

## Sport

## Column One

## Sports

## WHIZZ KID

COMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN



John Johnson for once as he matched the second-fastest 100m ever run at the Grand Prix meeting here on Wednesday, reports AFP.

Fredericks missed the world record by just one hundredth of a second as he beat world champion Donovan Bailey, Olympic gold medalist Linford Christie and top American Dennis Mitchell to cross the line in 9.86sec.

The Namibian's time, recorded on the same track where Leroy Burrell ran his 9.85 sec two years ago, matched Carl Lewis' 1991 World Championships gold-medal performance in Tokyo.

Fredericks' feat just before Atlanta left Johnson in the shade, even though the United States 200 and 400m runner timed an awesome 43.66sec over one lap.

Astonishingly, Fredericks, who was followed in by Bailey (9.93) and Ato Boldon of Trinidad (9.94), might have gone even faster but he slowed up five metres out to begin his celebrations.

Christie, Fredericks' training partner, who has only just confirmed he will defend his title, was fifth in 10.04 while Mitchell was last.

Christie was also well beaten over 200m, fourth behind Boldon who won in a fine 19.85sec.

Only last month Fredericks ran a year's best 9.87 in Helsinki, confirming him as the man to beat at the Olympics ... if he decides to contest the shorter sprint at all.

The 28-year-old, a double silver medalist at Barcelona and regarded as a specialist over 200m at the start of the season, mistrusts the shorter event.

He said: "I feel confident over 200. In the 100, you make one little mistake and you are out."

But he revealed in Helsinki that, despite his reservations, he was considering attempting the double in Atlanta, a decision which seems almost inevitable after Wednesday's heroics.

Michael Johnson's run was almost as impressive, if only because he set off at a snail's pace, allowing the rest of the 400m field to run away from him.

Just after the halfway, however, the Texan moved up a gear, going close to compatriot Butch Reynolds' 1988 mark of 43.29.

Roger Black of Great Britain, the 1991 World Championships silver medalist, who

broke the British record with 44.39sec last month, did it again by this time posting 44.37 ahead of Darnell Hall.

The women's 100m went to American Gwen Torrence, the world champion going under 11sec again to win in 10.97. She was emulated by 110m hurdler Allen Johnson.

Johnson, also a winner at Gothenburg, timed 13.06 sec to beat 1993 champion Colin Jackson, although the Welshman gave a hint of a return to form after a series of injuries in season's best 13.13 sec.

Maria Mutola, meanwhile, returned to winning form in the women's 800m.

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Nouredine Morelli, the triple 1,500m world champion, had to work hard for a victory in 3:30.99 while Marie-Joe Perez of France, almost untouchable over the women's 400m, also had to dig deep to win in 49.45, the best time of the women's 800m.

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