

RUN LIKE A CHAMPION



The history of Jamaican track and field is filled with iconic moments. From the Helsinki Quartet's world record relay victory in the 1952 Olympics onward, every generation has at least one such performance to cherish. For this generation, one of those iconic moments came at the 2015 World Championships in the women's 4x400 metres relay final.

Shericka Jackson, Christine Day, Stephenie Ann McPherson and Novlene Williams-Mills had placed 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th in the individual 400 metres final

to put the warning signs in plain view. However, an All Star USA led by 400 metres champion Allyson Felix stood between them and the ultimate prize.

With Anastasia Le-Roy in for 2007 World Championship bronze medallist Williams-Mills, qualifying was straightforward and when the starter called the teams to order for the final on August 30, the stage was set for a high speed battle. Day, the 2014 Commonwealth Games bronze medallist, outran Richards on the first leg, 50.3 to 51.4 seconds from the blocks, and Jackson finished fast to build the distance between Jamaica and the USA with a 49.5 seconds split on her leg.

McPherson hurried off, knowing that Felix was in hot pursuit. The fabulous American cut into the Jamaican lead, took charge and completed a sensational 47.7 seconds circuit on the third leg but McPherson had kept the margin from becoming irreversible.

Her bravery gave Williams-Mills a chance to latch onto Francena McCorory, the 2014 World Indoor Champion. With 150 metres to go, McCorory surged in an effort to shake off her pursuer. Instead, Williams-Mills veered into lane 2 as they entered the final straight and gradually pulled past, crossing the finish line with the baton aloft at the end of a 49.1 seconds anchor leg.

There was an instant in the heat of the homestretch struggle when it looked like the Americans would hold on but later Williams-Mills told Track And Field News what made the winning difference. "When you have the heart of a champion, you have to run like a champion", said the woman who fought off the ravages of breast cancer after the 2012 Olympics.

Victory had been attained in the world leading time of 3 minutes 19.13 seconds.

The on-track celebrations were unbridled. Jackson and Day jumped for joy as Williams-Mills crossed the line securing Jamaica's second World Championship gold medal in the 4x400 metres. The first was secured in 2001 by Sandie Richards, Catherine Scott, Debbie-Ann Parris and Lorraine Fenton.

At home, it was pandemonium. Naturally, the victory pops up often on [Youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and networking sites like Facebook as fans enjoy the moment over and over again. The courage of Day, Jackson, McPherson and Williams-Mills delighted many on August 30, 2015 and continues to serve as an inspiration.

The win gave Jamaica 7 gold medals which matched the best performance by the nation at a global championship. The first 7 gold medal haul was achieved at the 2009 World Championships.

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