

FIRST BIG WIN FOR LITTLE VC



The glittering track and field career of Veronica Campbell-Brown, CD, has been filled with consistent success. With two individual wins a piece at the Olympics and the World Championships and two World Indoor 60 metre titles, Veronica is one of Jamaica's best ever sprinters. She shifted into gear 21 years ago at the 1st World Youth Championship, in Bydgoszcz, Poland.

The Troy, Trelawny native might not have been the 100 metre favourite when she arrived in Poland. In consecutive outings at Boys and Girls Championships, she had lost in the sprints to Melanie Walker and Lisa Ann Sharpe. She and Sharpe both won their heat and semi-final races comfortably in Bydgoszcz and in the final, on July 16, VC got out fast. Sharpe finished with a rush but Campbell held on to win in 11.49 seconds.

Crediting work done beforehand on her start, the 17 year-old Vere Technical High School sprinter was overjoyed. "I'm very happy that I am the first winner of the 100 metres", she told the JAMAICA GLEANER after the 1-2 finish.

She sped onto the senior stage in 2000, holding her own as the second leg runner on Jamaica's silver medal winning 4x100 quartet relay with her idol Merlene Ottey on the anchor leg.

With that experience under her belt, Veronica did the double at the World Junior Championship in Santiago, Chile to round off a breakthrough season.

One of her teammates in Bydgoszcz and Santiago offered a shrewd observation of the young Veronica a decade later. Interviewed for the 2010 publication "Champs 100: A Century of Jamaican High School Athletics", 400 metre hurdles virtuoso Walker assessed, "We went to the World Youth Games and Veronica became Veronica Campbell at that time."

Olympic and World champion herself, Melaine was so right. Known as 'VCB' after her marriage to long-time sweetheart Omar Brown, Veronica took home two gold medals from the 2004 Olympics with wins in the 200 and the 4x100, gold in the 100 at the 2007 World Championships before defending her Olympic title in a personal best time of 21.74 seconds in 2008.

Fiercely competitive, VCB added the 2011 World 200 crown to her collection of honours in Daegu, South Korea. In all, she has 11 World Championship medals and 8 from the Olympics.

Remarkably for someone so good at 200, she won the World Indoor 60 metre gold medal in 2010 and 2012 and has a personal best for the short distance of 7 seconds flat.

Nevertheless, Campbell-Brown really got going with that big win in Bydgoszcz and she never looked back.

Ironically, the second World Youth 100 winner was Allyson Felix, who would become one of Veronica's major 200 metre rivals over the years with the Jamaican dominating at the Olympics and the American great in charge at the World Championships.