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## SPORTS

# WORLD-BEATING SPEED! JAMAICA DOMINATES SPRINTS GLOBALLY

### DEFINING A DECADE 2000-2009

BY KAYON RAYNOR  
Sunday, January 31, 2010

WITHOUT question, Jamaican athletes dominated the last decade in the sprint events at global championships.

The names of Usain Bolt and Asafa Powell on the men's side, as well as Veronica Campbell-Brown and Shelly-Ann Fraser on the female side easily come to mind as the athletes who kept Jamaica's flag flying high at major championships over the last 10 years.



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Following his triple gold medal exploits at the 2008 Beijing Olympics and at last summer's 12th IAAF World Championships in Berlin, Bolt cemented himself as the nation's most successful sprinter. In fact, the debates continues as to whether the 23-year-old Trelawny native is the best sprinter of all time, having become the first person to establish world records in the 100m and 200m while taking gold in both events in the Olympics and World Championships. He clocked 19.30 and 9.69 in Beijing and lowered those to 19.19 and 9.58 in Berlin.

Before that, Bolt had also established the world junior record of 19.93 in 2004 at the age of 17.

However, prior to Bolt's complete dominance in the sprints, his countryman Powell elevated himself to the top of world sprinting with his 9.77 clocking in Athens in June 2005, after losing the Olympic gold a year earlier on the same track. He later lowered the mark to 9.74 before Bolt eclipsed it with 9.72.

Powell, who developed a reputation of underperforming in major championships, still managed to end the decade as the athlete with the most legally attained sub-10 clockings in history with a whopping 60. The previous record of 52 was held by American Maurice Greene.

Michael Frater, who secured the silver in the 100m at the 2005 World Championships in Helsinki and made it to the 2008 Beijing Olympics final, also represented the nation well in the sprints.

Veronica Campbell-Brown, who captured two Olympic 200m gold medals in the previous 10 years, was the most successful Jamaican female sprinter. Only Merlene Ottey, who represented Jamaica for more than 20 years, has secured more medals for the country.

The distinction for Campbell-Brown, however, is that she is the only athlete in history -- male or female -- to have won gold medals in the 100m at the World Youth, World Junior and World Senior Championships. Only American Marion Jones, who served prison time for lying about doping and lost most of her medals, had more success than Campbell-Brown in the sprints in the last decade.



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The Vere Technical alum also secured three individual silver medals at the World Championships and an Olympic bronze in the period under consideration.

Fraser, who has been representing Jamaica's senior team for the last three years, also cemented herself as one of nation's top female sprinters.

The 22-year-old, who hails from the volatile community of Waterhouse, became the first Jamaican woman to secure gold medals in the 100m at the Beijing Olympics in 10.78 and last summer's World Championships in Berlin, in a national record of 10.73. Ottey had set the previous record of 10.74secs in 1996.

Other female sprinters such as Tayna Lawrence, Sherone Simpson, Beverly McDonald and Kerron Stewart, who have secured medals in the 100m or 200m at the last three Olympic Games, must also be mentioned for their invaluable contribution.

Jamaica was also represented well in the 400m, 400m hurdles and sprint hurdles events over the last 10 years by the likes of Lorraine Fenton, Shericka Williams, Gregory Haughton, Melaine Walker, Deon Hemmings, Danny McFarlane, Brigitte Foster-Hylton and Deloreen Ennis-London, who secured medals at the Olympics and/or World Champions.

The icing on the cake of Jamaica's sprint dominance came at the Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008 when the island finished with a record 11 medals -- six gold, three silver and two bronze -- to place fourth on the track and field medals table; and finally at the IAAF World Championships in Berlin last year when our athletes finished second of more than 200 countries on the medals table with a record 13 medals -- seven gold, four silver and two bronze.



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