

## Jamaican sprinter Blake happy to bide his time

Some of what Yohan Blake does comes at you at the speed of slow. He talks sparingly, quietly. He walks at a leisurely pace. It's as if he's saving all his energy for when it matters most.

Later this month, it will matter completely. The youngest man to ever win a world championship in the 100-metre dash will be out to earn his pass to the London Olympics by competing against several rivals who have all run under the 10-second mark. One of them will be the reigning Olympic champion, Usain Bolt, the fastest man on earth. To get to London and his first Games, Blake will have to finish in the top three at the Jamaican track and field nationals beginning June 28. The race, many believe, will be the ultimate 100 metres; arguably more competitive than what we'll see in the Olympic final. Is Blake, a raw-boned 22-year-old, ready for the challenge? There's no reason to think otherwise. At the Donovan Bailey Invitational track meet at Edmonton's Foote Field on Saturday, Blake bolted from the blocks in lane 5, took the lead then pushed it through to the finish. His time of 10.05 seconds was not his fastest this season, but it was strong enough to defeat his closest competitors, American Trell Kimmons and fellow Jamaican Lerone Clarke. More importantly, it was another indication the young man who stole the thunder at the 2011 International Association of Athletics Federations worlds is ready to run loudly in the weeks ahead. "I used to running in the 9s," said Blake, who has the second-fastest time this season (9.84), a snip behind Bolt's 9.82. "I felt like I was going fast but the track didn't offer me any resistance to go fast &hellip; I'm glad I came to Canada, though. It was a different experience for me." Blake's first-place showing at last year's worlds was a new one as well. In the final, a bewildered Bolt false-started and was disqualified. Blake shook off the distraction and raced across the finish line to make history. It made for a compelling story. The 5-foot-11 Blake and the 6-foot-5 Bolt are running mates under the same coach, the legendary Glen Mills, who has coached Jamaican sprinters to 71 world championship and 33 Olympic medals. Known for his showy personality, Bolt has helped tutor his soft-spoken protégé, whose penchant for heavy training has earned him a nickname, The Beast. As Blake explained: "We have wonderful chemistry, me and Usain. He gets me prepared for all of this. He motivates me and we motivate each other." Given his Jamaican roots, Bailey has followed Blake for several years and developed a friendship that resulted in Blake coming to Edmonton as preparation for London. Bailey likes what's seen in Blake's development and persona. "As sprinters, everyone has their own outward personality but beneath it all there's a heart of a lion," Bailey said. "Yohan may be the complete opposite of someone like Usain but he wants to crush you when he goes onto the track and that's what I like." Bailey, a former Olympic sprint champion, also approved of how Blake has taken complete advantage of his opportunities. "For a while, a lot of people spoke it was the fact Usain false-started as opposed to who the winner was," he added. "I was glad for Yohan that he came back and ran the second-fastest time in history in the 200 [19.26 seconds] and he continues to win at the 100." Qualifying for London will be trying. Those looking to make the cut include Asafa Powell, Nesta Carter and Michael Frater, who partnered with Bolt to win Olympic gold in the men's 4 x 100-metre relay. Blake is fully aware of what he's up against since "all those guys are running really fast." And so is Blake, who just before Edmonton clocked a 9.90 at a Diamond League race in New York. Seems this business of saving himself for race day is working pretty well. To that end, his pre-Olympic philosophy is both simple and under-stated: "Anything is possible." At top speed.