

SPORT



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'This means a lot to me'

REUTERS, Beijing

Usain Bolt once again produced his best when it mattered most to retain his 100 metres world title and reassert his status as the number one sprinter on the planet at a rocking Bird's Nest Stadium on Sunday night.

"I came out here, relaxed, no stress and brought it home. My aim is to be number one until I retire and therefore I am pushing myself and pushing myself," said the 29-year-old after striking his trademark "Lightning Bolt" pose.

"It is all about running the race and getting it done. You can call that race rusty. I could have run faster. This title means a lot to me. It has been a long season with me coming back from injury."

Justin Gatlin finished second in 9.80 to take silver as he did at the world championships in Moscow two years ago.

With Gatlin, who has twice served bans for the use of banned substances, being one of four convicted dopers in the final, a victory for Bolt proved to be more significant than who was the best sprinter.

"I understand why (people thought it was important for me to win)," Bolt added. "But as I said, I wanted to do it for myself. It was a big deal."

Bolt, the reigning Olympic champion and world record holder, has now not been beaten in the 100m or 200m in six major global championships going back to 2007.

"I feel good, on the last five metres I kind of stumbled and it cost me my momentum," said Gatlin, adding that he got nabbed by the great Usain.

COMETH THE MOMENT COMETH THE MAN: Usain Bolt has made the blue riband 100m sprint a prized possession of his own ever since his meteoric rise at the Bird's Nest in 2008 Beijing Olympics. After seven years on Sunday the Jamaican returned to that fever-pitch to retain that status in some style.

PHOTO: AFP

Lightning pierces the dark

SMH

Usain Bolt has saved his sport from its own grubby self. The world's fastest man won gold in the 100m at the World Athletics Championships here on Sunday.

The dominant athlete of his generation, if not all, overcame the dominant sprinter of the year.

In the race that offered a battle between the good and the bad, the clean and the dirty, the good and the clean won. True, the bad and the dirty ran second but second in this race was a lot further than the hundredth of a second that separated Usain Bolt from the twice-banned Justin Gatlin.

Embarrassment was thus stunningly, breathtakingly averted. Bolt overpowered Gatlin to win in 9.79s. Gatlin was at his shoulder but didn't dip as he needed, crossing the line in 9.80 seconds. Canadian Andre de Grasse ran third in 9.92s.

If a Bolt gold medal can be unexpected then this was it. Slow, unconvincing, out of form, he saved his best run of the year for the only one that mattered. It was his third 100m world championships gold.

Before Sunday night's final, Gatlin had run the five fastest times in the world this year. Then Bolt beat him.

This was the result athletics, indeed world sport, prayed for but feared it would not get.

Bolt's win saves the sport from the image

of a twice banned 100m gold medallist, but it remains a grubby night for athletics. Half of the men on the starting blocks for the 100m had all served drugs bans.

It is easier to stomach the distasteful when there remains someone still so much better than the rest who has never failed a drug test.

After the semi-finals it appeared the final would deliver a Gatlin win when the American ran the fastest semi in a time of 9.77s, the fifth fastest in the world this year. The four faster times were all also run by him.

Bolt had been anything but convincing. He ran 9.96s for his semi and appeared to be labouring.

The victory thus only builds the legend of Bolt for this was doubtless the most

unexpected win for the man who has won more gold than any other.

The status quo in the sport thus pleasingly remains, for Jessica Ennis-Hill, the British Olympic heptathlon gold medallist and the face of the London Olympics, won gold again just 13 months after having her first child.

Bolt, the reigning Olympic champion has now not been beaten in the 100m or 200m in six major global championships going back to 2007, although he was disqualified from the shorter race at the Deagu world championships in 2011.

The 29-year-old will go for successive world championship sprint sweeps in Beijing, the site of his breakthrough triumph at the 2008 Olympics, with the 200 metres final scheduled for Thursday.



Usain Bolt embraces his mother Jennifer Bolt after winning the 100m final at the Bird's Nest in Beijing yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS



Sri Lanka legend Kumar Sangakkara walks back to the pavilion through a guard of honour after being dismissed in the last innings of his career on the fourth day of the second Test against India at the P Sara Oval in Colombo yesterday.

SANGA STATS	15 years of international career after he made his Test debut in July 2000 at Galle against South Africa	319 runs is his highest score in Tests which he raised against Bangladesh in February 2014	57.40 is his batting average, the fifth best among batsmen with at least 5,000 runs	12,400 are the runs he made from 233 innings in 134 Tests including 38 hundreds and 52 half-centuries	1493 were the runs he scored in 2014 to finish to finish as the most successful batsman in the calendar year	6,830 are the runs he finished with in Sri Lanka, the second most by any batsman behind Mahela Jayawardene
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Mountain in front of SL

AFP, Colombo

Kumar Sangakkara was dismissed for 18 in his last international innings to leave Sri Lanka in trouble in the second Test against India in Colombo on Sunday.

The hosts, set a tough victory target of 413, slumped to 33-2 after Sangakkara's dismissal before closing the fourth day's play at 72-2 at the P Sara Oval.

Opener Dimuth Karunaratne was on 25 and skipper Angelo Mathews was on 23. Sri Lanka begin the final day's play on Monday needing 341 more to win with eight wickets in hand.

India, looking to level the three-match series after losing the first Test in Galle, declared their second innings at 325 for 8 in the post-tea session after Ajinkya Rahane top-scored with 126.

It left the hosts facing a little less than four sessions to achieve the huge target or bat out for a draw on a slow, wearing pitch that should favour India's spinners.

The highest successful fourth-innings run chase at the venue is 352 for 9 by the hosts against South Africa in 2006.

Sangakkara, the fifth highest run-getter in Test history, did not have to wait long to bat after Sri Lanka lost opener Kaushal Silva in the third over, tapping a full toss from Ravichandran Ashwin to the short mid-wicket fielder.

Sangakkara hit three boundaries but fell to Ashwin for the fourth time in as many innings in the series when he edged a catch to Murali Vijay off the 18th ball he faced.

SCORES IN BRIEF
INDIA: First innings 393
SRI LANKA: First innings 306
INDIA: Second innings 325 for 8 decl (Vijay 82, Rahane 126, Sharma 34, Ashwin 19; Prasad 4-43, Kaushal 4-118)
SRI LANKA: Second innings 72 for 2 (Karunaratne 25 not out, Sangakkara 18, Mathews 23 not out; Ashwin 2-27)

Law arrives here tonight

SPORTS REPORTER

Former Bangladesh cricket coach Stuart Law will arrive here tonight to assist the Bangladesh Under-19 team as a technical adviser.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) hired the high-profile Australian coach as they don't want to leave any stone unturned for Bangladesh team's success in the ICC Under-19 World Cup to be held in Bangladesh in January-February next year. Bangladesh's best performance in the show-piece event was a fifth finish in the 2006 Youth World Cup in Sri Lanka.

The former Australia middle-order batsman was the head coach of the Tigers from June 2011 till he resigned less than ten months into the job and during his tenure Bangladesh reached the final of the Asia Cup for the first time in 2012.

Law will stay for four weeks during his first visit. "He [Stuart Law] will go to Khulna along with the Bangladesh Under-19 team on August 29 for a 12-day camp there and after that the camp will continue at BKSP till September 20," informed BCB's national manager of Game Development Nazmul Abedin Fahim yesterday.

Law will have a discussion with the coaches and other technical persons before travelling to Khulna. He will assist the junior Tigers in three phases. In the second phase, he will work from October 26 to November 20 and from January 4 to till the end of the World Cup in the third phase.

U-19s face Nepal today

SPORTS REPORTER

Having confirmed semifinal berth, Bangladesh will be looking to emerge as Group A champions in the inaugural SAFF U-19 Championship when they take on hosts Nepal at the ANFA Complex Ground in Kathmandu today.

Despite both teams having three points each, earned from victories against Bhutan, Bangladesh will have to win today's fixture to top the group, thanks to the less number of goals they scored compared to the Nepalese.

Bangladesh coach Saiful Bari Titu was less than satisfied with the performance of his charges, who beat Bhutan 2-0 while wasting a couple of sitters.

"We will need to improve on our performance if we have to win the title," said the Bangladesh coach yesterday.

Bangladesh kept the Bhutan backline busy for most part of the game, with the

wings making most of the attacking forays, but Titu knows it would be a different ball game against the Nepalese. However, he is ready to build the game up from the centre in case the Nepalese manage to neutralise the wing threat from Bangladesh.

Titu also said he has special plan to stop Nepal striker Bimal, who made the difference by scoring a hat-trick in the 3-1 win in the championship opener against Bhutan.

"The other opponents are not the same as Bhutan. Nepal, especially, are a strong side and technically ahead of us," said Titu.

"Bimal's speedy run is dangerous for any opponent and we will have a special plan to stop him. I will show the Nepal-Bhutan match to my players and instruct them about what to do," said the former Bangladesh international.

According to the information of the Bangladesh coach, most of participating teams including Nepal have been playing two forwards in 4-4-2 formation, and in order to stop the two forwards, Bangladesh will likely deploy a defensive midfielder in

A win for Clarke

AFP, London

Australia sent captain Michael Clarke into international retirement with an innings and 46-run victory in the fifth and final Ashes Test at The Oval on Sunday.

Even so England, who had already regained the Ashes, won the series 3-2 with Clarke the first Australian in more than a century to be on the losing side in four successive Ashes series in Britain.

When impressive paceman Peter Siddle had Moeen Ali (35) caught behind, England, following-on, had been dismissed for 286 in their second innings.

Siddle, only playing after Josh Hazlewood was injured, bowled with both pace and control on his way to innings figures of four for 35 in 24.4 overs -- including 12 maidens.

Australia's victory on Sunday meant none of the Tests in this Ashes had gone to a fifth day -- a testament to the general lack of batting resilience in both sides.

"This game sums up the series," Clarke told BBC Radio's Test Match Special.

"Both teams have had a rollercoaster ride. The boys did as I asked, it was a test of our character and we came through it."

This series equalled the fewest days in a Test series of five or more matches of five or more scheduled days each of 18 that took place when England faced the West Indies in 2000.

It also set a new record, in terms of days played, for an Ashes series of five or more matches of five or more days each.

This had stood at 19, a mark set way back in 1884-85, an era when Tests were 'timeless' and played to a finish.

Australia, after losing the toss at The Oval, piled up 481.

SCORES IN BRIEF
AUSTRALIA: First innings 481
ENGLAND: First innings 149
ENGLAND: Second innings 286 (Cook 85, Bairstow 26, Buttler 42, Moeen 35; Lyon 2-53, Siddle 4-35, Marsh 2-56)
Result: Australia won by an innings and 46 runs and England clinched five-match series 3-2.
Player-of-the-match: Steven Smith.
Players-of-the-series: Joe Root of England and Chris Rogers of Australia.