

## Bright Future for Jamaica in Women's Triple Jump



With Shanieka Ricketts and Kimberly Williams flying the flag internationally, the women's triple jump is becoming an event Jamaica can rely on for medals at the highest level. Moreover, according to one expert, Ricketts and Williams could inspire a new generation of champions. That expert is Shanieka's coach, Kerry-Lee Ricketts and he sees at least three young prospects who could make the grade.

Speaking in March, Ricketts argued, "I think the likes of, say, a Shanieka Ricketts and a Kimberly Williams being in the top four and even winning events on the international scene and medals, that will actually inspire some of the youngsters to actually stick to the event and basically pursue the event even after college."

Williams took up the mantle from 2005 World Champion Trecia Kaye Smith and has two Commonwealth titles and a 2018 World Indoor Championship silver medal. Ricketts has neared the 15 metres barrier with her personal best of 14.93, won the 2019 Diamond League title and took the silver medal at the last World Championships.

Ricketts, who now heads his own Ricketts Performance Centre, knows who is next in line. "Lamar Distin, formerly of Ruseas, formerly of Vere, formerly of Hydell", he began, "both she and Rhianna Phipps would have competed at Champs one year, went over 13 one year, those two definitely, I could definitely see prospects later on."

They both achieved a distance of 13.37 metres on that occasion but Distin won on count back with a better second best mark of 13.09. The result gave Hydell High a 1-2 finish.

Distin focused on the high jump during the indoor season and both young ladies are at Kansas State University.

Preceding them at Kansas State was Shardia Lawrence who won the 2019 NCAA title with a last round personal best of 13.99 metres. Ricketts thinks Lawrence has Olympic potential. "In terms of Shardia, I can definitely see her making the trip to Tokyo if all goes well. I think she's got what it takes and she just needs to have a solid injury free season", he projected.

Lawrence herself is equally optimistic. She named her former Vere colleague Sabina Allen and her former Hydell teammate Rhianna Phipps as part of the new wave. "We have rising ones that are coming like Rhianna Phipps, because my coach got her now and she has a huge talent, I'm telling you, and I know she's going to be great as well", she noted. Phipps is now at Kansas State under the guidance of coach Vincent Johnson.

Phipps has triple jumped 13.52 metres this year. That's one centimetre off the Boys and Girls Championships record posted by Tamara Moncrieffe of Holmwood in 2014. Moncrieffe had a marginally wind-aided jump of 13.92 metres in 2015 and is now at the University of Alabama.

Overall, there are 12 active Jamaicans with personal bests over 13.30 metres. They include Lotavia Brown, the 2019 Pan-Am Junior Champion.

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