

Five Athletes to Watch from Jamaica

Jamaica, a track and field powerhouse in recent years, is sending fewer than a dozen athletes to compete in the 2012 Olympic Games in London.

However, what they lack in numbers, they make up for in experience and intensity. The Jamaican track and field team, led by three-time gold medalist Usain Bolt, is likely to make headlines in London. Here are five Jamaicans whose names you need to know before you watch the games (listed alphabetically):

1. Yohan Blake: Twenty-two-year-old Yohan Blake surprised track and field fans at the 2011 World Championships by defeating countryman Usain Bolt to win the 100m event. Though they train together, this Kingston native is likely to give Bolt some stiff competition in London. He'll be running in the 100m, 200m and 4x100m relay in this his Olympic debut.
2. Usain Bolt: Jamaica's Olympic star may not shine quite as brightly in London as he did in Beijing, but there's no denying that this charismatic runner will be a contender at the 2012 Games. Bolt, one of the standouts of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, won gold in the 100m, 200m and 4x100m events, setting world records in all three events. Bolt hasn't slacked off after the Beijing Games. Since 2008, he has won five world titles and bested his world record times in all three events.
3. Veronica Campbell-Brown: It's not just the Jamaican men that excel in the running events. The Jamaican women, led by Veronica Campbell-Brown, are likely to leave their mark also. Campbell-Brown already has two Olympic gold medals to her name. She won the 200m at both the 2004 and 2008 games. She also won the 200m title at the 2011 World Championships. This is Campbell-Brown's fourth Olympic games. She carried the Jamaican flag in the opening ceremonies in Beijing and won a silver medal in 2000 in the 4x100m relay. If she wins gold in London, she'll be the only woman in history to win three consecutive gold medals in the 200m event.
4. Asafa Powell: London will be the third Olympic outing for 29-year-old Asafa Powell. Despite setting previous world records in the 100m, Powell has yet to earn an individual Olympic medal. (He was part of the gold-medal-winning 4x100m relay team in Beijing.) Though he'll face tough competition from his Jamaican teammates in the 100m, don't count Powell out for a medal in London. He has frequently run the 100m in less than 10 seconds.
5. Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce: Another defending gold medalist, Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce is looking to repeat as gold medalist in the 100m event. Fraser-Pryce, 25, also won gold in the 100m event at the 2009 World Championships.