

Morgan's National Indoor 800 Record Turns 25



In 1996, Alex Morgan was part of a George Mason University team chasing its first NCAA title. Morgan's mission was to contribute with a big run in the 800 metres. He was so successful that he set a Jamaica indoor record that endured for 25 years.

Morgan produced the indoor race of his life, clocking 1:46.70 on March 9, 1996. "The race was my part, my mission, my personal mission, and I thought it was my best year, best chance to win", he explained on February 24. He went to the NCAA meet, held in Indianapolis, in form having missed Clive Terrelonge's existing Jamaica record – 1:47.30 - by just 0.17 in Boston

earlier in the year.

The final was a titanic struggle. Latvian Einars Tuparitis went out hard and Morgan went with him. "He was pulling me at a pace that I'd never gone before. I was running to keep up with him but yet he just keep on hammering at the pace, going away", he remembered of an effort where he covered the first 400 in 51.9 seconds.

"I was digging and it seems like I was gaining on him. When the last lap came, he had a pretty good lead, maybe around 8 yards but I normally end with a good finish and I started to put in some extra drive and I was gaining up on him going into the last stretch and somehow he even found another gear and went and won that race", Morgan summarized, "but I give thanks for at the end of the race, I ran the fastest time I ever ran indoors."

The retired two-lapper is taken aback by his record's longevity. "Usually those records that stand up for a very long time, you know, you seem to have more respect to them, and to realize that I have it for 25 years, man, it's a great honour. It's quite humbling", he said, still stunned by his own achievement.

"I never had a national record on my mind in that race. It was just to run and do my best. So I'm very grateful and I say words can't express to know that I still have it and that long now", Morgan added.

The 1996 Olympian is still the only Jamaican to break 1:47 indoors.

He says the record was the product of hard work. "If you want to have any chance, you've got to put in the work", advocated the man who is now an educator and coach at Winston Jones High School. In addition, he praised his George Mason coach John Cook and his teammates who included Jamaicans Greg Haughton, Ian Weakly and O'Neil Duncan for creating an atmosphere geared to success. "We had some boys, you know, who were purpose driven and wanted not only to do well at the NCAA level but for their countries", the 1997 CAC bronze medal winner reflected.

With assistant coach Dalton Ebanks guiding their efforts, they won Mason's first ever NCAA team title.

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