

4 Gold Medals for Jamaica's Women in Tokyo?



At the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, China, Jamaica's women contributed massively to a brilliant team performance. Thanks to Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, Veronica Campbell-Brown and Melaine Walker, Jamaica won three women's Olympic gold medals for the first time. That achievement showed how far our women had come.

20 year-old Merlene Ottey put our women on the medal table for the first time at the 1980 Olympics, with a bronze in the 200 metres. Our ladies have never looked back. In fact, they have won medals in every Olympic Games since then.

The wait for the first Olympic gold medal by a Jamaican woman ended in 1996. Running in her second 400 metre hurdles final, Deon Hemmings outlasted the classy US pair of Kim Batten and Tonja Buford-Bailey to win in Olympic record time, 52.82 seconds.



Jamaica won 2 women's Olympic gold medals at the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Greece. Campbell-Brown won the 200 metres, and Tayna Lawrence, Sherone Simpson, Aleen Bailey and Campbell-Brown joined forces to take the 4x100 metres relay. It was the first time Jamaica had won either of these events at the Olympics.

It didn't take long before our ladies topped that double gold performance. In Beijing, China, at the 2008 Olympic Games, Fraser-Pryce led Simpson and Kerron Stewart across the line in the 100 metres, with Simpson and Stewart tied for second. Then Campbell-Brown repeated her 2004 200 metres win over the redoubtable American Allyson Felix.

Poetically, the third gold came from Walker in the 400 metre hurdles, in the Olympic record time of 52.64 seconds.

Fraser-Pryce and Elaine Thompson-Herah have the gold medals coming since 2008, with the former defending her 100 metres title in 2012 and the latter doing the 100/200 metres double in 2016. In all, our wonderful women have won 9 of the nation's total of 22 Olympic gold medals.

The prospects for the 2021 Olympics are good. Thompson-Herah and Fraser-Pryce are among the long range gold medal candidates in the sprints. Natalliah Whyte, Fraser-Pryce, Jonielle Smith, 400 metres ace Shericka Jackson and Natasha Morrison are the 2019 World Championships gold medallists in the 4x100 metres relay. World shot put runner-up Danielle Thomas-Dodd is amongst those who could win. The same could be said of World triple jump runner-up Shanieka Ricketts and 2015 World 100 metre hurdles champion Danielle Williams who took a bronze last year.

Jamaica's women have built on the accomplishments of pioneering Olympic finalists like Cynthia Thompson and Una Morris, and have come a long way since Ottey made history in 1980. If the Covid-19 pandemic subsides, Tokyo may well witness a new 4 gold medal high for the women who compete for Jamaica in athletics.

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