



Jamaica's Usain Bolt reacts as he wins the men's 200m on Thursday.

LUCY NICHOLSON / REUTERS

Bolt slams Lewis drug comment

By GERALD IMRAY in London
Associated Press

Usain Bolt took a momentary break from basking in his historic Olympic sprinting double to fiercely criticize former US athlete Carl Lewis.

Soon after winning gold in the 200m at the London Olympics for the 100 and 200 titles at back-to-back Games, Bolt said on Thursday he had "lost all respect" for Lewis after the American was quoted as saying Jamaica's doping controls were not as strong as other countries.

While not making any direct accusations, former 100 and 200 Olympic champion Lewis has said in recent years that Jamaican drug

testing procedures might need to be tightened.

The comments brought a stern reaction from Bolt at Olympic Stadium, right after he roared to an unprecedented second 200m title at the Games. No other athlete has won the 200 twice at the Olympics, although Lewis won the event in 1984 and finished second in the 1988 Games.

With the smile that had been a constant fixture throughout his press conference vanishing from his face, Bolt lashed out at nine-time gold-medal winner Lewis after being asked if he'd like to be compared with him or late sprinting great Jesse Owens.

"I'm going to say something controversial right now. Carl Lewis, I have no respect for him," Bolt

said. "The things he says about the track athletes is really downgrading for another athlete to say something like that. I think he's just looking for attention, really, because nobody really talks much about him.

"That was really sad for me when I heard the other day what he was saying. It was upsetting. I've lost all respect for him. All respect."

Asked which specific comments from Lewis made him angry, Bolt replied: "It was all about drugs. Talking about drugs. For me, an athlete out of the sport to be saying that. That was really upsetting for me. Really upsetting.

"To jump up and say something like that. As far as I'm concerned he's looking for attention. That's all." Lewis, the former 100 and 200

Olympic champion, has raised questions in recent years about Jamaican drug testing procedures.

Following Bolt's performance in Beijing, Lewis told Sports Illustrated: "Countries like Jamaica do not have a random program, so they can go months without being tested. I'm not saying anyone is on anything, but everyone needs to be on a level playing field."

Bolt had already dealt with one question about doping when he was asked on Thursday if he could guarantee that Jamaican sprinters — who swept the top three spots in the 200 — were clean.

"Without a doubt," Bolt said, sitting in between silver medalist Yohan Blake and bronze winner Warren Weir. "We train really hard."

Enjoying a track and field masterpiece

Sport is the greatest performing art.

You can have your movies, theater, opera and ballet, but nothing quite stiffens the sinews and conjures up the blood like the games people play.

Sport is athletic endeavor, but it is also fine art. You only had to watch Usain Bolt win the men's 100m Olympic final on Monday morning (Beijing time) or the 200m on Thursday to see that.

Although he's more Jackson Pollock than Picasso, all the colors came together in 9.63 sec of near perfection in the brief sprint and then 19.32 in the half-track race. Yes, the man from the north-western Jamaican parish of Trelawny did not exactly burst out of the blocks in the 100, but, once in stride, a masterpiece was in the making.

In the 100, Bolt's compatriot and stablemate Yohan Blake and the United States' Justin Gatlin and Tyson Gay painted pretty quick pictures too, but they were as Salieri was to Mozart — great, not brilliant.

In the 200, young Jamaicans Blake and Warren Weir filled out a podium canvas of green, black and gold... but the fastest man that has ever lived shone the brightest as a Caribbean nation went into raptures.

By completing the sprint double at consecutive Olympics (and he can make it a double hat-trick in the 4x100 relay), Bolt is inarguably the greatest sprinter of all-time, better than Jesse Owens, Carl Lewis or... well, just anyone who's laced them up for races that now last less than 10 sec and 20 sec respectively.

Sadly, though, with any great athletic work nowadays, the cynical among us look for signs of forgery. After too many doping scandals, the question is always being asked, "Yes, but is he/she clean?"

Lewis, who tested positive three times and was involved in the dirtiest race of the 20th century — the Ben Johnson-tainted 100m final at Seoul in 1988, raised his eyebrows over Bolt's stunning times in the 100 and suggested drug-testing procedures in Jamaica weren't up to par with the rest of the world.

He didn't say categorically that Usain was a cheat, but the implication was there.



TYM GLASER

Toss in the fact that Blake and pocket rocket Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, who defended her 100m title in London and claimed a surprising silver in the 200, have both tested positive for banned substances and Lewis gains a little more traction.

But, King Carl, and others with suspicious minds, conveniently forget that Bolt was a star in the making from his school days at William Knibb Memorial High and was destined for greatness in the 200 and 400 before adventuring into the 100 not long before the 2008 Beijing Games.

He broke the prototype of sprinters with his long, lanky frame and huge, loping strides and, as far as I know, there's not a drug out there on the market yet that can make you taller — otherwise we'd all be about 3m tall and playing in the NBA!

Victor Conte, of drug lab BALCO infamy, says 60 percent of the (I presume track) athletes at the Games are cheating.

How he would know? I don't know, but that's a pretty high mark.

If that is near even close to the scale, it's scary. Could Bolt be among the naughty ones? Yes. Is he? We don't know.

However, due to crimes of some of his sprinting forebears, there will always be an element of doubt.

Still, it's not fair for this once-in-a-lifetime athlete to be tarnished with the same brush without any tangible proof.

An athlete's track and field career is relatively short, and this could well be 25-year-old Bolt's last Games. Can't we just enjoy a great artist at work?

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