

Wrong Move!

Former sprint hurdler Jackson believes Bolt's retirement plans dampened preparation

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Photo Credit: Howard Walker



LONDON, England — Usain Bolt's plan — announced well in advance — to retire at the end of the London World Championships, was a contributing factor to his failure to defend his 100-metre title, believes former 110m hurdles world record holder Colin Jackson.

Bolt had stunned many when he said he was retiring well over a year ago before capturing three gold medals at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games.

“I remember my coach said to me when I was going to retire, if you keep talking to yourself that you are going to retire you are actually already retired, which makes it really difficult for you to prepare,” said Jackson.

Jackson, who turned 50 in February and represented Great Britain with distinction, won an Olympic silver medal in 1988 and won the World Championships twice — in 1990 and 1993.

Jackson, born in Cardiff, Wales of Jamaican parents, said Bolt had a lot on his mind.

“He was focusing on this being his last competition. He wanted it to be a good competition. I think the team around him did a good job to get him here in the state that he is in,” he noted.

“Remember he [was within] just a jiffy of taking the title and that's an amazing job that they have done to make him be where he is,” Jackson added.

Bolt was third in the 100m final in 9.95 seconds, behind second-place finisher Christian Coleman in 9.94 and champion Justin Gatlin, who ran 9.92.

Jackson went unbeaten at the European Championships for 12 years and was a two-time Commonwealth Games champion. His world record for the 110m hurdles of 12.91 seconds in 1993 stood for over 10 years. He remains the 60m hurdles record holder with 7.30, established in 1994.

Jackson, who was also renowned for being a fast starter, was fascinated that Bolt was able to finish so close to those ahead of him despite throwing his technique through the window.

“It was an exceptional race really and I think because Usain felt that he was slightly out of practice of his starting technique in that sense... I think all that was on him and when you are under pressure at a major championships, the emotional stress being your actual last race and last competition and everywhere you go people wishing you good luck and that absorbs a lot from you,” Jackson pointed out.

“I can remember when I retired how hard it was to deal with the fact that you will never ever, ever run again,” said Jackson, who retired in 2003.

He continued: “So you play all that with the slight complication of the technical issues and you end up the performance that Usain really gave us which was, he actually just drove out the blocks and ran and chased instead of him doing his beautiful normal fluid action and just take it in time and move himself through.”

“So it's a couple of many things which ended up with that performance. He was literally only just five strides from the gold medal,” he noted.

Jackson, who dabbled in sports management and coaching, and who is now a sports commentator, believes Bolt is more than just an athletics star, but a global sport star.

“It's been incredible and as a super star of sport, not just athletics he's been an amazing iconic figure. So many people really look up to and aspire to be like [him]. I would say if you see it you can be it and he showed that every and every single element you can be a great super star, a great

human being, a nice personality and you can achieve. So when you kind of put all of those into one package it's called Usain Bolt,” Jackson remarked.