

Jamalco Track Club Approaches 30th Anniversary



The Jamalco Track Club is approaching its 30th anniversary and the milestone has club founder Dennis May looking back with pride.

"November 21, 1991 is when we started the track club with 4 members", he recalled.

Based at Halse Hall, Clarendon, the club has made an important contribution to Jamaica's track and field. Speaking on February 4, 2021, May sifted through his storehouse of memories and picked 3 moments in the club's history he will never forget.

He first zoomed back to 1994. "Orville Taylor winning the silver medal in the Commonwealth Games, British Columbia, in the 4x400 and running 45.9 opening leg for a man who had just done track and field for one year. Never did track and field before", May regaled.

His recollection turned to 1994 World Junior 400 metre champion Michael McDonald. "The second one that stands out in my mind is when McDonald broke 45 at the Mutual Games in 1996", May began. The 21 year-old was concerned about getting lane 8 and having Nigerian star Jude Monye behind him. "It's the same 400 metres. All you do, you don't make them catch you and when you reach the top of the turn, you just go. Make sure you keep him behind you", said May of the advice proffered by club coach Oliver "Rabbit" Heywood.

With a smile, he added, "And he runs 44.75, so that was memorable."

He then flashed back to a dominant club performance at the now defunct JN Relays, with Jamalco Track Club posting notable times in sprint and middle distance baton events.

He has the highest regard for Heywood. "I have never had a next coach and I have been totally satisfied with his performance. I believe he is one of the best in the island, not recognized as he should be, but for a man who has produced 3 Olympic 400 metre runners locally, he should be", May praised.

He also hailed the stewardship of two-time Olympian Neville Myton. "I cannot thank Neville Myton enough. I had left the island in 2002 and Neville came to Jamalco in 2002 and I left the care of the Track Club in his hands. He kept it, nurtured it and when I came back two years later, it was right up there up top and he brought a whole new dimension to it", May said.

His core group also includes his colleague Ewan Scott. "A lot of people don't know that Scottie has been with us as a sounding board and a voice from when we started the club. In fact, he was one of the first persons on the sport committee who suggested that I start a track club and a netball team", he added with reference to the very successful Jamalco Netball Programme.

He also gave kudos to the Jamalco Management for their support over the years. The club also has staged the JAAA/Jamalco Development Meet at Halse Hall from 1992, which is held annually on the first Saturday in February.