

Zzzzzzzzapp!

by Siegfried Lindstrom

A news flash for any desert-island readers whose contact with the rest of the planet is limited to bottle-borne *T&FN* issues washing into your front yard by wind, wave and ocean current:

At the '09 World Championships in Berlin, Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt annihilated his own World Records set a year earlier at the Beijing Olympics, knocking the 100 mark down to 9.58 and the 200 to 19.19.

The planet referenced above is Earth, but as no less an authority than OG/WC champion Maurice Greene noted before the meet began, "Bolt is from Mars."

By now it is clear Bolt's assessments of his accomplishments tend more toward the unadorned than do his crowd-pleasing ham-it-up victory celebrations.

"I keep telling you guys," he said after his new records were booked, "my main aim is to become a legend. That's the main aim for me and that's what I'm working on."

"I don't put myself under any pressure. I keep telling you, when I go out there I know what to do. So I just go out there and execute, pretty much."

Execute, indeed. Just as in Beijing, the sprint finals were run on August 16 and 20, with the half-lapper run the day before Bolt's birthday—his 23rd this time.

Rather than dance the night away, though, an activity for which the 6-5 superstar has well-known fondness, Bolt said instead, "I'm going to get a long sleep; that's what I'm going to do. I'm really, really tired right now."

So what's a little exhaustion? Bolt had temporarily removed the phrase "others can only dream about" from the realm of cliché.

100: Zap No. 1 Is A 9.58

In his 100 Bolt blew through 60 meters—the distance for which Greene's World Indoor Record is 6.39—in 6.31.

According to readings from a laser device (see p. 8), 5 meters after that he hit a top speed of 27.45mph (12.27mps).

The wind-reading was 0.9mps, and the *Big Gold Book* says the time is worth 9.63—by 0.06 the fastest time ever—in windless conditions.

Boggling stats—and the list goes on. Hands-down, though, the man least boggled was defending champion Tyson Gay (see p. 8), who crushed his own American Record by 0.06 for a final time of 9.71 that flashed far under the old meet record, Greene's 9.80 from '99.

Gay pulled out the record, and a finish well in front of the bronze-medal 9.84 of pre-Bolt WR holder Asafa Powell, despite a groin injury that forced him to soft-pedal his starts in the qualifying rounds and save just one all-out getaway for the final.

"My groin, it's barely hanging on," Gay said before opting out of a defense of his 200 title. "In the finals I just tried to block everything out and give it my all because there was nothing else left."

Nothing but an all-he-had challenge for Bolt,

In the first of two Bolts on the blue that defined World Championships XII, the universe's fastest human electrified the crowd as he wiped out Gay & Powell



Bolt's WC Double

who repaid the respect by running through the line, instead of coasting in Beijing-style.

The Bolt phenomenon, it seemed, also removed the jinx—seen by many as a mental block—that previously limited Powell at championships. Freed from expectations of victory, Powell ran his fastest ever Worlds, equal to the No. 6 time in meet history.

As if Beijing hadn't sent the message, Bolt played through the 100 rounds, telegraphing fleeting images of Superman. In his quarterfinal, he jogged—yes, that's really how it looked in the last 30 meters—10.03, looking around and allowing his Antiguan training mate Daniel Bailey the win in 10.02.

In his semi, Bolt false-started on first try at a getaway. Did it rattle him at all?

"No," he said. "Me and my teammate Daniel Bailey were really just having fun out there. I told him I was going to beat him out of the blocks because in training he always beats me out of the blocks. So I guess I got a little bit too excited.... Just one of those things."

Briton Tyrone Edgar caught the next flyer and disqualification, and when the field finally got a clean start, Bolt blew down the track in 9.89 (wind 0.2mps), the fastest semi in meet history.

American Doc Patton was 3rd, while U.S. champion Mike Rodgers' 10.04 for 5th was the fastest time not to advance, ever. Gay took the second semi in 9.93 (wind -0.2).

The 100 final showcased the most mystifying Bolt attribute. How does a sprinter who stands 6-5—with levers more like to vaulting poles than short-throw pistons—match the rest of the best out of the blocks?

Official biomechanical analysis or the race (see p. 8) showed that at 20 meters Bolt was 0.01 clear of Beijing silver-medalist Richard Thompson, 0.02 up on Powell, and 0.03 ahead of Bailey and Gay.

He passed 40 meters in 4.64, 0.06 ahead of Gay having covered the 20-40m segment in 1.75. Had Bolt stopped accelerating and merely maintained, he would have timed 9.89 at the finish, but instead he laid down figures of 1.67, 1.61, and 1.66 for the last three 20-meter sections.

That meant, looking at each 20m segment as a separate unit: 0.03 faster than Gay from 20-40, 0.02 faster 40-60, 0.02 faster 60-80 and 0.03 faster 80-100. Faster in each phase, then, than the No. 2 all-time sprinter (after being 0.02 slower in reaction time: 0.144-0.146).

In turn, Gay overcame his deficit to Powell at 20 meters by gaining 0.02 on the Jamaican from 20-40, another 0.02 40-60 and then hulking 0.05 chunks from 60-80m and 80-100.

Bailey (4th) and Thompson (5th) both at 9.93 rounded out the final's sub-10 club. Patton's zip appeared to desert him after 30 meters and he placed 8th in 10.34.

While Bolt explained his run as just pursuit of his "legend" goal, and added that he really doubted he'd break his 200 record, the rest of the world gaped. "In my event," former 110 hurdles WR holder Renaldo Nehemiah said after consulting the IAAF Scoring Tables, "that's a 12.39!"

Yes, and according to those less-than-consistent calculations, 9.58 is equivalent to 42.09 for 400, 1:38.46 for 800, a 3:37.14 mile or a

"I Just Go Out There And Run"

Faster down the track Bolt goes; where he'll stop nobody knows. Everybody is speculating, it seems... except for Usain Bolt himself.

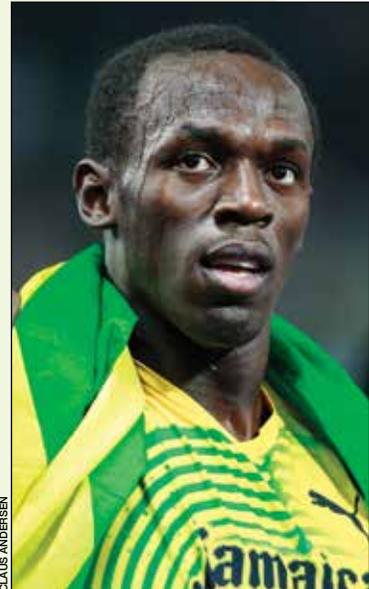
"Somebody quoted me that I said I could run 9.4," Bolt said after both new World Records were in the can. "I did not say that. I said 9.4 is possible. I don't know if I can do it. I think 9.4 is going to be the limit for the 100 meters.

"I don't know what the limit for 200 meters is. I don't put limits on myself but I go out there and I run hard all the time."

But Bolt had run 19.19 with a -0.3mps wind. Had the Lightning sprinter given any thought to that or what he might have done with an optimum-legal 2.0 behind him? Not before the race, no. And not after either.

"Spearmon actually asked me before when we were warming up, 'Which way is the wind blowing?'" Bolt said.

"I was like, 'I don't know.' I didn't know which way it was blowing, and I started thinking about it: 'Uh, looks like we got a headwind.' But for me I don't worry about anything because it's just a part of life. I just go out there and run."



CLAUS ANDERSEN

1:58:55 marathon. On the field, you're looking at a 21-foot vault (6.40), a 30-³/₄ (9.16) long jump or a 79-4³/₄ (24.20) shot put. Whacky numbers.

200: Zap No. 2 Is A 19.19

No one knew what Bolt might do in the 200. He was downplaying expectations, and, pun intended, would lightning strike twice in Berlin? It had in Beijing, but wouldn't twice defy all laws of probability?

With Gay having withdrawn (hoping to save himself for one straightaway run in the

Only One Man Faster Than Gay

Although the Berlin men's dashes projected as being all about Bolt and went down as being all about Bolt, the tale of how Tyson Gay preserved the word "competition" for the 100's vocabulary should never be forgotten.

While Bolt received a 2.7-ton chunk of the Berlin Wall from the host city for his records, Gay—racing with a gimpy groin and reminded at every turn of what he was up against—built a monument of his own to being the best *you* can be. His 9.71 final was not just an American Record, but also the fastest 100 ever for anyone not named Usain.

Even as he hobbled into his German doctor's waiting room a week before the meet, Gay met Bolt coming out. Berlin was plastered with posters of his rival, yet Gay's poise never wavered. Rather than boosting himself on the sense of indomitability Bolt carried into Berlin or on a wave of heavyweight trash talk that would have been incongruous with his quiet style, Gay turned to plain belief in himself.

Even at his career low when his fitness left him shy of the Beijing final, Gay said, "There was never a doubt in my mind that I could compete with this guy or at this level."

Gay admitted he rushed his training last fall and "got a little banged up early." But he regrouped and made himself a more complete sprinter. "I've gotten a lot stronger this year," he said. "I changed my workouts so I started running a little bit faster in practice without spikes on. I ran some pretty fast times and I also made sure I took care of my body better."

Before joining the dash battle of this millennium, Gay half-joked, "I'm probably what you would call boring. I haven't really flexed my muscles too much before the races or anything like that. But at the same time, I'm always the same person."

Afterwards, he was still that person. "I'm really happy that Usain Bolt broke the record," he said. "I know that may sound strange but I knew it was humanly possible for someone to run that fast. Unfortunately it wasn't me. But I'm very happy with the race."

On Bolt's first big night in Berlin, Gay repeated an earlier comment worth remembering: "I gave it my best," he said, "and I still know I have more left in the tank." /SL/

4x1 final) and nobody else under 20-flat in '09, it seemed Bolt could just run to win.

Besides, Bolt insisted, "The only thing [his late-April car accident] affected was my 200 training, because I didn't get to do as much on the corner as I wanted to."

As in Beijing, even without Gay three Americans reached the final. Bolt took semi 1 in 20.08 ahead of Panamanian JUCO titlist Alonso Edward (20.22) and '04 Olympic champ Shawn Crawford (20.35).

Wallace Spearmon, the two-time Worlds 200 medalist who lost a podium spot in Bei-

jing to an out-of-lane DQ, won semi 2 in 20.14 with Jamaican Steve Mullings (20.26) and Florida State junior Charles Clark (20.27) behind him.

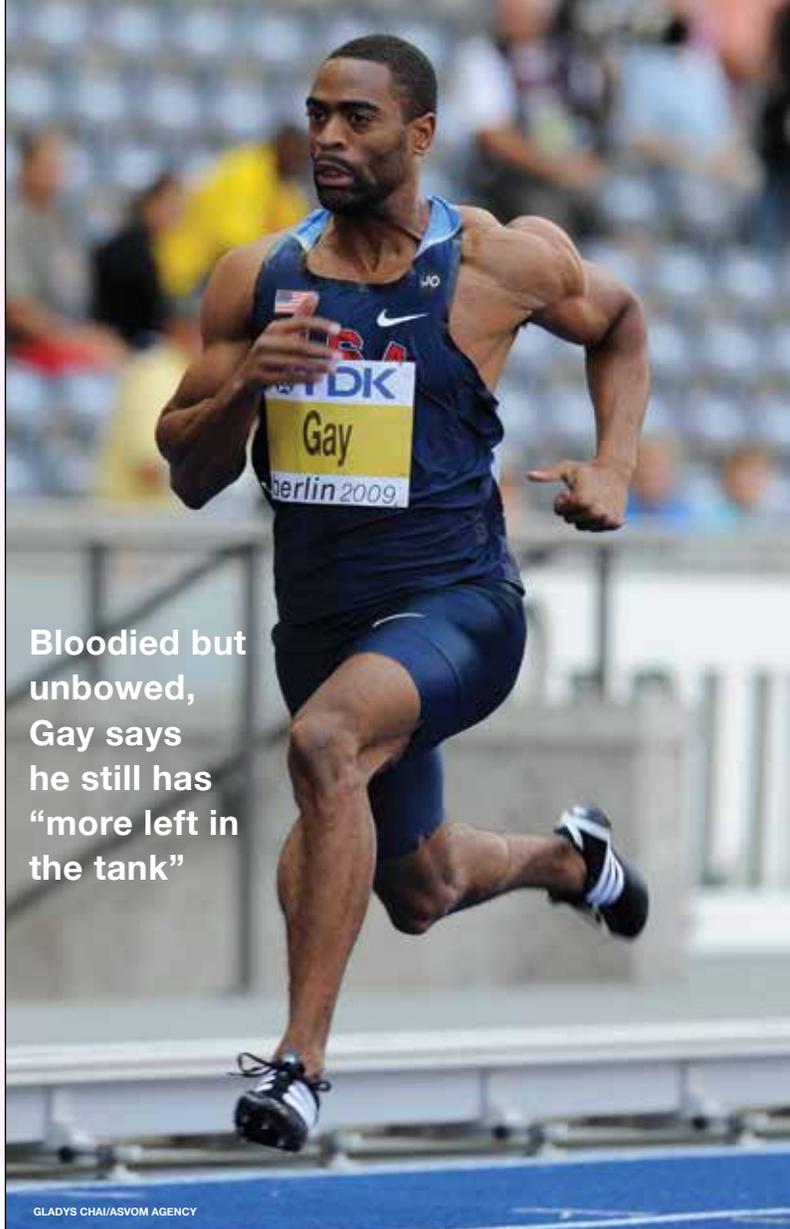
For the final, Ramil Guliyev, the Azerbaijani who had stirred the World University Games in July with an out-of-the-blue 20.04 clocking, was in lane 1. David Alerte of France was in 2. The assignments for lanes 3-8 were to Mullings, Spearmon, Bolt, Edward, Clark and Crawford.

Showtime again. Barely more than 30 meters into the race Bolt gobbled up the stagger to Edward, and began to fully stoke his stride—lightning striking again.

He destroyed the stagger to Clark in another few strides but needed most of the curve to run down Crawford's margin in lane 8, for the 33-year-old American was pumping full-tilt also.

However, when Crawford reached halfway second with a superb 10.15 split, Bolt was more than 2 meters ahead at 9.92, 0.04 up on the 9.96 split reported for his Beijing WR.

Nor did Bolt let up in the straight. In just 38 strides he ate the ground to the finish, which he crossed more than 6 meters ahead of Edward's Panamanian record 19.81. How was that for subpar speed endurance?



Bloodied but unbowed, Gay says he still has "more left in the tank"

GLADYS CHAI/ASVOM AGENCY

Edward, the 19-year-old Barton County soph, was 4th at 100 meters, just ahead of slow-starting Spearmon and almost 2 meters behind Mullings in 3rd.

But down the straight Edward and Spearmon split 9.44 and 9.43 to catch Mullings (9.78) and a tying-up Crawford (9.74) with about 10 meters left. Spearmon pulled into 2nd briefly but Edward got the ground back with a superior lean, 19.81-19.85.

Crawford (19.89) and Mullings (19.98) made this the first 200 ever with five men under 20-seconds. Clark placed 6th in 20.39. Everyone in the top 6 save Bolt spent at least some time in the U.S. collegiate system.

These days, however, Bolt as the exception really isn't news. "You can look at any sport," Spearmon explained. "Just because you get beat doesn't mean that you stop trying. Now all that means is that you go home and you work on your own résumé."

"So whenever I go home this off-season, I'm going to work twice as hard, maybe three times as hard. Maybe [I'll] put a picture of Bolt above my bed, you know, and that will be motivation at night."

100 Splits At 20-Meter Points

	20	40	60	80	100
Bolt	2.89	4.64	6.31	7.92	9.58
	(2.89)	(1.75)	(1.67)	(1.61)	(1.66)
Gay	2.92	4.70	6.39	8.02	9.71
	(2.92)	(1.78)	(1.69)	(1.63)	(1.69)
Powell	2.91	4.71	6.42	8.10	9.84
	(2.91)	(1.80)	(1.71)	(1.68)	(1.74)

In addition to those 20-meter splits—captured by high-speed cameras from the side—the IAAF/DLV research teams also measured Bolt's 10-meter splits from behind with a laser. These splits are not as accurate as the 20m ones, having a margin of error of up to 0.02. Bolt's increments (* = differs from camera version):

1.89 [1.89], 0.99 [2.88*], 0.90 [3.78], 0.86 [4.64], 0.83 [5.47], 0.82 [6.29*], 0.81 [7.10], 0.82 [7.92], 0.83 [8.75], 0.83 [9.58]