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Saluting the great athlete
 "It's important to use the fame and the achievement of Usain Bolt for the benefit of Jamaica. Bolt could be minister of anything he wants." – Jamaica PM

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SCRIPTS GOLDEN HISTORY

Usain Bolt at the Olympic Stadium in Rio on Friday night. (REUTERS)

Dedication the key, says the champion

AFP
RIO DE JANEIRO

USAIN Bolt said a ferocious dedication to his sport lay behind his incredible Olympic career on Friday after capturing his unique 'triple-triple'.

The 29-year-old Jamaican sprint king surged home to anchor his team to victory in the 4x100m relay and secure his ninth gold medal.

Asked afterwards to explain his success, Bolt replied simply: "Dedication. I wanted it the most. I was never satisfied."

"I'm going to stay up late and have fun. I never knew this would happen when I started out," added Bolt, who lingered on the track after his lap of honour, milking applause on the last night of his final Olympic appearance.

With chants of "Usain Bolt, Usain Bolt" raining down from the Olympic Stadium, the sprint superstar knelt down and kissed the finish line.

Bolt's team-mate Yohan Blake said the other Jamaican members of the relay squad had been determined to deliver a gold.

"We wanted to win to make Usain immortal and he is immortal," Blake said. "I've told him he should come back for 2020!"

Bolt meanwhile joked that he had given his team-mates an ominous warning not to let him down: "I told the guys I'd beat them up."

Jamaican sprinting legend signs off with unprecedented 'triple, triple'

AFP
RIO DE JANEIRO

USAIN Bolt brought the curtain down on his Olympic career with a record-equalling ninth gold medal on Friday, anchoring Jamaica to relay glory in a perfectly-scripted finale to complete his unprecedented "triple-triple."

The 29-year-old superstar, widely seen as the greatest sprinter in history, stormed over the line in 37.27sec to trigger an eruption of adulation in the Olympic Stadium.

Japan's quartet took a surprise silver in 37.60sec while Canada took bronze after the United States, who crossed in third, were later disqualified.

The victory saw Bolt complete a third consecutive clean sweep of the 100m, 200m and 4x100m titles following his six gold medals in the 2008 and 2012 Games.

It leaves Bolt – who will retire in 2017 – level with Carl Lewis and Paavo Nurmi on a total of nine Olympic gold medals, a record for a track and field athlete.

The relay gold was the final



Usain Bolt kisses the track after the men's 4x100m relay of the 2016 Games at the Olympic Stadium in Rio de Janeiro on Friday. (REUTERS)

'UNTARNISHED' EVEN IF STRIPPED OF GOLD

RIO: Usain Bolt has insisted his legacy to athletics would survive unscathed even if former relay team mate Nesta Carter is found guilty of doping at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Sprint king Bolt achieved a 'triple-triple' by anchoring Jamaica to a runaway gold in Friday's 4x100m final, but was then asked about the possibility of being stripped of one of his medals.

Reports surrounding Carter surfaced in the months leading up to the Rio Games, claiming that in re-tests of frozen blood and urine samples from Beijing, Carter, who ran the 4x100m relay with Bolt, tested positive for a banned substance.

"I don't think it will tarnish my legacy," said Bolt after leading Jamaica to a hat-trick of golds to complete his collection of 100m, 200m and 4x100m titles for the third straight Olympics. (AFP)

act of an incredible Olympic career that redefined athletics and often left commentators scrambling to find a new vocabulary of superlatives as each new milestone came and went.

On Sunday Bolt became the first man in history to win a hat-trick of 100m gold medals.

He then followed that up with Thursday's barnstorming win in the 200m, sealing another

never-before-seen treble.

Friday's triumph was potentially the most awkward, with Bolt's gold medal hopes reliant on the performances of his team-mates. But Asafa Powell, Yohan Blake and Nickel Ashmeade were in no mood to fluff their lines.

A superb third leg by Ashmeade ensured that Bolt had a precious lead after the final

changeover. From that point there was only ever going to be one outcome and Bolt powered home by three metres to universal delight.

Bolt will now set off a year-long lap of honour that will culminate with the World Championships in London next August.

The Jamaican is preparing to exit with athletics fighting

that was comparable to boxing icon Muhammad Ali.

"The man is a genius," Coe said. "There's been nobody since Muhammad Ali who's got remotely near to what this guy has done in terms of grabbing the public imagination."

However, Coe argued that just as a new generation of boxers emerged after Ali's retirement, so track and field would unearth new personalities after Bolt.

"It's a massive gap, but it's not a gap that is insuperable," Coe said. "You're not going to fill that gap overnight, but there are great, talented athletes out there."

US team disqualified from bronze

The United States were disqualified from the bronze medal position in the men's 4x100m relay. That gave the bronze medal to Canada, anchored by Andre de Grasse, the 200-meter runner-up. On the Americans' first exchange, between Mike Rodgers and Justin Gatlin, they were judged to have passed the baton outside the exchange zone.

Bolt could be minister of anything he wants: Jamaica PM



Team Jamaica (L to R) Yohan Blake, Nickel Ashmeade, Asafa Powell and Usain Bolt celebrate after winning the men's 4x100m relay final of the 2016 Games at the Olympic Stadium in Rio on Friday. (AFP)

REUTERS
RIO DE JANEIRO

AS he blazed through the Rio Games, winning an historic third batch of three sprint gold medals, Jamaica's Usain Bolt was clear this is his last time on the Olympic track, where he feels he has nothing left to prove.

Bolt, the most famous Jamaican since Bob Marley, has repeatedly declined to say what he will do after he hangs up his spikes. Unlike the reggae great, who died of cancer at 36, Bolt has the option of planning his next career move.

With his 30th birthday on Sunday, Bolt should have a long second career ahead of him and a lot of people, from his sponsor Puma to Jamaican

Prime Minister Andrew Holness, want a say in his plans.

"It's important to use the fame and the achievement of Usain Bolt for the benefit of Jamaica. It does open doors," Holness told the BBC during a brief visit to Rio on Monday.

Holness said he would have a seat in his cabinet ready for Bolt's 1.96 metre (6'5") frame, if the athlete would accept.

"Usain Bolt could be minister of anything he wants," he said.

Bolt would be far from the first Olympian to make the jump into politics.

Former New York Knicks player Bill Bradley, a member of the 1964 U.S. Olympic team, served 18 years in the U.S. Senate after retiring from

competition.

Fellow Rio competitor Wesley Korir is on a break as a member of Kenya's parliament to run Sunday's Olympic marathon.

Bolt has not said if he would consider the post, and in any case has committed to run at next year's World Championships before bowing out from competition.

"I don't know what I am going to do, you just stress me out," Bolt told reporters in the early hours of Friday before leading his team to victory in the 4 x 100m relay, his third gold of the Rio Games.

The only thing he would rule out was coaching.

"I want to stay in the sport, I want to stay around the

sport," he said. "We will see what happens. Definitely not as a coach though."

Some among the thousands of fans who turned out on Friday to see him race in the final leg of his "triple triple" said they did not much care what he did next, so long as he continued to create goodwill for the country.

"He's been such an inspiration to Jamaican kids, showing them they can be so much more," said Charles Russell, a 32-year-old from Kingston.

"He should do whatever it is he wants to do. He's earned it."

George Freeman, 54, who was born in Kingston and now lives in Miami, said that Bolt had done much to improve Jamaica's profile on

the world stage.

"It's a small country with limited resources. To be number one in something is special," Freeman said.

"He has done a lot of good things for Jamaica. Whatever he does, I hope he continues to make a lot of money and do a lot of good things for Jamaica."

Bolt has already built the beginnings of a business empire, including sports bar Tracks & Records in the Jamaican capital.

Regardless of what he does next, the charismatic Jamaican has clearly been relishing his last Olympic performance, smiling broadly as he barrels toward the finish line.

"I just wanted to say goodbye."