

## Well Done, Elaine!



A fine season by Jamaica's Elaine Thompson-Herah has gotten the acclaim it deserves, with her selection to the top five nominees for the prestigious Female World Athlete of the Year. With four wind legal sub-11 clockings for the 100 metres in 2020, Thompson-Herah reached two other important landmarks as she tuned up for the rescheduled Tokyo Olympics.

Her four fast 100 metres races - 10.88 seconds on August 8; 10.92 on the 22; 10.85 in Rome to take the world lead on September 17 and a season ending 10.87 in Doha on September 25 - pushed her career sub-11 total to 34. Only six other women have broken the 11 second barrier more often.

The top three on that list are all Jamaicans - Merlene Ottey with 67 sub-11 times, Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce on 54 and Veronica Campbell-Brown on 49.

Elaine's Rome race put her level with East Germany's 1983 World Champion Marlies Gohr on 33. The tie was broken in Doha a week later.

When you add her wind-aided 10.73 seconds time done at Jamaica College on July 25, her undefeated 100 metre season looks even better.

2020 is also the sixth consecutive season in which the 2016 double Olympic champion has broken 11 seconds. Given the pain she has endured due to Achilles tendon trouble, her consistency is noteworthy. In fact, only three other women – Fraser-Pryce, young American Sha'Carri Richardson and Bahamian wonder Shaunae Miller-Uibo - ran under 11 seconds all year. By comparison, 8 women achieved the feat in 2019 and 17 did so in 2018.

The last time there were as few as four ladies to break 11 seconds was 2007.

Now 28, Thompson-Herah also clocked 22.19 seconds for the 200 metres, to be the third fastest in the world over the distance.

Thompson-Herah is in the running for the top award for the first time since 2016 when Ethiopian Almaz Ayana, winner of the Olympic 10,000 metres in world record time, took the top spot. Similarly, the remaining 2020 Female World Athlete of the Year nominees include three distance dynamos. Ayana's compatriot Letesenbet Gidey who set a world record of 14:06.62 over 5000 metres, Ethiopia born Dutchwoman Sifan Hassan who covered a world record of 18,930 metres in the one hour run and set a European record of 29:36.67 over 10,000 metres, the fourth fastest performance in history, and Kenyan Peres Jepchirchir who won the World Half Marathon title and twice broke the World Half Marathon record.

The other top five nominee is triple jump World Champion Yulimar Rojas of Venezuela. Undefeated, Rojas stretched the world indoor triple jump record to 15.43 metres.

They are worthy candidates but whatever happens when World Athletics announces the winner on December 5, Elaine's 2020 is a step in the right direction for her. She is consistently fast and with the Tokyo Olympics hopefully around the corner, that augurs well for the MVP Track Club star. Like Fraser-Pryce who did 10.86 seconds in 2020, the girl from Banana Ground is among the early sprint favourites for Tokyo.