

Jamaica trio in line for major prize

Jamaicans Usain Bolt, Veronica Campbell-Brown, and Yohan Blake, who all won gold medals at the recent World Championships in Athletics in Daegu, South Korea, have all been shortlisted by the IAAF for the 2011 World Athlete of the Year Award.

The trio is a part of a group of 10 male and 10 female candidates who have been selected by an IAAF panel, which consists of eight athletics experts. An email poll involving members of the world athletics family began yesterday and will close on October 23 at which point, three male and three female finalists will be determined and announced by the IAAF.

The Council of the International Athletic Foundation will then make the selection of male and female winners from the three finalists during the 2011 World Athletics Gala, which will take place in Monaco on November 12. Bolt has won the award twice in the last three years, winning in 2008 and 2009, with Asafa Powell (2006) being the only other Jamaican male to have received the accolade. Merlene Ottey, who won in 1990, is the only Jamaican woman to have won the award to date. David Rudisha and high jump great Blanka Vlasic were last year's recipients. Bolt and Blake are joined on the male shortlist by Grenadian 400m prodigy, Kirani James, who was also a gold medallist in Daegu; British long distance athlete, Mo Farah and the Kenyan pair of Rudisha and Patrick Makau. High jumper Jesse Williams, hammer thrower Koji Murofushi, triple jumper Christian Taylor and discus thrower Robert Harting complete the list. Among the females, Campbell-Brown has the likes of 100m world champion, Carmelita Jeter, for company. Four-hundred-metre champion, Amantle Montsho, 400m hurdles champion, Lashinda Demus and 100m hurdles champion, Sally Pearson, have also been shortlisted, along with double world champion at 5,000m and 10,000m, Vivian Cheruiyot. High jumper Anna Chicherova, shot putter Valerie Adams, javelin thrower Mariya Abakumova and heptathlon world champion Tatyana Chernova complete the women's list. Bolt returned from a false start in the 100m final in Daegu to successfully defend his 200m title with a powerful 19.40 seconds run, before leading Jamaica to a world record 37.04 seconds - bettering their own mark of 37.10 - ensuring that the male sprint relay title remained in Jamaica. Blake, who trains alongside the double world record holder at the University of the West Indies, made the most of Bolt's absence in that 100m final, winning in 9.92. Blake, who also lowered his 100m personal best this year to 9.82, before threatening Bolt's 200m world record mark with the second fastest time in history - 19.26 in Brussels - says he is extremely happy with the consideration. "I am honoured to be getting news of this selection," said Blake, who is currently on vacation and was also a part of the record-breaking relay team. "It's a great honour to be named among these exceptional athletes. "I have always dreamt of experiencing all of this and I am happy that my dream is coming true. I hope to continue doing well so that I will continue to make my dreams become reality," added Blake. Veronica Campbell-Brown was also successful in Daegu, winning the 200m gold medal for the first time at the world championships, as well as picking up a silver medal in the 100m, as well as the 4x100m relay.