

## Good Signs for World Under 20 Team



Whenever the World Under 20 Championships falls in the same year as the Olympics and the Under 20 spectacular takes place after the greatest show on earth, Jamaica's young athletes do well. The phenomenon will occur for the third

time this week in Nairobi, Kenya and Jamaica's 2021 squad will seek to repeat the achievements of the 1992 and 2000 contingents.

Weeks after the Barcelona Olympics, Jamaica excelled in World Under 20 host city Seoul, South Korea, September 16 -20, 1992. Led by Nicole Mitchell and Gillian Russell, the team gained 3 gold, 3 silver and 3 bronze which placed the nation 6<sup>th</sup> on the medal table. Mitchell won the 100 metres, after taking the silver in 1990 and Russell defended her 100 metre hurdles title.

Later, Mitchell and Russell contributed to a win in the 4x100 metres relay and overall, to Jamaica's highest placing at a World Under 20 Championships.

That accomplishment was overtaken in 2000, when the Chilean capital of Santiago hosted the under 20 event from October 17 to 22. Veronica Campbell came from the Sydney Olympics with a relay silver and dazzled her rivals with the first World Under 20 Championships 100/200 metres double by a woman. That effort was the cherry topping in a team performance that netted 3 gold, 4 silver and 1 bronze and 5<sup>th</sup> on the medal table.

Later known as Veronica Campbell-Brown, the young VC set championship records of 11.12 and 22.87 seconds in the 100 and 200 metres, respectively.

The 1992 and 2000 Jamaican World Under 20 teams have something else in common. Until the splendid showing at the last staging of the event, those two teams shared the best gold medal yield of all the Jamaicans who had contested the event. That benchmark was finally surpassed in 2018, with a haul of 4 gold, 5 silver and 3 bronze and second place on the medal table.

The highlight of the 2018 triumph was the sprint double by Briana Williams. En route, she set a meet record in the 200 metres with a super run of 22.50 seconds.

Though she is eligible to compete by age and has the fastest time by an under 20 athlete in the world this year in the 100 metres at 10.97 seconds, Williams retired from junior competition in 2019. In her absence, Ackera Nugent is a strong candidate to follow in Russell's footsteps. Nugent tops the world 100 metre hurdles performance list at 12.76 seconds.

In March, the precocious Nugent won the NCAA Indoor 60 metre hurdles title.

**HB**