

## Boneheads body-shame athletes

**By Sarah Sobanski**

Mexican gymnast Alexa Monroe placed 12th in Artistic Gymnastics (AG) Women's Vault in the Olympics. She placed 28th in AG Women's Floor Exercise, 31st in AG Women's Individual All-Around, 51st in AG Women's Beam and 59th in AG Women's Uneven Bars. The 22-year-old is 1.47 metres tall and weighs 99 pounds.

Ethiopian swimmer Robel Kiros Habte finished 59th in Swimming Men's 100 metre Freestyle, his only event in the Olympics. The 24-year-old is 1.76 metres tall and weighs 179 pounds.

What do both of these athletes have in common besides Rio 2016? They were both called fat and body-shamed after their events.

Among the many insults thrown at Monroe and Habte there were pictures of pigs, jokes about entering in hot dog-eating contests instead of the Olympics, and a variety of colourful whale word-plays.

That's right, it takes a special kind of person to call an Olympian fat. There are so many other things that would better demand their attention ? like jumping in front of a bus ? but they go out of their way to subject us to their art-thou commentary.

I thought maybe the Olympics was the one place that people couldn't be body-shamed. It's akin to shaming a blind person for picking the wrong colour, or accusing a deaf person of ignoring you ? have some respect.

The amount of stress and agony that Olympians put their bodies through in order to even qualify at the Olympic games makes me surprised they don't all wander in looking somehow transformed or deformed and super human. Don't get me wrong, I'll watch the men's swimming all day. I'm just surprised that 24/7 training and a 10,000 calorie a day diet like USA swimmer Ryan Lochte has, results in so many abs as opposed to something less average ? like an aerodynamic swimming beer gut.

Let's, however, look at some mathematics to actually whether determine Monroe is healthy or obese. In a sane world these are truly the real, hard-hitting questions we should be asking; are our Olympians fat?

Looking up a body mass index (BMI) calculator online and plugging in Monroe's details, the gymnast has a BMI somewhere around 22 per cent. This is a rough estimate.

The BMI suggests under 18.5 per cent is under weight, under 24.5 per cent is normal weight, under 30 per cent is over weight and over 30 per cent is obese. To put this further in perspective, when I was training daily for hockey ? including dry land, on ice training, and from home ? my BMI was 28 per cent. So BMI is a pretty hard scale to wheedle your way into, depending on your body type, and Monroe still pulled a 22.

But you already knew Monroe wasn't the f-word, because fat doesn't mean unhealthy, it means fitting attitudes tastefully. It means subjecting yourself to the unattainable and downright unhealthy standards that society puts on both the female and male body.

Every person who body-shamed Monroe or Habte should have to do a single day of their training regimes ? and it should be broadcast on live television across the world. No pressure right? Be sexy and destroy the world stage single-handedly, no sweat. Only one rule: no defibrillators allowed on-site.