



## FEATURES



## My Hero: Veronica Campbell Brown on Merlene Ottey

Two-time Olympic 200m champion Veronica Campbell-Brown looks up to former Jamaican sprint queen and eight-time Olympic medallist Merlene Ottey...

**“I have always looked up to Merlene Ottey. Ever since I was young. She’s a wonderful person – very inspiring, very confident and I really enjoy talking to her. She’s always been my role model.**

I remember watching her at the Atlanta Olympics – it was very close in the 100m with Gail Devers. It was too close to call and very disappointing because Gail was declared the winner (Ottey won silver). It was disappointing but really fun to watch her compete.

I’ve been running on the track since I was young and **I attended Vere Technical High School, the same school as Merlene. I ran against her at several senior trials when I was a junior but the first time I really spoke to her was when we were doing baton exchange, getting ready for the 2000 Olympics.** I was the youngest one on the team and she was always really nice to me.

**We always keep in touch, mainly by email. We talk athletics and she always gives me advice. I had an email from her just before the Beijing Games.**

Merlene has proved the trailblazer for women’s athletics in Jamaica and she’s had a great longevity in the sport. She’s always very close to gold and she always sets the standard to follow. **We have all tried to emulate her. She has provided the motivation and the tradition as to why Jamaica is now such a powerhouse.”**

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