



Great Britain's men and women celebrate after winning gold and silver in their respective 4x100m relay finals at the World Championships.

Picture: PA

# Mitchell-Blake brings home an historic relay gold, as Asha enjoys silver lining

**Everyone else knew it, but not Nethaneel Mitchell-Blake.**

The Newham & Essex Beagle crossed the finish line of the 4x100m relay final at the World Championships 0.05 seconds ahead of American Christian Coleman, but the roar was not enough to convince him.

Baton in mouth, biting down to quell the tension, London Stadium's scoreboard soon told Mitchell-Blake what he wanted to see – queue the pandemonium.

The 23-year-old, who grew up in the same borough that hosted the 2012 Olympic Games and these World Championships, was now a world champion too.

And when it was confirmed, Mitchell-Blake hared around the track, not knowing what to do and at such a speed he was in danger of setting a new personal best without even trying.

He soon found team-mates CJ Ujah, Adam Gemili and Danny Talbot and celebrations continued into the night as they reflected on their time of 37.47s – the third fastest of all time.

## Athletics

“I didn't know what to do with myself once we had won, you have all these pre-meditated celebrations and all this fancy stuff, but it was just uncontrollable energy,” he said.

“I was exhausted after about 20 seconds of running up the whole track. It's an amazing feeling, and it's testament to the effort we put in. Anything less than victory would have been unsatisfactory and I'm glad to put the gold medal on in a home stadium – that won't probably ever happen again.

“Hats off to everybody involved, it's a great feeling. When you sit back and think of the names in that final – Usain Bolt, Justin Gatlin, Yohan Blake – they are some of the fastest guys ever to run in the sport.

“For us four to come together and truly believe in ourselves to get the gold, it hasn't sunk in.”

Fellow Beagle Asha Philip had led the women off in their final with a blistering start, as Desiree Henry, Dina Asher-Smith and

Daryll Neita saw Britain to silver in 42.12, outside the mark they set to win Rio Olympic bronze.

“I had no idea where Daryll [Neita] was in that final leg, so I was screaming and panicking, wondering what was going on,” said the 26-year-old.

“The crowd just kept getting louder and louder so I started to panic more and more. But we got a silver medal, and that's an upgrade to what we won in Rio, so we're really happy with that.

“We got the baton round, and we got a medal, we didn't drop it and that's what's important.

“We've progressed so much from last year, and we're definitely getting closer and closer to the USA.”

\*You can help the next generation of young British athletes by getting involved in SportsAid Week this September with London 2012 hero Greg Rutherford MBE.

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## Athletics

**Newham & Essex Beagles Robbie Grabarz failed to recapture the spirit of London 2012 as the Olympic bronze medalist finished sixth in the high jump final at the World Championships.**



Great Britain's Robbie Grabarz looks on during the high jump final at the World Championships at London Stadium (pic Adam Davy/PA)

With two clear jumps to open the competition at 2.20m and 2.25m, Grabarz then failed with three attempts at 2.29m to leave him shy of a medal position.

After qualifying for the final with a leap of 2.31m, Grabarz had spoken of needing to not let the excitement of the crowd get to him on finals night.

And although he feels that was mission accomplished, he still left the stadium ruing a missed opportunity.

“I'm absolutely gutted. It was a terrible performance,” said Grabarz.

“It was technically really bad. I don't have any excuses or reasons, it's just way below what I'm capable of.

“It's not the kind of performance I should be putting in, in my career at this point, in a major final.

“I think I managed the excitement quite well, just technically I didn't do what I was supposed to do, to be honest.

“The support is absolutely amazing and it was exciting to be out there but not over the top, so I don't really know what went wrong.

“I don't want to say it's my last chance at a worlds, but it's definitely my last chance jumping in London, like this.

“And there won't be many more worlds I'm going to be fit for, so it's just such a missed opportunity.”

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## sport

## Athletics

**Rabah Yousif admitted he nearly buckled under the pressure as he helped deliver a British bronze at the World Championships.**

But Newham & Essex Beagles Yousif, who was also part of a bronze medal-winning 4x400m relay quartet two years ago in Beijing, kept his cool in a super-charged atmosphere.

After a shaky performance in the heats, Yousif could be forgiven for feeling tense and the pressure was only ramped up when Great Britain won gold in the men's sprint relay and silver in both of the women's events.

Matthew Hudson-Smith gave Britain a flying start with solid legs from Dwayne Cowan and Yousif setting up anchor man Martyn Rooney, in clear third.

Rooney duly delivered, holding off the challenge of Belgium as Trinidad and Tobago pipped the United States to gold and Yousif said: “I've done big championships before but I've never felt pressure like that.

“We saw the relay boys and girls get their medals and then we heard the women's 4x400m team had won a silver too, we knew we had to deliver. It was a different

pressure because the 4x100m boys set the standard so high.

“I watched them win in my room and I was bouncing around all over the place, I was so excited I could hardly sleep and I couldn't wait to get out on that track. We knew we couldn't be the only relay team to leave with nothing.”

Yousif has been nowhere near his best this season but believes, despite their advancing age, this could become a formidable team, if they can all stay injury free.

Next year it's the Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast and they will arrive at the European Championships in Berlin ranked number one in the continent, with a target on their back.

“It's been a tough season with injuries and problems, so this means so much,” he added.

“The only frustration is I believe with last year's form we'd have won this championship with flying colours and we'd be sat here with golds rather than bronzes.

“I don't think any of these guys are going anywhere, we think we can do more special things together.”