



Joey Cheek

Long Track Speedskating

Olympic Gold, Silver & Bronze Medalist
World Champion

Joey Cheek



Born and raised in Greensboro, NC, Joey Cheek moved to Canada at 16 years old to pursue a most unusual goal for a small-town southern boy, that of winter Olympic champion. Ten years later it was mission accomplished, as Cheek won Olympic gold, silver and bronze medals and became World Champion in speedskating. Cheek's gold medal winning margin of victory at the 2006 Olympic Games was the largest in history. He dominated the competition.

It was then, at the press conference of his gold medal winning performance, that Cheek left an indelible mark on Olympic history as he silenced the room full of international journalists by refusing to speak about his victory. Instead, he spoke out on behalf of the suffering people of the Darfur region of the Sudan. He announced a personal donation of \$25,000 (later raised to \$40,000) and challenged the Olympic family of sponsors and fans to help these people in such dire need. He went on to raise over 1 million dollars.

As a result of his humanitarianism and exemplary behavior both on and off the ice, Joey Cheek was elected by his peers to carry the American flag during the Closing Ceremony of the 2006 Olympic Winter Games. He was named the U.S.O.C. Athlete of the Year and received the 2006 U.S. Olympic Spirit Award for his demonstration of the Olympic ideals during the Games. At the close of the Olympics Cheek earned the crown jewel of Olympic sports endorsements, becoming the featured athlete on the limited edition Wheaties box. His efforts were later recognized by President Bill Clinton at the 2006 Clinton Global Initiative at the U.N.

- “Cheek is an antitoxin for those who have been fed a steady diet of showboating, sniping, self-absorbed Olympians.” - *Karen Krause, New York Times*
- “Cheek showed what happens when the Olympic torch falls into the right hands, when it belongs to someone who will use it to illuminate the world's problems and try to solve them. It's the most surprising, enlightening news conference I've ever seen.”- *J.A. Adande L.A. Times*
- “The athletes of a nation line up behind Joey Cheek tonight. The rest of us should, too. He is the best of them, and the best of us, and we are all poorer if we do not fall in step.” – *Gary Shelton, St. Petersburg Times*

