

Chantz on a Mission



"Injuries can really humble you". So says Chantz Sawyers, the 2018 IAAF World Under 20 400 metres bronze medal winner. Now 21, Sawyers has made his way back from two years of injury and disappointment. He hopes the road ahead leads him under 45 seconds and to the Jamaican Olympic team.

Born in New York and raised in North Carolina, Sawyers was speeding in 2018 and 2019. The former basketball player followed his bronze for Jamaica with a personal best of 45.24 seconds in the 2019 NCAA final and sterling duty on a quick University of Florida 4 x 400 metres relay team. A hamstring injury clipped his wings as the 2020 season approached and as he recovered from that, COVID-19 wiped the outdoor season. Then a quadriceps injury laid him low.

"Recently, you've been seeing 100s and 200s, not at my peak performance mainly because again I'm trying to come back from injury and getting back into shape so I can perform well at the big meets, such as Conference, Nationals and Trials and possibly make the Olympic team and all that", Sawyers said last week.

"All I see is a bunch of excitement. Excitement is the number 1 thing that motivates me to just keep training", he enthused. "So what we can see in the upcoming future is just a bunch of PRs and a bunch of teams being made and hopefully just more success than down flow because injuries can really humble you sometimes", he reasoned.

He made a cautious return during the recent indoor season in the 400 and the 4x400 metres. "I haven't ran in two years before that relay and it just made me realize how much training I've missed", he reported.

"Now that I'm getting back to it, I'm very confident in myself, just hoping best for the future right now", said the talent coached by Florida head coach Mike Holloway.

Sawyers is now a man on a two-pronged mission. "Honestly, after the amount of injuries I was having in the past two years, I'm just looking forward to having fun in the sport again overall because it was taken away from me for a long time and being , " he enumerated.

Then he added, "Obviously, if I have those two aspects down pat, we can see a lot of PRs and of course my main goal right now is to go sub 45. I'm really close to that mark. I definitely feel like that is possible for me. I just have to overcome this injury and get my speed together."

The next phase in his mission will come this weekend at the Tom Jones Invitational at the University of Florida, where he will run his first outdoor 400 metres in 2 years. "I will pretty much be running the 400 at every meet you'll see from now on", he promised.

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