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SPORTS

REMAKING VCB... COACH'S WORK PAYS EARLY DIVIDENDS

BY KAYON RAYNOR Senior staff reporter raynork@jamaicaobserver.com
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IT'S no secret that Veronica Campbell-Brown -- Jamaica's two-time Olympic 200 metres champion and winner of 100m titles at the World Youth, Junior and Senior Championships levels -- is not one of the better starters in world sprinting.

However, that seems to be changing following her gold medal in the 60 metres at the 13th IAAF World Championships in Doha, Qatar on March 14, where she clocked a career-best 7.00 seconds.



Two-time Olympic 200 metres champion Veronica Campbell-Brown (left) and new coach Anthony Carpenter.



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Campbell-Brown's previous 60m best of 7.04secs was achieved in 2006.

The improvement in her reaction time, and inevitably her start, must be credited to her new coach Anthony Carpenter, whom she joined in November last year after more than five years of association with the Florida-based Lance Brauman.

The Atlanta-based Carpenter, who has been coaching track and field for more than 15 years, has been speaking about his work to improve the performances of the Jamaican superstar.

"I have technology background, so I believe in video analysis and prior to agreeing to take the role as her coach, I spent an extensive amount of time reviewing her past races and analysing and trying to figure out what the deficiencies were, in my opinion," Carpenter told the Sunday Observer in an exclusive telephone interview from Atlanta yesterday.

"We spent time reviewing past footage and capturing footage in practices and meets now and basically working on improving those deficiencies, and she's been able to grasp most of the new concepts very quickly and we've started to see some success as we move ahead.

"The beginning part of her race was something that I could see was the problem, so we just took the requisite time in training to address it," he added.

Carpenter, who has also coached other sports including tennis, basketball and American football, indicated that room still exists for improvement by the former three-time Jamaican Sportswoman of the Year.

"Absolutely, the net of it is that I've had four months with her and I think in her prior environment, she did exceptionally well, but she developed some habits over the last several years and it's taking some time to kind of fix some of those habits.

"Some of them she knocks out in practice and isn't always able to execute in the meets, but we're starting to see with more regularity where she is able to grasp the concepts and execute on a more regular basis.

"So as she's able to get more practice under her belt... I expect to see more improvements in her performances this season and over the next couple of seasons as well," the American declared.

A graduate of the Kansas State University who is married with four children, Carpenter confessed to having little certification in track and field. However, he has put his 15 years' experience of coaching, combined with his competitive years at the collegiate level, to good use.

"I was a long jumper and a sprinter and I've been coaching at the youth level up through to the elite level in recent years. Each year, the level at which I've coached has been at a higher level," he disclosed.

"Whereas I don't have certification (IAAF or USATF), what I've been able to do over the last several years is build a network of what I would consider to be trusted advisers who coach at both the collegiate and professional levels, and so whereas I've not had an opportunity to receive a higher level of certification, I've had the opportunity to be mentored by and associate with several of who

would be considered world-class coaches," added Carpenter, who has been running a Youth Sports Club in Atlanta since 1991.

Carpenter, who also started and sold three businesses in the past several years, believes Campbell-Brown will be able to improve her personal best times of 10.85secs and 21.74secs in the 100m and 200m respectively, in the outdoor season.

"As everybody knows, she's an extremely talented young lady. I believe I was brought on board to improve on those times, so that's first and foremost the objective...

"Our goal this year is to basically make her as competitive as possible in the 100m and then maintain the position that she's had in the 200m for the last couple of years," he added

"I believe she is the best 200m runner there is and there are a few women in front of her in the 100m right now and we want her to be a player at the level where they are at this point in time, so we know 10.85secs is not going to get it done and we're focused on her running faster than she's run before," he said.