

# Andre De Grasse slowly reaching his top speed ahead of Olympics

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By Israel Fehr

6/14/2016



TORONTO – Canada's fastest man is taking it slow. It's all part of his plan to be crowned the world's fastest man in two months time at the Olympics in Rio de Janeiro.

Andre De Grasse has yet to run the 100 metres in under 10 seconds this year and heads to the Canadian Olympic trials taking place in Edmonton from July 7-10 intent on changing that. Vancouver's Harry Jerome International Track Classic on June 17 will act as his main warm-up and while he's won his last two Diamond League races, he clocked in at just over 10 seconds in both.

"I'm hoping for a sub-10 (second) performance (in the 100 at the Olympic trials), a sub-20 (seconds in the 200-metres)," De Grasse said Tuesday while attending the Toronto District School Board Elementary School Track & Field Championship at Birchmount Stadium in Scarborough. "That's my goal right now. That'll give me a lot of confidence going forward."

De Grasse broke out as an international track star last summer, [winning gold in the 100](#) and 200 metres at the Pan Am Games and followed that up with a bronze in the 100 at the world championship in Beijing.

Since then, his life has been altered dramatically. De Grasse has gone from racing as a student-athlete at the University of Southern California, where he won the NCAA championship in the 100, to training full-time in Phoenix as a professional made rich quick by [multi-million dollar contract with Puma](#). Add in a bothersome toe injury that required treatment back home in Toronto, a subtle change to his approach on the starting blocks, and it's been quite the whirlwind transition for De Grasse. The build-up to reaching his top speed is a product of being methodical in his preparation and simply taking part in much fewer races.

"My training environment has changed. My coaching has changed. I'm just trying to get used to it right now. It's

going well, I can't complain, I'm starting to do better than how I was doing at the beginning of the season," said De Grasse. "I feel good. My body feels way better than before. Last year, running 50 races, that was tough on my body. This year I've run six or seven races so I'm feeling good heading into trials and I'm going to be fresh for the Olympics."

That's important, as he has his sights set on competing in the 100, 200, and 4x100 relay in Rio . De Grasse and teammates Aaron Brown, Brendon Rodney, and Justyn Warner finished third at the world championship. Brown [posted a 9.96 second time](#) in the 100 in a race in Florida on Saturday, a personal-best that bodes well for Canada's podium hopes.

"Now that Aaron has stepped into that platform, running sub-10 seconds, it's good for our relay team. We have a chance to compete with Jamaica and the U.S.A.," said De Grasse. "I think that was good for him to see that I came in and ran sub-10, and he's motivated now to do the same thing, and he believes in himself that he can do it."

Brown, 24, had long been the favourite to join Donovan Bailey and Bruny Surin as the only Canadians officially in the sub-10 second club (Ben Johnson's records were erased due to doping) but De Grasse beat him to it last year. The 21-year-old's rise to the top has been so meteoric that it's easy to forget he'll be a first-time Olympian in August. He'll certainly have his hands full in [Brazil](#) – Usain Bolt is striving for an unprecedented third straight Olympic gold in the 100 metres – but De Grasse is relishing the opportunity to perform next to the best in the world.

"It's going to be a great feeling. I don't know what to expect. I'm excited about it. I'm going to try and do my best for the country," said De Grasse. "I feel like the 200 is my best event, so that's why I am going to do it at the Olympics as well, but the 100 is the marquee event. Everyone loves to watch it, so I have to do my best to put on a show."

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