

MEMORABLE MOMENTS - JAMAICA'S MEN IN THE OLYMPIC 100



When Herb McKenley won the silver medal in the 100 metres in the 1952 Olympics, he wrote the first chapter in Jamaica's memorable history in sprinting. When Tyquendo Tracey, Yohan Blake and Oblique Seville go to the blocks for the 100 metres on July 28, they will seek to add to those memories. If Tracey, Blake or Seville wins a medal, it will be the fourth consecutive Games in which Jamaica's flag will fly at the presentation ceremony.

In addition, it will be the fifth Games in a row that will feature a Jamaican in the 100 metres final.

McKenley lost narrowly to American Lindy Remigino in 1952. 16 years later, Lennox Miller became the second Jamaican to win a medal in the 100 metres, when his Jamaican record 10.04 seconds made him the runner-up at the 1968 Games. He lost to American Jim Hines who took the world record under 10 seconds by clocking 9.95.

Like McKenley, Miller has a special place in our sprint history. His 1972 bronze made him the first Jamaican to win two medals in the Olympic 100 metres. To make the occasion more special, the 1972 final was the first with two Jamaicans as Michael Fray finished fifth.

In 1976, Donald Quarrie lost the gold by inches to Hasely Crawford of Trinidad and Tobago and gave Jamaica its third 100 metres medal in back-to-back Games.

By 1984, a new 100 metres star had arrived. Raymond Stewart reached the final at the end of his time at Camperdown High School and repeated this achievement in 1998 and 1992.

The Jamaican presence in the final continued in 1996 when Michael Green finished 7th in a dramatic race won in world record time by Jamaican-born Canadian Donovan Bailey.

There were no Jamaican finalists in 1980 or 2000 but in 2004, 5th placed Asafa Powell started a new line of success. His time of 9.94 showed how the event had moved forward as Hines' 1968 world record was 0.01 slower.

Usain Bolt dominated the 2008 100 metres with a world record 9.69 seconds with Powell and Michael Frater giving Jamaica three finalists for the first time. In 2012, Bolt won again with Blake second. The tall Jamaican's winning time - 9.63 seconds - is the second fastest 100 metres race ever run. Sadly, a groin injury held Powell back but he joined Stewart as a three-time finalist.

In 2016, Bolt became the first man to win the event three times and joined Stewart and Powell as a three-time finalist.

Blake just missed a medal and now can join Stewart, Powell and Bolt as a three time finalist when the Tokyo Games begin. The bid to add to the nation's all-time 100 metres medal tally of 3 gold, 4 silver and 1 bronze begins with the first round at 7pm Japan Standard Time on July 31. The semi-finals and the final are set for August 1.