

Usain Bolt

Lightning Bolt

From his first gold medal in the 100 meters at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, Jamaica's Usain Bolt started a streak—or rather, a bolt of what would become a career of victory. Since becoming an otherworldly figure in 2008, Usain has won 69 of 74 races. He won 18 of 19 championship races in the 100 meters, 200 meters and 4x100-meter relay, and his only “loss” was in the 2011 world championships, when he was disqualified for a false start.

Usain, the world record holder in the 100 at 9.58 seconds and the 200 at 19.19 seconds, had raced little in the 2016 season. He was running strong in June of 2016, and clocked 9.87 at a meet in Kingston, Jamaica, despite stumbling twice. But three weeks later at the Jamaican Olympic Trials, Usain strained his low back and left hamstring, which have often given him problems in the past. He qualified for Rio due to the medical exemptions that the Jamaican team allows in the qualifying process despite not competing in the trials.

In Rio, he took the gold medal in the 100 meters for the third consecutive time; a feat accomplished only twice by Carl Lewis. Usain easily ran down fast-starting Justin Gatlin of the U.S. and crossed the line in 9.81 seconds, his fastest time in a year that's been sabotaged by injuries. At age 29, it was the slowest of his three Olympic 100-meter finals. In the 200, he believed he could break his world record of 19.19 and could even go under 19 seconds in the final, but he crossed the line in 19.78 seconds, his slowest time in his three Olympic 200 meter finals. Usain finished out his Olympic career in style. In the 4x100 relay, Jamaica took home gold, beating out Japan and a United States team that was later disqualified due to a lane violation. With his third gold medal of these Olympic Games, Usain was able to get the legendary triple-triple, making him the greatest sprinter of all time.

Usain Bolt plans to retire next year after the world track and field championships in London, with one transcendent career goal remaining: to take his world record of 19.19 seconds at 200 meters below the 19-second barrier.

Questions For Thought:

1. Usain has performed at a consistently high level. What is the key to a consistent performance?
2. What traits does Usain possess that has made him so successful?
3. Usain stays relaxed and keeps his poise. What techniques do you use to stay relaxed?