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Women's 100m and strong fields in the throws to take the spotlight in Osaka - IAAF World Challenge



Veronica Campbell-Brown of Jamaica wins the women's 60m title in Doha beating pre-race favourite LaVerne Jones-Ferrette (Getty Images)

Two reigning World champions and a pair of reigning Olympic champions will headline the **Osaka Grand Prix** on Saturday, the second **IAAF World Challenge** meeting of 2010.

100m debut for Campbell-Brown

Leading the field in the women's 100m will be Jamaica's two-time Olympic 200m champion Veronica Campbell-Brown. Earlier this year, Campbell-Brown won the World indoor title in the 60m in Doha, and outdoors has run 22.32 in the 200m. Osaka will be her 2010 100m debut on the same track at Nagai Stadium where she took the short dash World title in 2007.

From the Japanese perspective, this race will attract the most attention, for Chisato Fukushima has already set two national records this season. At the Oda Meet in Hiroshima on 29 April, Fukushima lowered the Japanese 100m record to 11.21, and on 3 May at the Shizuoka International in Fukuroi she set a national 200m record of 22.89, the first sub-23 second clocking recorded by Japanese. In both Oda and Shizuoka, Fukushima was well ahead of her competitions and in Osaka she will be chasing faster runners and if she does not tie up, so another assault on her record could be in the cards.

The field also includes American Angela Williams, the 2008 World indoor 60m

champion. Williams' season best indoors was 7.31 in the 60m, but she is yet to make an outdoor debut. Her personal best at 100m is 11.02 and in the last two seasons, Williams recorded 11.22 and 11.42, so she could be Fukushima's best competition.

Samuels and Trafton square off in women's Discus, Cantwell vs. Taylor in men's Shot Put

One of the featured events could be women's Discus Throw where Olympic champion Stephanie Brown Trafton of the USA will throw against the reigning World champion, Dani Samuels of Australia. In Sydney on 27 February, Samuels set a personal best of 65.84m, while Trafton, who has a best of 66.21m from last year, reached 60.12m at the Drake Relays last month. The best Japanese in the field is Yuka Murofushi, a national record holder at 58.62m. She won the Hyogo relays with 53.32m last month.

Christian Cantwell and Dan Taylor are the featured athletes in men's Shot Put. Cantwell, the reigning World champion as well as the reigning Olympic silver medallist, defended his World indoor title in Doha in March. His 2010 best is 21.95m indoors from the Millrose Games in January, but he's already thrown 21.69m outdoors this season, at the Drake Relays, so he is obviously in shape. On the other hand, Taylor has thrown 20.89m indoors but his outdoor best of the season is only 19.47m from the Drake Relays. The Japanese All-Comers record is 22.04m, record by Reese Hoffa in the 2007 World Championships. It could be in danger.

Michael Rodgers, better known for his performances in the indoor 60m and the 100m, will be running the 200m in Osaka. He was second at 60m at this year's World Indoor Championships, and competed in the 100m at the 2009 World Championships in Berlin. He has a 100m career best of 9.94 and a 20.24 best in the 200m. Other contenders include Monzavous Rae Edwards and Shinji Takahira. Edwards has best of 10.02 and 20.17, and has clocked a windy 10.05 this season. Osaka will be his first 200m of the season. Takahira, a premier 200m sprinter in Japan, has the best of 20.22.

Men's Hammer Throw Challenge kicks off

After the women's chase for the IAAF Hammer Throw Challenge title got underway in Dakar last month, it will be the men's turn to take the spotlight in Osaka. Naturally, Koji Murofushi, the 2004 Olympic Champion with a career best

of 84.86m, will figure prominently. His main challengers include Aleksey Zagoranyi Russia, the 2009 World bronze medallist who has a best of 83.43m; and Nicola Vizzoni of Italy, who has a best of 80.50m.

[Click here for the full schedule of the [2010 IAAF Hammer Throw Challenge](#)]

The men's Javelin Throw has been gaining popularity in Japan after Yukifumi Murakami won the bronze medal at the 2009 World Championships. He has already thrown 82.49m this season in Wakayama, his longest throw on Japanese soil, so his early season form is quite good. His main challengers are: Ilya Korotkov, who has a best of 85.47m; Australia's Stuart Farquhar, who has a best of 85.35m; and Chris Hill, who has a best of 83.87m. Both Korotkov and Farquhar are in great shape, for they both set their personal bests in February.

Shi, Jackson and Powell-Crawford headline the hurdles

With Liu Xiang, the 2004 Olympic champion, pulling out of the 110m Hurdles due to injury, his Chinese compatriot Shi Dongpeng is now promoted to the position of favorite. Shi, who did not qualify for the final in Doha, is making outdoor debut of the season in Osaka. The top Japanese challengers are Tasuku Tanonaka and Masato Naito. Tanonaka recorded 13.79, while Naito recorded 13.94 into a headwind in Hiroshima last month.

2005 World champion Bershawn Jackson will headline the field in the 400m Hurdles. Both Dai Tamesue and Kenji Narisako, the two fastest intermediate hurdlers in Japan, will not compete in Osaka leaving Jackson as the prohibitive favorite. Jackson, who took bronze at both the 2008 Olympics and last year's World Championships, clocked an indoor personal best of 45.41 earlier this year, and in his only outing over the full lap hurdles, has clocked 48.36.

In the 100mH, Japan's Asuka Terada, could be pushed to the national record of 13.00 by American Ginnie Powell Crawford and Canada's Perdita Felicien. Felicien, the world indoor silver medalist this year and former World champion outdoors, has recorded 12.94 into the wind at the Drake Relays, while Powell, fifth at the World indoors in Doha, recorded 12.72 in Kingston last weekend. Terada's season best, a 13.25 performance against the wind, was recorded in Hiroshima on 29 April.

Ken Nakamura for the IAAF

