

Jamaica Could Be Strong at 2021 World Juniors



If the performances at last week's 2021 staging of the Boys and Girls Championships are anything to go by, Jamaica could have a great team for the upcoming World Under 20 Championships in Nairobi, Kenya. The 5-day national high school championships produced fine performances in the sprints, hurdles, jumps and

throws inside Kingston's National Stadium between May 11 and 15, with Tina Clayton, Shantae Foreman, Aalliyah Francis and Javier Brown doing high quality double duty.

Blustery winds slowed all the sprinters but Clayton nevertheless zoomed to a peerless class 2 sprint double. In the 100 metres, she stepped through a -2.1 metres per second wind to reach the line in 11.38 seconds, worth 11.25 in still air. She took the 200 in 23.45 seconds, worth 23.23 seconds on calm conditions. Her efforts here and in as part of a 44.81 second 4x100 metres relay team helped Edwin Allen High School to retain the team title.

Foreman navigated the wind well enough to clear 1.84 metres in the high jump and added a promising distance of 6.43 metres in the long jump before strong runs for St. Jago High School in the 4x100 metres relay – gold in 45.44 seconds – and the 4x400 metres relay – silver.

Jamaica can expect to field a formidable team at the World Under 20 Championships in the girls' 4x400 metres relay. Francis won the class 1 race in 52.51 seconds for Rusea's, with Hydel's captain Garriel White, the 400 metres hurdles winner, close in 52.77. In class 2, Dejanae Oakley of Clarendon College edged White's teammate Oneika McAnnuff, 52.51 to 52.54, in a thrilling race for gold.

Notably, Oakley attends the same school that produced World Indoor and Commonwealth 400 metres gold medal winner Sandie Richards.

In the discus, where Fedrick Dacres and Kai Chang have won World Under 20 gold medals for Jamaica, 18 year-old Ralford Mullings of Kingston College spun his implement out to 61.92 metres. That would have won the silver at the 2018 staging of the under 20 global event.

Brown did a delightful 400 metres/400 metre hurdles double with notable times of 45.75 and 49.89 seconds respectively and closed the day with a 45.8 seconds anchor to Jamaica College's 4x400 metres relay effort. In each case, he was overcome with joy near the finish line and eased off the gas. His 18 points pushed Jamaica College to the school's first boys' team title since 2011.

He turns 20 this October but hurdles runner-up Devontie Archer clocked a personal best 50.43 seconds and is eligible for Nairobi.

For the first time in history, three boys dipped under 1:49 in the class 1 800 metres, with Chevonnie Hall of Edwin Allen completing a 1500/800 metres double. Hall staved off challenges from Rivaldo Marshall and J'Voughnn Blake to set in record time – 1:48.58, with Marshall and Blake both at 1:48.86. Only Sherwin Burgess and his cousin Kenroy Levy in 1987 and Kimar Farquharson and Tyrice Taylor had previously broken the 1:49 barrier at Boys and Girls Championships.

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