

IAAF Top Male and Female Athlete of the Year

It should come as no surprise that Jamaican sprint sensation Usain “Lightning” Bolt is headlining the shortlist for the Rolls Royce of sports awards, the 2012 International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) Male Athlete of the Year.

The 26-year-old sprint star confounded the opposition and erased any doubts about his form and fitness at London 2012 by storming to gold in both the 100 metres and 200 metres, going on to play a key role as Jamaica smashed the world record in the 4x100 metres relays.

Bolt headed the last three men still standing after the 10-man shortlist named last month was whittled down to the final three candidates.

Aries Merritt and David Rudisha are also in contention for the prestigious award, which will be presented later this month.

American Merritt clinched gold in London in the 100 metre hurdles and then smashed the world record with a blistering run of 12.80 seconds in the second of two Samsung Diamond League finals in Brussels in September.

Rudisha also achieved an Olympic gold and world record double. The Kenyan blitzed the field in the final of the 800 metres at the Olympic Stadium in Stratford to cruise to victory in a best-ever time of 1:40.91.

Great Britain’s Jessica Ennis, New Zealand’s Valerie Adams and America’s Allyson Felix are in a three-way race for the 2012 Female Athlete of the Year.

The IAAF says Adams, Felix, Ennis emerged on top following a three-week poll.

The voting process to determine the three male and three female finalists for the World Athletes of the Year Award started on Monday October 8 and concluded on Sunday October 28.

The IAAF says votes were cast from a panel of 2,400 people around the globe representing the IAAF and IAF Council Members, the 212 IAAF Member Federations, the IAAF Committee and Commission Members, the One-day Meeting Directors, the IAAF Ambassadors, the IAAF Registered Athletes’ Representatives, International Top Athletes, selected members of the International Press and IAAF Staff Members.

The IAAF says each person voted for one man and one woman.

The three men and three women who received the most votes were selected as finalists.

The winners of the 2012 World Athlete of the Year Awards will be announced live, on stage, during a Special Awards Ceremony as part of the IAAF Centenary Celebrations, which will take place in Barcelona, on November 24.