

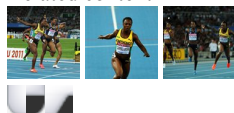
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For Campbell-Brown, World 200m gold at last



Veronica Campbell-Brown of Jamaica celebrates winning the women's 200 metres final (Getty Images)

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Daegu, Korea - On the day Usain Bolt returned to the track in the 200 m heat and the semi final Jamaica's women took their first sprint gold medal in these championships. It was Veronica Campbell-Brown who won the 200m in 22.22.

While Jamaican sprinters had won both 100m races (men and women) as well as the women's 100 m in Berlin two years ago it has been a while since there was a Jamaican 200 m world champion in the event that Campbell-Brown took in Daegu. It was legendary Jamaican Merlene Ottey, who had won this gold back in 1993 and 1995. Veronica Campbell-Brown was the fitting athlete to achieve this for Jamaica as she had made history on a number of occasions during her career.

"I thank God for giving me the strength to do this. I already had two silvers in this event and now finally I have the gold," said the 29 year-old, who had taken two silver medals in the two previous World Championships at 200m. Each time she was beaten by Allyson Felix (USA), who this time finished third.

So this time it is the other way round for Campbell-Brown. In Osaka four years ago she took the 100m title and finished second. In Daegu on Monday night she was beaten by Carmelita Jeter (USA) in the 100m, but now beat the American into second in the 200m.

In a very strong field, which not only included Jeter and Felix but also their fellow American Shalonda Solomon, Campbell-Brown knew what she had to do: "I know that Carmelita is very fast and I have raced against Allyson for many years. So I had to run a very strong curve. I managed to do so and this was the base for my victory."

"It took a while, but it was coming," Campbell-Brown said about her first World Championships' 200m gold. On the Olympic stage she had of course had great success at this distance before, when taking the gold medals in Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008. Additionally she had been unbeaten in 28 consecutive 200m finals from March 2000 to July 2005, when she finally lost against Felix.

Campbell-Brown grew up in the village of Trelawny in the Jamaican countryside. It is there where a number of Jamaican sprint stars come from, Bolt among them. While Kenyan elite runners often used to cover long distances to school little Veronica had some sort of preparation for her future career as a child as well. She had to run to the local shops to fetch some food if something was needed urgently. Her mother sent her because she was so quick. When they were running at school or for fun she would always win – even against older boys.

Her talent became obvious and she received a scholarship for the Vere Technical high school, which has produced a couple of world-class women sprinters in the past. Among them was Merlene Ottey.

As an 18-year-old Campbell-Brown became the youngest Jamaican female to take an Olympic medal after running on the 4x100m Relay team of her country in Sydney, which took second in 2000. In the same year she won the 100m and 200m sprint double at the World Junior Championships, becoming the first woman in the history of the event to do so.

But more significant for Jamaica was her Olympic triumph in 2004, when she took the 200m title. It was the first time her country had an Olympic sprint champion. Additionally she won a bronze in the 100m and the Jamaican sprint team was the winner of the 4x100 m relay. Another prestigious gold medal came in the 2007 World Championships in Osaka. When Campbell-Brown won the 100m it was the first time Jamaica had a global champion at this distance.

The Jamaican sprint queen, who became an UNESCO Ambassador for gender equality in 2009, is actively supporting schoolgirls in her home country. She has launched the Veronica Campbell-Brown foundation, which supports a group of girls, providing them for example with school fees and books for a period of four years.

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in Daegu Campbell-Brown, who studied marketing and management at the University of Arkansas and who is married to the 2000 Commonwealth Games 200m champion Omar Brown, collected her eighth World Championships' medal so far. There should be a ninth one to come in the relay on Sunday. Only one woman has collected more medals at these championships: Merlene Ottey won 14.

But Campbell-Brown intends to continue making more history.

Jörg Wenig for the IAAF