

Bolt goes back to work after 2 surprising losses

In the 100, it was the start. In the 200, it was the curve. Safe to say Usain Bolt has plenty to work on and not much time to do it - and that's before he even starts thinking about the man who kept beating him at the Jamaican Olympic trials, Yohan Blake.

When Bolt awoke Monday morning, there were 33 days until the start of the 100-meter sprints at the London Olympics, where the British sports books list him at 4-6 to win - still a favorite to earn the "living legend" status he seeks at the upcoming games but a much less prohibitive one than he was before trials began. "I never train for one person," Bolt said. "Everyone is talking about Yohan Blake and he is proving himself as one of the greatest. But for me, it's going back to training, getting back to work to and getting done what I've got to get done." If Bolt does get things back on track, will that be enough? Great question. In the 200, the smart money would say yes, at least if Sunday's performances are any gauge. Blake won in 19.80 seconds into a slight headwind - not all that impressive a time for a man who has run 19.26. Bolt, of course, holds the world record at 19.19. He ran 19.83. "They ran 19.8. That's the world-record holder who ran 19.1 and the second fastest man in history who ran 19.2," said Wallace Spearmon, who won U.S. trials Sunday in 19.82. "Honestly, I figured they'd run about 19.5 or 19.6 today. (That) caught me off guard a little. Not a bad thing, but I didn't know." In the 100, however, things appear less certain, even if Bolt does bring his game up a notch. Before Friday, Blake had never run faster than 9.82. On Friday, he finished in 9.75 - the eighth-fastest time ever. He won by .11 seconds and there was a significant amount of daylight between Blake and Bolt at the finish line. The World's Fastest Man is no stranger to bad starts - he was in the back of the field coming out of the blocks when he set the world record at the Olympics - but he has almost always been able to make up the ground. The rare exceptions: a loss to Tyson Gay during a 2010 season in which Bolt was at less than 100 percent, and this latest setback against Blake. "We'll discover what the problem is," coach Glen Mills said. "At 6-5, he's not going to be the fastest starter in the world. He doesn't have to be the first one out of the blocks to win." Yet in an interview he was doing in a different corner of the stadium, Bolt was talking about how he'd actually been working more lately on the 100, which is why his curve in the 200 was so lackluster. "But I can't blame it on that," he said. The reason he became the greatest to ever run the longer race is because of the line he has learned to take on that curve. He negotiates it so well that Blake is known to stop what he's doing when they're practicing together just to take a look. On Sunday, Bolt wobbled around the bend, and by the time he hit the straightaway, he had ground to make up. He chipped away over the last 50 meters, but when he looked to his left as he approached the finish, he grimaced. Blake beat him to the line. Again. "I'm not surprised, because I was working real hard," Blake said of his back-to-back wins. "And I know Usain will work hard as ever. It's up to me to keep working hard and keep my form going into the Olympics." From what little the world knows about Blake, who is just emerging as a star, there's not much doubt that he'll keep his head low and stay with the work. Bolt is a better-known quantity. Since he burst onto the scene with his three world records and three gold medals in Beijing - 100, 200, 400 relay - one of the story lines surrounding Bolt is that he can do the hard work when necessary, but doesn't really embrace it. Two losses in three nights have shocked him out of that mode. While trying not to act panicky about the setbacks, he conceded that he now has something altogether new to prove: that he's as good a chaser as he was a front-runner. He'll have a warmup race of sorts at a Diamond League meet in Monaco on July 20, where he's scheduled to run in the 200. Then, it's London calling. "I'm the Olympic champion," Bolt said. "I have to show the world I'm the best. I can come back. It's not like I was blown away or anything. So now, I know what I need to do to get it right."

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