

## Laidlaw-Allen wins OFSAA sprint gold medals, nearly matches long-standing Canadian record

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Scarborough boasts the fastest high school student in the province - and very nearly the fastest in Canada, ever.

Marlon Laidlaw-Allen, of Scarborough's Bendale Business and Technical Institute, closed out his high school career in stellar fashion at the provincial track and field championships, held in Brockville June 7 to 9, sweeping both the senior boys 100-metre and 200m races.

But it was his winning time in the 100m, at 10.42 seconds, that raised eyebrows, just 1/100th of a second off the mark (10.41) set by Canadian sprinting great Carlton Chambers in 1994, which still stands as the record for both the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA) as well as the Canadian inter-scholastic mark.

No one was more surprised at how close he was to the mark than Laidlaw Allen himself:

"I was more surprised than anything else because my start was terrible," said Laidlaw-Allen in a phone interview a few days later back at Bendale. "As I got myself up and running I'm saying to myself, there's no way I'm leaving high school without getting two medals so I had to buckle down and push, and push so hard.

"And when I won, I was like - I can't believe it."

Needless to say, he was "not at all" bummed out about missing the record.

He then closed out his high school career winning the 200m in 21.09 seconds.

It marked the third double medal haul at OFSAA for Laidlaw-Allen.

Last year in Sudbury, he accomplished a gold-bronze combo, winning the 200m sprint and finishing third in the 400m. An injury during the trials prevented him from qualifying for the 100m that year.

And back in 2009, at the junior level, he pulled off the same double-gold combo, not only winning, but also breaking the OFSAA record in both the 100 and 200m events, both of which were subsequently broken by fellow Toronto sprinter Andre Ford-Azonwanna from North York's Cardinal James McGuigan.

Fittingly, this year, with Laidlaw-Allen back for a fifth year, he was able to compete directly against Ford-Azonwanna.

Ford-Azonwanna won the showdown at the regional level and Laidlaw-Allen conceded it was on his mind "a little bit because he beat me in Metros so I'm like (thinking) to myself he's going to be there in OFSAA, I've got to prepare for him, and I've got to train hard and focus."

Ford-Azonwanna was also fastest in OFSAA qualifying, but ended up with the bronze medal behind Laidlaw-Allen.

Laidlaw-Allen, who represented Canada at the 2009 World Youth Games, will not get too much time to enjoy his latest double medal haul, or, indeed, his graduation, with a couple of high profile events quickly coming up.

First of all, he will compete at Canada's track and field Olympic trials in Calgary June 27 to 30 and then he will compete for Canada at the IAAF World Junior Championships in Athletics in Spain July 10 to 15.

His goal at Canada's Olympic trials: "I honestly hope to PB (personal best) and make it to the final - or just PB."

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Scarborough high schools accounted for three double medalists at the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA) track and field championships which ran June 7 to 9 in Brockville.

Leading the way were two senior double gold medalists:

\* Marlon Laidlaw-Allen from Bendale Bendale Business and Technical Institute won both the senior boys 100m and 200m sprints in 10.42 and 21.09 seconds, respectively (see story).

\* Brittany Crew from Birchmount Park Collegiate not only won the senior girls shot put (14.86m) but set a new OFSAA record in the process, and also won the discus throw (44.24).

\* and Chad Elliott of Birchmount Park CI won both the midgets boys 100m (11.20s) and long jump (6.11m).

Other gold medalists included:

\* Evan Karakolis of Birchmount Park CI in senior boys Javelin (67.51m);

\* and the Birchmount Park open girls 4x400m relay team (3:55.92). Team members included Tashuana Yapchung, Ashley McDonald, Takesha Ellis, Krystine Sora, Katrina Innanen, Tekel Gabriel.

Here are the other silver medal winners:

\* Matthew Ing, Birchmount Park, in junior boys javelin (52.19);

\* and Tashuana Yapchung, Birchmount Park, in senior girls 400m (55.78);

And here are the other bronze medal winners:

\* **Steven Ajayi, St. Patrick SS, in senior boys 200m (21.49);**

\* **Andrew Costello, St. Patrick SS, in senior boys 800m (1:53.31);**

\* Deandre Smith, R.H. King Academy, in junior boys 400m (51.43);

\* and D'Andra Layne, Lester B. Pearson, in junior girls 200m (24.98).