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Havana, February 11 (RHC)-- Coinciding with his 40th birthday, U.S. sprinter Justin Gatlin announced his retirement from athletics after a career full of titles and controversies.

Gatlin, winner of Olympic gold in the 100-meter dash in Athens-2004 and one of the few athletes who was able to beat star Usain Bolt, confirmed his departure from the sport in a post on Instagram titled "Dear Track."

"I loved you, track. You gave me tears of sadness and tears of joy, lessons learned that will never be forgotten," the athlete wrote. "The torch has been passed but the love will never fade."

Gatlin's retirement was long expected. The New York athlete had intended to compete in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics but suffered an injury at the U.S. qualifying trials in Eugene, Oregon.

In his career, Gatlin completed a double in the 100m and 200m at the 2005 Helsinki World Championships in Helsinki and also captured 100m gold at the 2017 World Championships in London, scoring a rare victory over Jamaica's Usain Bolt.

But Gatlin's career was also marked by scandal, with two suspensions for doping, in 2001 and 2006. For the second positive, he served a 4-year ban.

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