

Monday, 20 October 2008

Campbell-Brown goes back to school, and is content to "let times take care of themselves"



Veronica Campbell-Brown with pupils of her former school in Troy, Trelawny, Jamaica (Paul Reid)

relnews



Trelawny, Jamaica - Veronica Campbell-Brown, reigning double Olympic 200m champion and the 2007 World 100m gold medallist, enjoying a few weeks break before she goes back into training, took time out last week to make a notable donation to her old school.

The 26-year-old Jamaican sprint ace arguably now one of the most successful female sprinters of the modern era, also reflected on the possibility of her going even faster on the track in the future.

On Friday, 17 October, Campbell-Brown visited her former primary school for the first time in many years.

Despite the school being on mid-term break just over a dozen students, the girls dressed in blue tunics and boys in khaki suits and blue ties, turned out along with principal Carmen Daley and two senior teachers, Paulette Smith and Pauline McKenzie. The pupils greeted her by performing several skits, dances, songs, and poems in her honour.

Campbell-Brown, who retained her 200m title at the recent Olympic Games in Beijing, China, did not go empty handed but used the occasion to donated six brand new desk top computers and three printers to the small school nestled in the hills of southern Trelawny, near the border of Manchester.

Ms Daley told the small gathering "This is a memorable day for us and we are grateful for what Veronica has brought to us." With the advancement in technology in the classroom, Daley said they were "very lucky to have the computers" and promised to "take the very best care of them."

Campbell-Brown, who also attended Vere Technical the same high school that produced Olympians Merlene Ottey, Beverly McDonald and Michael Blackwood amongst others also announced plans to help refurbish the dorms there by donating mattresses later in the month.

On Friday at Troy she exhorted the students to aspire to their best, "it is not where you are coming from but where you are going," she told them while emphasising the importance of education.

Speaking to reporters later she said she felt an obligation to give back to the school, "I am a product of Troy All-Age and I have not been back in a while and I realised I had not contributed anything to Troy All Age."

She said herself and her manager Claude Bryan "were brain-storming and trying to figure out what would be the best way to make a contribution and we thought that in an increasingly technological world the best thing would be computers as it would be beneficial to not just this group but those to come. We thought this would be a great way to ensure their education was enhanced and they can join the growing trend."

Starting back at the end of the month

Campbell-Brown said she is enjoying the break from training and competition and is in no hurry to get back just yet.

"I am in no rush to get back," she said, "I still have a few weeks off and I am trying to enjoy the break that I have because when I start back at the end of the month I will be at it for the next 10 months before I get any more break."

Campbell-Brown thoroughly enjoyed the recent official celebrations put on by the government.

"It was great, the outpouring of love was just phenomenal...there were more people in Trelawny than Kingston but overall the outpouring of love for us was just great and we enjoyed every moment of it. To see the people who were here at home cheering for us in the Olympics coming out on the road to greet us was overwhelming."

As long as I am competitive I will run

Campbell-Brown said that she is not be setting any goals as far as times were concerned and not predicting any records.

"My 200m time is where I want it as I have been waiting a long time to run sub-22 seconds and I achieved that," says Campbell Brown who set a personal best of 21.74 seconds in winning the Olympics after running under 22.00 seconds for the first time weeks earlier in winning the half lap event at the Jamaican national trials which were held at the national stadium.

Campbell-Brown whose best time in the 100m of 10.85 seconds was set in 2005, said she had hoped to run 10.60 seconds last season "but it did not happen but I am in no rush, I will just continue to train hard and let times take care of themselves."

The 26-year-old who was a member of the 2000 Olympic team as a schoolgirl said she has not set any time table for her career, "as long as I am competitive I will run, my body will tell me when it is time to

stop and I will obey."

"I still have a lot to accomplish and I hope to full fill my potential I will continue to train hard and let my legs speak for themselves."

Paul Reid for the IAAF