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EQUALITY  
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Media portrayal of women  
athletes with innate  
variations in sex characteristics

Dr. Payoshni Mitra

30.11.2022



**Achieve gender equality and  
empower all women and girls**



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## Terminology

Innate variations in sex characteristics—including genitals, chromosomes, gonads, hormone production, or hormone sensitivity—are sometimes referred to in policy and medical literature as “Disorders of Sex Development” or “Differences of Sex Development (DSD).” Variations in sex characteristics are also sometimes referred to as “intersex,” which, as explained in a 2019 UN background note: “Intersex is an umbrella term used to describe a wide range of innate bodily variations of sex characteristics.”

All athletes mentioned in the course of this discussion were assigned female sex at birth, brought up as girls and have always competed & identified as women.



# Bolt after one more title: Arise, Sir Usain

● Jamaican jokes that knighthood could reward latest milestone

**Rick Broadbent**  
Athletics Correspondent, Berlin

Another day, another miracle. Usain Bolt continued his habit of doing extraordinary things with the air of a man in search of a hammock on the porch, but this time he had to get his hands dirty.

I thought it wouldn't hurt to try," he said after dismantling another world record in jaw-dropping fashion. "If Queen Elizabeth knighted me, then I would get the title Sir Usain Bolt. That would be nice."

It was a year to the day since Bolt broke Michael Johnson's 200 metres record in the Olympic final. He has been surfing a wave of goodwill since, smashing records and crashing cars, but if his destruction of his 100 metres record on Sunday was stunning, this record on Sunday was stunning, this appeared more of a challenge.

Before the race Bolt exuded all the tension of a beach holiday, donning a T-shirt with the slogan, "Ich bin ein Berliner", in homage to the over-sized foam mascot that has been terrorising these World Championships, and laughing "Come and get me," he mouthed into a camera.

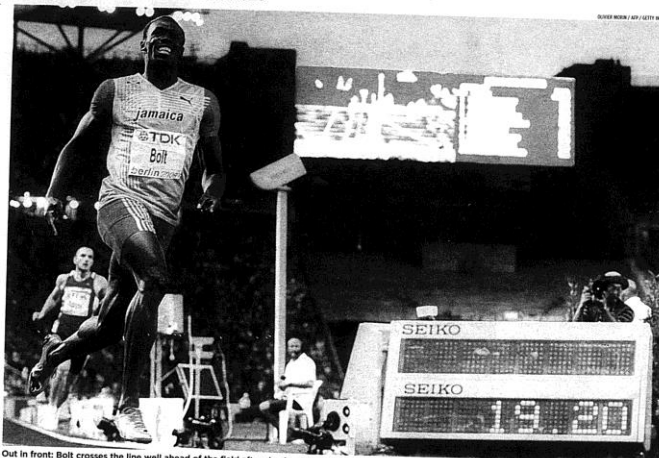
However, for 19.9sec, he worked like never before, shaving a huge 0.1sec off the landmark he had set in the Bird's Nest. Johnson had previewed the race by saying Bolt was tired, but lethargy has never looked so impressive. "I definitely showed people that my world records in Beijing were not a joke," he said. "I was trying my heart out and I don't think I'm going to be able to walk for a day."

Bolt, 23 today, is motivated by titles, which is why his most seismic feats have come at the leading championships. In Beijing he took the greatest show-cum-corporate carve-up on earth and distilled it into a one-man circus. Here, he was the undisputed star turn. Johnson, the former fartaway figure of the 200 metres, claimed that his own dominance had a numbing effect on the public.

"If I won a race, nobody was standing up and cheering," he said. "I couldn't win but I could lose." The peculiarity of Bolt is people love his dominance. No contests have become the hottest ticket and, with Tyson Gay, the hitherto fastest man over the distance this year, withdrawing earlier in the week, the outcome was never in doubt. All that mattered was the time.

He got off to a flying start. He had passed Wallace Spearman, his American friend, within five strides. Nobody else was involved. Alonso Edward, of Panama, was second in 19.8sec. Spearman third, in 19.85. Two others ran close behind, in 19.95. Nobody cared.

Incredibly, there was a benign conditions might wind, so with benign conditions might this have been a near mythical sub-19-second run. "I don't know the limit in the 200 metres," Bolt said. "But I don't put limits on myself." He prepared by sitting in his room playing video games. He said he wanted to



Out in front: Bolt crosses the line well ahead of the field after shaving 0.1sec off his 200m world record that he set at the Beijing Olympics last year



## Fast show

● Five men recorded times below 20 seconds in the greatest 200 metres race of all time: Usain Bolt (Jama) 19.9, 2. Alonso Edward (Pan) 19.85, 3. Wallace Spearman (Pan) 19.85, 4. Shawn Crawford (US) 19.95, 5. Steve Mullings (Jam) 19.95, 6. Charles Clark (US) 20.39, 7. Ramil Guliyev (Aze) 20.61, 8. David Alerte (Fra) 20.68.

The race was run into a headwind of minus 0.3 metres/second.

celebrate by going to sleep, but he will be back in action tomorrow in the 4x100 metres relay final.

"I am ready for another world record there," he said. "But I don't know if my team-mates are." The question then is where he goes after. He believes many can lower the 100 metres mark to 9.4sec and, given that he said he is not in as good condition as last year, he is probably right.

The 200 metres has always been Bolt's baby. It is the event he has worked at for years. He lanced the 100 metres, but Glen Mills, his urine coach, told him he would only allow

him to do so if he broke the Jamaican record for the 200 metres. Hence, he clocked 19.7sec in 2007, claiming Don Quarrie's 36-year-old record, and the stage was set for sporting history.

The accolades have been plentiful. Davis Patton, last in the 100 metres said there were no words to describe him, but tried anyway: "It's like he's created a game person. He's like a cheat code. That's how good he is."

It was an innocent use of a word that has blighted the sport, and Bolt hopes that his longevity will make people "stop asking those questions."

He is certainly a one-off, in terms of talent, appeal and also earning potential. His fees here have taken his income to \$320,000 (about £195,000) for the past four days. The love-in goes on and he has proved that he is the master at topping the untappable. He says he is trying to stay away from the 400 metres, but it seems a matter of time before he is rethinking perceptions about the quarter mile too.

A year ago in Beijing, he said: "Michael Johnson revolutionised the sport. I just changed it a little." The times are changing.

## Setting a record pace

Fifteen months in which Bolt rocked the world of athletics

**2008: May 31** Breaks world record in the 100 metres at the Reebok Grand Prix in New York, recording a time of 9.72sec.

**August 16** Wins 100 metres gold at Beijing Olympics, lowering his previous world record to 9.69sec.

**August 20** Completes Olympic sprint double, winning the 200 metres in a world-record time of 19.30sec.

**August 22** Runs third leg as Jamaica win Olympic 4x100 metres relay victory in world-record time.

**2009: April 29** Escapes serious injury when his BMW skids off a road and overturns in Jamaica.

**August 16** Wins gold medal in 100 metres at World Championships in world-record time of 9.58sec.

**Yesterday** Takes second gold medal in Berlin, with world-record time of 19.9sec over 200 metres.

# Rutherford record tops productive day for promising young Britons

**Rick Broadbent**

Greg Rutherford suffered sunburn at the 2006 Commonwealth Games and the Beijing Olympics in the back of an ambulance with kidney and lung infections, but he avoided further calamity last night and nightingale a British record for good measure.

The qualifying mark of 8.30 metres for the long jumper from Milton

Keynes would have merited a medal in each of the past four World Championships, and took him into tomorrow's final. It proved he is back in rule health after various nightmares including eight bouts of tonsillitis in a year and he had considered quitting the sport. "I started to resent it," he said.

Even this year, he has been blighted by injuries and illness. "I got a torn hamstring seven weeks ago and

thought that was it, but [yesterday's jump] felt great," he said. "I know I can jump further." Having seen his record taken away by a centimetre, Chris Tomlinson also qualified, with 8.06 metres, the first time that Britain has had two finalists in the long jump.

It was a night when the young Britons showed their potential. William Sharman was fourth and ran a personal best of 13.30sec in the

110 metres hurdles final, a race won by Ryan Brathwaite, of Barbados.

Emily Freeman's personal best of 22.64sec saw her into tonight's 200 metres final. Mo Farah qualified from his 5,000 metres heat and the only Britisher for Britain was Paula Radcliffe's decision not to run in Sunday's marathon. The 2005 champion said she did not want to go herself "on the line" unless she felt 100 per cent fit. Despite

a good time in the New York City Half Marathon last week, her first race for ten months because of surgery to remove a bunion, she withdrew and is targeting the World Half Marathon title in Birmingham on October 11.

There was no joy for the partisan German crowd as Arane Friedrich came third in the high jump behind Blanka Vlasic, of Croatia, who won with a jump of 2.04 metres.

# Why I steal other women's husbands

15 sparkling pages of your new-look Femal Magazine STARTS ON PAGE 41



**Cameron's drastic move to curb binge-drinking: 30p on a can of strong lager and 50p on alcopops**

# TOPICS TO HIKE ALCOHOL TAXES

By James Chapman  
Political Editor

**THE Tories have unveiled radical plans to crack down on the binge-drinking culture.**

They would treble taxes on alcopops and strong lagers and ciders, outlaw 'loss leader' sales in supermarkets and strip takeaways and food stores of late-night licences.

Such tax changes would mean a four-pack of extra-strong lager such as Carlsberg Special Brew costs an extra £1.30, a bottle of powerful cider an extra £1.25 and a bottle of alcopop an extra 50p. But duty on low alcohol products would be slashed.

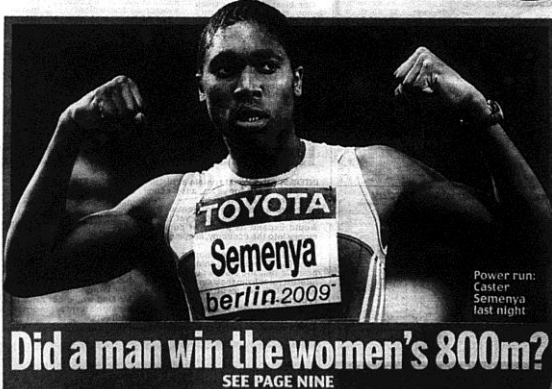
The party says wines, spirits and 90 per cent of the beer and cider consumed in Britain would be unaffected.

Tory leader David Cameron believes 'serious changes' are needed amid growing evidence that the availability of cheap alcohol is wrecking people's health and fuelling violence and anti-social behaviour.

Alcohol-related crime is estimated to cost the economy £7 billion a year, and almost half of victims of violence say their attacker had been drinking. Yet alcohol is around two-thirds cheaper in real terms than in 1980.

Mr Cameron spoke out after joining police on patrol in Hull. He said: "Drink-related violence and crime are a massive problem. We need to look at the unbelievable availability of very cheap drink, getting three times cheaper for £1.99, at all hours of day and night. We've got to

Turn to Page 4



Power run: Caster Semenya last night

**Did a man win the women's 800m?**  
SEE PAGE NINE



## A tale of two exceptional athletes

Caster Semenya and Usain Bolt made headlines in 2009 World Championships in Berlin. However, one was revered for being extraordinary and the other had to face scrutiny and humiliation for being too fast to be a woman.





**BBC SPORT**

## Caster Semenya says IAAF used her as a human guinea pig and fears others at risk

🕒 18 June 2019 | Athletics



Semenya has won the Olympic 800m title twice and the world title three times

2019



## Scrutiny reversed

How media portrayal changed from 2009 to now because of the resilience shown by some athletes and the relentless work of some advocates, scholars, legal practitioners and others



## How Sprinter Dutee Chand is Smashing Patriarchy in Sports and Society in India

In 2014, the 23-year-old challenged a rule that forbids women with “too much” testosterone from competing. In 2019, the sports star has also become a queer icon.

By [Pallavi Pundir](#)

11 December 2019



VICE Asia is calling 2019 "The Year We



DISCOVER



### PLAYER'S OWN VOICE

POV HOME ▼ PODCAST



### Who is a woman, and who gets to decide?

'Once your gender is questioned, once you are publicly humiliated, people don't forget'

By Phyllis Ellis for CBC Sports

June 26, 2022

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Global development

## World Athletics accused over 'abusive sex testing' of athletes from global south

Human Rights Watch says testing regulations are demeaning and target women based on racial stereotypes

**Kaamil Ahmed**



Sebastian Coe's World Athletics could face legal action with an intersex athlete seeking 'justice' amid claims competitors were coerced into surgery to comply with testosterone production rules

By Robert Dineen For The Mail On Sunday  
22:41 21 Aug 2021, updated 15:51 22 Aug 2021



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Asher-Smith is the reigning world champion in the 200m  
ASHLEY LANDIS/ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATHLETICS

## Dina Asher-Smith qualifies for 200m final and will race intersex athlete Aminatou Seyni

Matt Lawton, Eugene



Share



Dina Asher-Smith qualified fourth-fastest for the final of the women's 200m with a season's best time — and she will be joined by Aminatou Seyni, the Nigerien athlete with “difference in sex development” whose presence could cause controversy.

Asher-Smith, the reigning world champion over 200m, ran 21.96sec to finish second behind Tamara Clark (21.95sec). The 26-year-old edged out Elaine Thompson-Herah, the double Olympic champion, whose time of 21.97sec was enough to qualify as a fastest loser. In the first semi-final, Shericka Jackson emerged as the clear favourite; the Jamaican clocked 21.67ssec, the tenth fastest time in history.



Seyni — who was fastest in the heats with a time of 21.98sec — qualified sixth fastest for the final, running 22.04sec to finish second behind Jackson in the first heat. [Namibia's Beatrice Masilingi](#), a DSD athlete who made last year's Olympic final, finished last in her semi-final after appearing to injure her hamstring.



Seyni's presence in the final places the position of DSD athletes in elite sport under scrutiny again. In response to the achievements of South Africa's 800m runner Caster Semenya, World Athletics, the sport's governing body, introduced regulations in 2019 that prevent DSD athletes — who in some cases are women born with male genitalia who can also display male testosterone levels — from competing in women's events over distances between 400m and a mile, unless they use testosterone suppression medication. Semenya is due to run at the World Championships in the 5000m. That prompted many DSD athletes who had been competing over 400m to drop down to 200m.

GL



## But yet, scrutiny continues

Scrutiny of women athletes continue even when they are not winning medals.  
Sensationalizing headlines often not backed by substance in the text.



## Payoshni Mitra



### Sebastian Coe's comments show that women DSD athletes' wellbeing is not enough of a priority

The World Athletics president's differing responses to Keely Hodgkinson's and Christine Mboma's silver medals is deeply concerning

PAYOSHNI MITRA

6 Aug 2021, 9:42am



### COMMENT

Annet Negesa: 'I cannot go back to the body I had before I was operated on, but I can try to stop other women going through what I did'

Ugandan athlete Annet Negesa welcomes new IOC regulations and urges World Athletics to end 'discriminatory' policy

**ANNET NEGESA**

18 November 2021 • 7:30am





So does our fight back...

Athletes & advocates & allies continue to be more vocal about the harmful practices against women with innate variations in sex characteristics



Thank you

[www.genderequalitysport.org](http://www.genderequalitysport.org)