



Gone for the Gold

Wendy Grossman
& Jon Crowcroft





DENNIS MITCHELL FINISHED: 9th, 10.64sec



Mitchell, who went on to win a bronze medal in the 100m and a gold in the 4x100m relay at the 1992 Olympics, tested positive for excessive testosterone in 1999. He blamed the test result on "two bottles of beer and sex with his wife at least four times," explaining that, it was her birthday, the lady doesn't eat meat. USA Track and Field accepted his explanation but the IAAF did not, and banned Mitchell for two years.

Mitchell also tested at the trial of his former coach that he had been injected with a human growth hormone. Today he coaches at the National Training Centre in Florida, and at his own club.

DESAI WILLIAMS FINISHED: 7th, 10.11sec



During the Cuban inquiry, established by the Canadian government following Johnson's disqualification, a Toronto doctor testified that he had supplied Williams with anabolic steroids for which the sprinter escaped punishment. It was also claimed that in 1985 Williams told a Canadian team manager about Johnson's use of steroids. Despite this, in the run-up to Seoul he trained with Johnson under coach Charlie Francis, and even he coached with him in 2004.

Both men have since graduated to coaching, but Johnson insists relations between them are frosty. "There's a rift between us now," he says.

BEN JOHNSON FINISHED: 1st, 9.79sec



Twice 50 years ahead of his time, says Ben at the race in Seoul. He has suffered bouts of depression since, especially over the past decade, but now coaches young athletes in Toronto. He's also argued that drugs are a necessity for any athlete who wants to get to the top. It's all in tatters, he says of his sport. No doubt about that.

After completing his two-year ban after Seoul, he competed at the Barcelona Olympics but failed to make the final.

He tested positive for drugs on two further occasions, and has been trainer to Diego Maradona and Colonel Gaddafi's son, Al-Saadi.

CALVIN SMITH FINISHED: 4th, 9.99sec



11sec should have been the gold medalist," says the American, who held the 100m world record between 1983 and 1987 before Ben Johnson took it from him. Smith finished fourth in Seoul, before being promoted to the bronze medal position. Like Robson Da Silva, he has never been implicated in any case of doping and describes himself as the "most sincere" of the 1988 final.

"It was a surprise he was caught," says Smith. "If they could've covered it up, they would've done. There must have been a break at the lab." A two-time 200m world champion, Smith now lives outside Tampa, Florida, where he is a social worker.

LINFORD CHRISTIE FINISHED: 2nd, 9.92sec



Christie was the first European to break the ten-second barrier. At Seoul he was awarded the silver medal following Johnson's disqualification. Four years later, he won gold when a sickly Carl Lewis failed to qualify at the US trial.

Christie matched the final again in 1996 when he was 36 and already a grandfather, but was disqualified for two false starts.

He avoided punishment for a positive test for a banned steroid after the 2000m in Seoul, but tested positive in 1999 for the anabolic steroid Nandrolone and was banned for two years, though he has always denied any wrongdoing.

CARL LEWIS FINISHED: 2nd, 9.92sec



The gold medal Lewis was eventually awarded replaced the 100m gold he won four years earlier which he shared with his father. In 2003, weeks after news broke that he had failed three drugs tests at the 1988 Olympic trials, he crashed into a wall and was convicted of driving while intoxicated. Lewis has always maintained his innocence, claiming he'd taken a shorted remedy.

A winner of nine Olympic gold medals, he now lives in Los Angeles where he runs a marketing company and is an ambassador for Nike and McDonald's. In 2011 he tried unsuccessfully to run for a seat in the New Jersey Senate.

RAY STEWART FINISHED: 8th, 10.12sec



Stewart had reached the 100m final at the 1984 Olympics and won gold in the 4x100m relay. At Seoul, however, a leg injury meant he finished last of the eight finalists. He went on to his recent personal best of 9.97 seconds, the first Jamaican to beat ten seconds.

In 2008, when Stewart was coaching several top athletes, he was implicated in a drugs scandal and charged by USA Track and Field, now the American governing body, for the alleged trafficking and administration of a prohibited substance. It followed claims he had purchased human growth hormone. Stewart continues to protest his innocence. He now lives in Texas and works in finance.

ROBSON Da SILVA FINISHED: 6th, 10.11sec



Da Silva competed in four consecutive Olympic Games (1996-04) and won two bronze medals, in the 200m at Seoul and the 4x100m relay in Atlanta. He now lives in Brazil, where it is understood he runs a diet regime. "He's got his number on Facebook," said Johnson of Da Silva. "He wants to go and visit me in Brazil. A nice guy." Da Silva is one of the ten Senegal finalists never tested for drug allegations. "I decided not to do drugs and lose," he said. "But I sleep well at night."

The Race That Shook the World is an BBC 4 Saturday month. The Great Race in History by Richard Moore (Wiley) is out now.



Before

In April 2025, Guardian published results of reanalysis of urine and blood samples stored since 2012 London Olympics.

Since, in women's 1500m, new candidate for "the dirtiest race in history", bronze Maryam Yusuf Jamal upgraded to gold; fifth place finisher Abeba Aregawi given revised bronze medal in 2024; then silver in 2025; and sixth place finisher Shannon Rowbury finally awarded the bronze.



After

- Who's on First
- What's on Second
- I Don't Know is on Third

Aslı Çakır Alptekin**	DQ 2015 (blood doping); sanction 2004 (illegal substances)
Gamze Bulut	DQ 2016 (ABP)
Maryam Yusuf Jamal	Awarded gold 2017
Tatyana Tomashova**	Awarded silver 2018 ; DQ 2024
Abeba Aregawi**	Awarded silver 2025; sanction 2016 (meldonium)
Shannon Rowbury*	ESPN 2017; awarded bronze 2025
Natallia Kareiva	DQ 2014 (ABP)
Lucia Klocová	Now officially 4th
Ekaterina Kostetskaya	DQ 2016 (ABP)
Lisa Dobriskey*	BBC 2012, immediately after the race; now officially 5th
Laura Weightman	Now officially 6th
Hellen Onsando Obiri	Now officially 7th



You can never step in
the same river twice

- In practice, tactics and strategy change with competitors
 - Many are listed at<https://www.momentumsports.co.uk/TtMDTactics.asp>
 - front running or kicker would completely depend on others