

Next Generation: Shadae Lawrence



Astute fans would have seen the name Shadae Lawrence on Jamaica team lists in the last few years as the country's leading discus thrower. She earned her place on the plane to the last Olympics and the World Championships in both 2017 and 2019. Lawrence wants more and, with the 2021 Olympics looming, she is aiming to make an impact.

With her 25th birthday just around the corner in December, Lawrence is looking ahead. "Definitely, I want to give track and field a couple more years", she said on November 6. "You know, I think I have lots more to give. I can improve in a lot of areas which I would have a better chance not just showing up at the different meets so I'm focusing on it now. And Olympics, I'm already qualified for that but I'm really focused on not just showing up but making a final, just making an impact for myself and the country", she resolved.

During her years at Kansas State University, she forged ahead with a 2017 NCAA title and in 2019, her last year of collegiate eligibility, she pushed her Jamaican record to 65.05 metres while at Colorado State. That followed an earlier meet where she zoomed her disc 63.89 metres.

The previous mark of 62.73 metres belonged to Kellion Knibb.

Now, Lawrence is working with renowned throws coach Julian Robinson to make the next step. She is based at the University of South Florida, where the weather is better, and zaps video recordings of her practice throws to Robinson, in Kingston, for analysis and feedback.

7th in last year's Pan-American Games, Lawrence thinks the new coaching set-up has already been fruitful. "I'm embracing the process. I'm being patient with myself and embracing the process and just trusting in him as a coach because I've learnt a lot already", she enthused.

At home, Robinson's group of throwers include World discus silver medallist Fedrick Dacres, 2017 World finalist Traves Smikle and 2018 World Under 20 winner Kai Chang. That demonstration of Robinson's expertise reassured her that she had picked the right coach. "He has good throwers who have thrown at the world class level so I trust him", she concurred.

Lawrence was a high school star for Vere Technical and Hydrel High and took the 2014 CAC Junior title. Since then, her international experience has given her a clear idea of what she must do to match the performances of Olympic champion Sandra Perkovic and the Cuban pair of World Champions Daima Caballero and Yaime Perez. Having seen them at close range, Lawrence observed, "it shows I have a lot to work on but it also shows that if I just put work, train at a certain level, then I can get there."

Shadae's twin sister, Shardia, is also pursuing her athletic dreams after winning the NCAA triple jump title in 2019. She is now training in California.

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