

Excitement in The Shot Put: O'Dayne Richards



"I'm excited, in fact I'm very excited about 2015, I just want to reiterate that I have high standards for myself and if I achieve my goals, I think I will end the year in the top three." Those are the words of shot putter O'Dayne Richards, speaking to the Jamaica Gleaner. Richards had turned into 2015 riding the crest of a wave. Not only had he won the 2011 World University Games and the 2014 Commonwealth titles, he had also moved the Jamaica record up to world class levels. There was more to come.

En route to his first World Championships, the University of Technology product collected the Pan-Am Games gold medal. As with his win at the Commonwealth Games, this was a first for Jamaica.

The 26 year-old started the World Championship final on August 23 in Beijing, China, with a foul and a safe spin of 20.79. Then he settled down and launched a throw that took the lead at 21.69 metres. That matched the national record throw he set at the Pan-Am Games.

The mark embellished his reputation as a big meet performer as he had thrown personal bests of 19.93, 20.97 and 21.61 metres to garner gold medals at the World University Games, the 2013 CAC Games and the Commonwealth Games.

Sprint-bred home fans searched for another Jamaican who had held the lead in a World or Olympic throwing final and found none. In fact, Dorian Scott, the 2012 Olympic shot put finalist, was the only other thrower from the land of wood and water to have contested a global final.

Scott held the national record at 21.45 metres before Richards' progression.

The big third round throw held up for third overall behind Joe Kovacs of the USA and Germany's 2011 World Champion David Storl. Among those behind O'Dayne were ex-world champion Resse Hoffa and 2-time Olympic King Tomasz Majewski.

The bronze was a breakthrough for Jamaica. Since Richards opened the door, this land of sprinters has blossomed in the throwing events, with significant progress being made in the shot put and discus. Danniell Thomas-Dodd took silver at the World Championships in Doha in the Women's Shot Put and Fedrick Dacres did likewise in the Men's Discus. As it was with Richards in 2015, these were the first podium finishes for Jamaica in those disciplines.

In addition to all the history made by the Linval Swaby coached Shot Putter in 2015, Richards also kicked off a very successful World Championships for Jamaica. Later on that same Beijing evening, Usain Bolt won the 100 metres and in the end, Jamaica had its second best medal haul at a major global competition with 7 gold, 2 silver and 3 bronze medals.

Bolt thrilled the fans with his third World Championships 100 and 200 metres double but it was Richards who got the excitement started.