**Michael Duane Johnson**

Michael Duane Johnson is an American professional athlete, specializing in sprint running. He was born on 13th September 1967 in Dallas, United States. Johnson’s father was a truck driver and his mother was a teacher. Johnson released an autobiography called ‘Slaying The Dragon’ where he told of how his mother and father had brought Johnson and his siblings up. His brothers and sisters became a teacher, a school counselor, a systems analyst, and a special agent for US Department of Defence.

Michael Johnson attended Skyline High School, and later Baylor University in Waco. At Baylor University Johnson trained as a runner under coach Clyde Hart. During that time he won various NCAA titles for indoor and outdoor sprint races. He also broke the record for his school of the 200 metre race in his first ever competitive run, running it in a time of 20.41. In the 4 x 400 metre relays he ran in a time of 43.5 for one section of the race. Johnson is nicknamed 'The Duck' because he runs upright, and 'Superman' because of his outstanding achievements.

He wanted to enter into the Seoul Olympics of 1988, however he was unable to do so due to an injury at the beginning of the trials. He didn’t manage to qualify for the 400 metres and withdrew from the 200 metre race. The following year though, he snatched 2nd place at the USA Indoor Championship, and runner up at the NCAA Outdoor Championships in the 4 x 400, running in a fantastic time of 43.8. He also won a 200 metre race in an American, setting a record with his time of 20.59.

In 1990, Johnson graduated from Baylor University, and left with a bachelor’s degree in Business Studies. At that time he was the first ever to hold the top spot in both the 200 metre and 400 metre races. The following year he ran the 200 metre race in Tokyo where he won the world title. The 1992 Summer Olympics were coming up when both Johnson and his agent got food poisoning while eating in Spain, so Johnson became weak. He was the favourite with the bookmakers to win, but because he had been ill he only made 6th place at the semis, and didn’t make it into the finals for the 200 metre races.

One of the most brilliant achievements of Johnson was the 1996 US Olympic trials, where he ran the 200 metres in 19.66 seconds breaking the world record that had been held by Pietro Mennea for almost two decades. He qualified for the Olympics of course, and in the 400 metre race he came first winning gold and breaking the Olympic record with a time of 43.49 seconds. Then in the 200 metre race he took gold again, making another world record with his 19.32 second time.

Johnson has been nicknamed ‘The Man with the Golden Shoes’ since the Olympics in Atlanta, as he ran wearing a pair of golden Nike running shoes. Johnson was one of the Olympic torch bearers in the relay in the run up to the London 2012 Olympics, carrying it to Stonehenge and Salisbury Cathedral in Wiltshire.

# Usain Bolt

Bolt has one of the most apt names in athletic running. He is a Jamaican born athletic sprinter, and was born on 21st August 1986 in Trelawny, Jamaica. He has won three gold medals in his time for his performances in the World Games and Olympic Games. Currently the age of 24, Bolt is the youngest runner so far to have won Olympic gold medals. Bolt is known for his practical jokes, and has been in trouble for taking things a little too far at times.

He grew up with his parents in his home town and his two siblings, a brother and sister. As a child he played football and cricket with his brother, and his parents ran a greengrocers. After realising how quick he was when running, Bolt turned his attention to running. He started his career at the William Knibb High School where he was coached by Pablo McNeil and Dwayne Barrett. In 2001, he won his first school championships where he received a medal for coming 2nd place in the 200 metre race, finishing in 22.04 seconds.

Later in 2001 Bolt participated in the CARIFTA Games and represented Jamaica and won a silver medal for his country in both the 200 metre and 400 metre events. Here he set his personal best time for the 400 metre race distance of 48.28. As mentioned earlier, Bolt was a bit of a joker, and he ended up being arrested before the CARIFTA even when he hid in a van instead of training.

Perhaps if he’d have trained he may have hit gold instead of silver. The same year he went on to take part in the 2001 IAAF World Youth Championships which were held in Hungary, but he was unable to make it to the finals. In spite of this he still set a new personal best.

Later he set more records  in the Central American Championships with a time of 21.12 for the 200 metre distance, and again in the Caribbean Junior Championships with a time of 47.12 seconds. Bolt was then awarded a place at Kingston after the Prime Minister noticed his abilities, and he was able to train with the Jamaica Amateur Athletic Association.

Bolt entered into the 2002 World Junior Championships where he won the 200 metre distance race. He then became the youngest gold medal winner. In the same year he ran the relay as part of the Jamaican team twice, and both times his team won silver medals. He was then awarded the IAAF Rising Star Award. The following year he won a gold medal for his efforts in the World Youth Championships at the age of just 17.

Bolt’s biggest achievement was in the 2008 Beijing Olympics where he won three gold medals for the 200 metres race, 400 metres race and the 4 x 100 metre relays. In 2009 he also won three more gold medals in the World Championships in Germany for the 100 metre, 200 metre and 4 x 100 metre relays.

Bolt then "re-defined everything", by following up that impressive performance with a successful defense of his 200 metres gold medal with a time of 19.32 seconds, followed by fellow Jamaicans second-place Yohan Blake at 19.44 and bronze medalist Warren Weir at 19.84. With this, Bolt became the first man in history to defend both the 100 m and 200 m Olympic sprint titles. In fact, Bolt was so comfortably ahead near the finish that he was able to slow down, put his left finger to his mouth and "tell everyone to shush."As soon as Bolt crossed the finish line, he did five push-ups, one for each of his Olympic gold medals.  When asked about his greatness as a sprinter following his victory, Bolt placed himself in the category of Michael Jordan and Muhammad Ali, in their respective sports.

# Tyson Gay

Tyson Gay born on 9th August 1982 is an American born sprint runner. He was born in Kentucky as an only child to his parents as a couple, Daisy Gay and Greg Mitchell although his mother had children from previous relationships.

Tyson Gay’s grandmother had been a runner in her youth, and his mother had also competed in running events in her younger years.

Gay attended Lafayette High School where he pushed himself in his training, and subsequently broke the record in the 200 metre distance race. By the time he was in his final year of school, he had become a much stronger and meaningful runner and had decided to pay the most attention to the 100 metres. He ran in the State Championships in Kentucky and won the race, setting a new record. Gay later failed his exams so was unable to get into sports college.

In the 2001 State Championships he ran again winning a gold medal for his performance in the 100 metre run. He beat the record with a time of 10.60 seconds, and this also became his personal best time. Tyson Gay then went to Barton County Community College and met his running partner, Veronica Campbell-Brown, before later attending the University of Arkansas.

It was at the Arkansas University where he ran in his very first NCAA games, but he only managed 4th place in a 60 metre run, and 5th in the 200 metres. In 2004 he tried for the Olympics and got through. He ran in the semi-finals but he did not do well enough to get into the finals. In his last year before going professional, he ran the 60 metre race giving himself a new personal best as well as breaking the record. Gay also participated once more in the NCAA games where his team won.

Gay’s first professional appearance was celebrated after a silver medal in the 200 metre race at the USA Outdoor Championships, and he went on to enter into the World Championships in Athletics in 2005, where he took 4th position at the finish line. The same year he ran in the Rieti Grand Prix and finished in 10.0 seconds over 100 metres, which was the best time for the season. His final run for 2005 was in the World Athletics, when he won the 200 metres race  which was 2005’s 2nd fastest time.

His performances stayed consistent as he won the gold medal at the IAAF World Athletics in 2006, and then came first the same year in the IAAF World Cup. 2007 saw Gay win 1st place in the World Championships in Athletics which was held in Japan in the 100 metre race, the 200 metre race and the 4 x 100 metre relay race.

In 2008 Gay tried out for the Olympics which were due to take place in Beijing and was thrilled when he got through. He only made it to the semi finals however in the 100 metre race, and his team was disqualified from the relay.

In London 2012 Olympics, the 4 Ã— 100 metres relay final brought Gay his first Olympic medal and an American record time of 37.04 seconds alongside Trell Kimmons, Gatlin and Ryan Bailey. Despite equaling the previous world record mark, the Americans took the silver medal behind Jamaica, whose team improved that record by two tenths of a second.

# Edwin Moses

Edwin Moses is one of the most inspirational athletes of our time. He is an American track and field athlete, and was born on 31st August 1955 in Dayton, Ohio. He is well known for being an Olympic champion.

Moses started out as a physicist from Morehouse College, Atlanta, and he is renowned for using his technical scientific knowledge to aid in his athletic training and performances in his specialist event, which is the 400 metre hurdles. The scientific knowledge that he had also helped him to develop the best drug testing systems to test for drugs in sporting events.

He began his athletic career during high school when he competed with his peers. He went on to compete in the school’s 180 yard hurdles and the 440 yard dash. As his parents wanted him to be well educated, he entered into a scholarship in engineering at Morehouse College.

There was no track at Morehouse College, so Moses did his training using the local public high school’s facilities while he was studying, in preparation for the 1976 Olympic trials. He won the trials for the 400 metre hurdle race and set a new American record with a time of 48.30 seconds. This was his first entry into the Olympics.

The Olympics were held in Montreal, Canada. Moses shot to fame after winning the race as well as breaking both the Olympic and the world records with an astounding time of 47.63 seconds. This was the beginning of a shining career and he was by far the best hurdles athlete for the next 10 years. During that decade he won 122 hurdles races.

At the 1980 Olympics in Moscow, he was unable to compete due to a US boycott of the Olympics. But he continued to show his one of a kind talent in Milan when he broke the 2nd world record with a new time of 47.13 seconds. Then in Koblenz, Germany 3 years on he broke his own record once more with an astonishing time of 47.02 seconds. He remained the record holder until 1992.

In 1979 Moses was working as an engineer but left his job to become a full time athlete. He made it his business to improve training conditions and financial support for American athletes when he became Amateur Sports Act in Congress in 1978. This made him even more of a star in the athletic world. He also helped to develop and implement the Athletes Trust Fund Program in an effort to offset training costs and receive income. The trust fund enabled athletes to create accounts which were to be administered by their sporting bodies. They were then able to receive direct payments to cover training costs without damaging their eligibility for the Olympics.

Throughout the late 80s Moses spent most of his time developing drug testing systems to stop athletes from cheating in races, as he was convinced that some athletes were still managing to slip the net. He was then nominated as a member of the International Olympic Medical Committee Medical Commission.In 2008, Moses presented the Dayton Literary Peace Prize's Lifetime Achievement Award to Martin Luther King, Jr., biographer Taylor Branch. In May 2009, the University of Massachusetts Boston awarded Moses an honorary doctorate for his efforts to maintain the integrity of Olympic sports and for his use of sports as a tool for positive social change.

# Carl Lewis

Carl Lewis is one of the greatest athletes in the world. He is known for his world records in running as well as his records in the long jump. Carl Lewis was born in Birmingham though he was actually brought up in Willingboro, New Jersey.

Carl Lewis started participating in long jump events when he was just 13 years old. Carl also started to perform in sprinting events at a young age as he had the capability of high sprinting speeds. Eventually Lewis was selected for the U.S. Olympic team, but America boycotted the games in Moscow and as a result, Lewis’s debut was postponed.

Lewis received the James E. Sullivan Award for the best athlete in 1981 and in the World Championships in 1983, he made his mark by winning in the 100m, long jump and the 4 x 100m relay events. Carl Lewis then went on to become the undisputable champion in the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. He won 4 titles in all including the 200m race and he also tied Jesse Owens’ record which was set back in 1936. He repeated the spectacular performance of 1983 in Rome in 1987, and then in the 1988 Seoul Olympics he went on to win 4 more golds.

In this last competition he may have had a good challenger in Ben Johnson but Ben was disqualified for doping and this cleared the field for Lewis. Carl himself had failed a dope test, but he was cleared by the IAAF. He was however beaten by Joe DeLoach in the 200m sprint event and in the 4 x 100m relay event the U.S. team was disqualified in the heats where Lewis was not even able to run due to bad exchange of the baton by the other players. This was quite the electrifying year for all those involved in the Olympics.

Then came the season of 1991. Carl Lewis and Leroy Burrell dominated all the sprinting events. In the races before the World Championships in Japan, Burrell broke Carl Lewis’s record as he finished 100 m in 9.90s but in the World Championships, Carl paid him back by breaking the record of 9.90s in 9.86s.

After 1991, Lewis’s career in the sprinting events continued to fade off, but he was still the best in the long jump events. However, his compatriot, Mike Powell won the long jump event in Tokyo, beating him and also breaking Bob Beamon’s record from 1968. In 1992, Carl Lewis was set for another tough dual with Beamon. But this time it was Lewis who took home the honors of winning.

After this event, Carl Lewis was unable to win any other major events during those games. But in 1996, at the age of 35 years, he again made a comeback by winning the long jump event and thus became the only athlete in the world winning this particular event 4 consecutive times. He was the third Olympian to achieve the record after Al Oerter for discus throw and Paul Elvström for yachting.

Lewis proved to very outspoken fellow and in 2003, he admitted that he had resorted to taking banned substances on 3 occasions in the 1988 Olympic trials. He claimed that he had ingested the banned substances as well as some herbal supplements. He was however allowed to compete in the Seoul Olympics, as the Olympic committee ruled that the intake of stimulants by him was inadvertent and not performance enhancing. In the Seoul Olympics he won the 100m gold after Ben Johnson was disqualified for taking drugs that did affect his performance.

All in all Carl Lewis is one of the most world renowned Olympians of all time. While he did cause a stir he will always be remembered for his hard work and perseverance.

Directions – For the Famous American Track Athlete that you have, answer the following questions in your group.

1. For your athlete, write down the main idea of the entire article. Give five details to support your answer.
2. List the 5 most important facts of your athlete
3. Make a timeline of the 10 most important events in your athlete’s life.
4. What would be an appropriate title for your athlete’s story?
5. Using examples from both this article and Raymond’s Run, state how Squeaky would feel about your athlete.