

In the Beijing Olympics of 2008, Jamaica, a small Caribbean island nation of less than 3 million people, had the fastest men and women in the world. Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt won both the 100meters and 200meters gold medals, while Jamaican women finished first, second and third in the 100meters, and also won the gold medals in the women's 200meters and 400meter hurdles. The men won the 4 x 100meter relay in World Record time. How did tiny Jamaica do it? At first, the volatile, flamboyant American sprinter Carl Lewis suggested that there was something strange in the way Jamaicans were running so fast; without saying it, he cast an aspersion on Bolt's world records, suggesting the Jamaicans had discovered some illegal means of running so fast. Lewis dominated track and field during the 1980s, when performance-enhancing drug use was rampant, and he refused to believe that drug-free athletes were running faster than those who took drugs. However, in 2008 all Olympians were tested over and over, and random new sophisticated drug tests showed the Jamaican and American athletes in Beijing were drug free. This article will look at Jamaica and its sprinters and explore why the tiny Caribbean island has dominated sprinting since 2005, when Asafa Powell broke the world record in the 100meters.

Jamaican Culture and Environment: The Building Block for Great Sprinting

In the language of the original Native Americans of Jamaica, the word Jamaica means land of wood and water, and the tiny Caribbean island has hundreds of excellent springs and rivers that supply clean water to the population. In addition, the National Water Commission provides free water to the island's population in pipes (called stand-pipes) along the roadways, where citizens draw clean water. As a boy, our family had the option of getting free stand-pipe water; however, we chose to go to the local spring which flowed down from a mountain. Almost everyone in the community took water from the spring, and no one drew water from down-river, where it was polluted by agricultural fertilizer, animal waste, and human use. Adults always added a small amount of 151-proof white rum to drinking water. The rum killed bacteria. In addition to clean water, Jamaica does not have malaria, poisonous insects or venomous wild animals. The island

has very few snakes, thanks to the snake-eating mongoose, transported from India by British colonial rulers. Thus, Jamaican children run through school playfields, without fear of being bitten by poisonous snakes—which is not the case in many tropical countries in Asia, Africa and the Americas.

The climate of Jamaica is temperate, not too hot and never cold. There is no air pollution, except in a few urban areas and regions close to bauxite mines. The volcanic island has rich soil where numerous fruits grow and ripen year-round. Children walking to school pick and eat mango, guava, orange, grapefruit, jack-fruit, sweet-sop, sour-sop, apples, pears, coconut, sugar canes, and other healthy edibles. Most homeowners welcome children and neighbors who pick ripe fruits, because otherwise they would drop, rot, and attract flies or rats. There are few poisonous plants, and children and adults learn what to eat, and what to avoid. In most Jamaican homes, mothers and grandmothers cook breakfast, lunch, and dinner daily. Diet consists of a lot of vegetables, bananas, plantains, yams, coco, cassava, rice, various beans, peas, eggs, flour in the form of dumplings, both fresh and salted fish, poultry, and meat. Jamaicans eat a lot of goat meat, pork, and chicken, seldom beef. There are many juices made from various fresh fruits. The island's farmers grow excellent ginger, garlic, onion, peppers and other spices,

Jamaicans only cook food “well-done,” there is no rare meat served in Jamaica, except at tourist restaurants. In a Jamaican restaurant the waiter or waitress does not ask the customer, “How do you want your meat cooked?” Everything is cooked only one way—well-done! In the tropics, it is wise to cook all food this way. Even fast-foods from American franchises, including Kentucky Fried Chicken, Dominos Pizza, Burger King, and TGIF, in Jamaica, cook their food to the Jamaican taste. Most Jamaicans still eat meals cooked at home—every day. Clean water, a healthy diet, and the lack of malaria and poisonous insects and animals make Jamaica a tropical paradise for sprinters. The rivers, streams, lakes, and Caribbean Sea are clean and produce fish, shrimp, and other seafood. The Caribbean Sea, with its blue and green water and white sand beaches makes Jamaica one of the most beautiful islands in the world. It is the preferred destination for millions of tourists from the United States, Canada, and Europe.

Jamaicans also take special care of pregnant women. As a boy growing up in rural Jamaica, my parents gave me fresh eggs, fresh milk, fresh meat and poultry, and ripe

fruits to take to pregnant women in our community. Many mornings, on my way to school, I delivered these foods to pregnant women in our rural hamlet. My parents would always say, "Take this to Mrs. so-and-so, it is not for her, but for the baby." We had no electricity in my community during the 1950s and 1960s; however, people still ate fresh goat meat, pork, beef, and poultry. When a person killed an animal, the fresh meat was shared with neighbors. People killed livestock at different times, and in that way people ate fresh meat and poultry, although they had no refrigerators or freezers. Jamaican households also made jams and jellies from mango, guava, and other fruits. Sugar cane juice was a delicacy, along with fruit punch and other sweet drinks.

In Jamaica, most women do not drink alcohol or smoke anything. Pregnant women never drink or smoke and they ate the freshest meat, poultry, and fruits in the community. The African-based Jamaican culture cares for the very young and the very old. Many times, grandparents raise children, while parents migrate to the United States, Canada, or England to work. The parents send money back to Jamaica to support their young children and their old parents. This system of migration and extended family permits parents to work in foreign countries without worrying about raising small children. When the children become teenagers, most join their parents in America, Canada, and England. By that time the children are old enough to go to high school and do not need babysitters. Generally, by the time the children come home from high school, parents return home from work

In Jamaica, by law every child goes to school until he or she is 16-years old, and most children participate in sports. At one time or another every child runs. Children practice running at a very young age, because Jamaican children start school at 4 years of age. Each school day, children have recess where they often take off their shoes and socks and run or play soccer and cricket barefooted. Schools have flat level grass playfields fields. Because there are no snakes or venomous insects, Jamaican children can enjoy sports in the safety of schools where teachers work as coaches. Running barefooted requires no athletic equipment, and at some time in their lives, most Jamaican children run track. The fastest ones remain as runners, and the others go on to other sports or leave sports entirely. Jamaica has only a few sports. Track and field, soccer and cricket are the major sports. Unlike the United States there is no high school baseball, lacrosse,

gymnastics, swimming, rugby, cycling, equestrian activity, rowing, diving, water polo, tennis, golf, or motor sports for the masses, which do not have a lot of money. Thus, many children run track.

In Jamaican culture, running is equated with sprinting. Few Jamaicans participate in distance running. Even today, in 2012, Jamaica has no cross-country season. Because of this emphasis on sprinting, very few Jamaicans run anything over the 400-meters. However, in the past, Jamaican men won two Olympic silver medals and a bronze medal in the 800-meters in the 1948, 1952, and 1960 games. In the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, Kenia Sinclair made the finals of the women's 800-meters. But for the upcoming London Olympics, not one Jamaican man ran the B-standard for the 800-meters. The problem is that Jamaicans see the 800-meters as a distance race, instead of as a long-sprint, where the world's best men run the first 400 meters in 49 seconds. Furthermore, Jamaican high schools prohibit young athletes from running anything longer than the 200 meters. Class-4 girls and boys (or those 12 and under) do not run races longer than 200 meters. While this protects the youngest athletes, it does not permit them to run long distances, and by the time they are teenagers, it is too late to begin a distance running program. In America, freshman students run cross-country in high schools.

Jamaican High Schools: Building Blocks for Sprinters

In Jamaica, when I was a child in the 1950s and 1960s, most children walked to primary and high schools located close to their homes, but today many take a bus or taxi. Each school has a different color uniform, and all students must wear uniforms. Almost every school has a large, flat grass playfield with enough space for a running track with a soccer and cricket field. As stated above, because of the mongoose, a weasel-looking animal, Jamaica has no poisonous snakes that could bite school children. Most schools have an organized track and field team with a coach, who teaches children to run barefoot on grass tracks. Track and field does not require expensive equipment, like cricket, tennis, and golf do. Every child can run, maybe not very fast, but all can run. At some point in their young lives, all Jamaican children run track and field; with the fast ones continuing, and the slow ones trying other sports or leaving athletics. When I worked as a volunteer track coach at a local high school in central Jamaica, the head coach sent the slow athlete to me, the long and triple jump coach.

Jamaica has an excellent administrative structure governing high school track and field, which is run by the Inter-Secondary Schools Sports Association (ISSA). It coordinates track meets under the auspices of Jamaican Athletic Administrative Association (JAAA). For a century Jamaican high school athletes have competed in a national championship meet--Boys and Girls Championships, known as CHAMPS. The meet is billed as the largest high school track and field meet in the world, and it lives up to those lofty accolades. Each year qualifying standards are set for all running and field events. Athletes who meet those standards qualify for the competition, but a school is limited to three athletes, per-event. The CHAMP organizing committee sets a date when all entries must be finalized and received, and there are no exceptions. School administrators who miss the deadline forfeit their school participating in the meet. The annual CHAMPS meet takes place at the end of March in national stadium in Kingston, from Thursday to Saturday. Initially, starting in 1910 it was Boys CHAMPS, but in 1957 girls were added, and now it is Boys and Girls CHAMPS.

The meet is televised in Jamaica and abroad and attracts coaches and track lovers from all over the world. CHAMPS has become a business generating millions of Jamaican dollars from television, sponsors, local businesses, shoe companies, and elite members of the track and field fraternity. The organizing committee includes the chairperson, consultants, meet director, meet manager, financial officers, technical coordinators, special projects director, sponsorship director, public relations director, coordinators, grounds officials, security, liaison officers, and dozens of meet officials. Some of the largest companies in Jamaica are sponsors of CHAMPS. Attendance by the prime minister, ministers in government, members of the opposition, and VIPs is a given. Numerous parties and social functions are scheduled the week of CHAMPS. Most officials who work at CHAMPS are volunteers.

High school athletes in Jamaica view CHAMPS as their local Olympics. In Jamaica, success in track and field is measured by what one did, or did not do, in CHAMPS. The qualifying standards are so high that a large number of high school athletes do not even qualify to compete in the meet. For athletes it is the first step to prominence, and in the past, the best athletes received athletic scholarships to American colleges and universities. Today, CHAMPS is a way of being discovered by the two

major Jamaican universities and track and field clubs based at the University of the West Indies (UWI) and the University of Technology (UTECH), home of Racers Track Club and MVP Track Club.

Class 1, 2, 3 and 4: The Foundation of High School Athletics

The Inter-Secondary Schools Sports Association (ISSA) governs high school track and field in Jamaica. Unlike the United States where high school athletes are divided into varsity and junior varsity, and freshman competes against seniors, Jamaican high school athletes are separated into four classes based on age groups. Class 1 is 17-19 years old, class 2 is 15-16 years old, class 3 is 13-14 years old, and class 4 is under 12 years of age. Athletes compete only against athletes in their class. Each athlete must submit a valid birth certificate to the high school, in order to compete in ISSA-sanctioned meets. ISSA officials validate the ages of athletes, against a central data base. This age-based system ensures that freshmen do not run against juniors and seniors. Class 4 athletes are restricted to short sprints and jumps, and cannot run over 200-meters. The class 4 athlete only runs the 70-meter hurdles, instead of the girls'-100-meter hurdles and boys' 110-meter hurdles. These restrictions are enforced to protect the young athletes. However, as said earlier, they mean Jamaicans do not excel in events longer than the 400-meters. If athletes do not run over 400 meters until they reach 14 years of age, and have no cross-country season, then young runners develop no distance-running foundation.

Overseeing ISSA is the national governing body for all Jamaican track and field, the Jamaican Athletic Administrative Association (JAAA). JAAA sanctions all track meets and ensures the competition meets international standards. This is important, especially for track meets held on grass tracks, which are not permanently measured at 400-meters. The JAAA must make sure tracks are flat and level and measures the distance of the man made tracks. It calibrates timing, providing measuring tapes, weighing of implements and testing wind gauges. An age-group, regional, meet, national, or even world record could be set at any sanctioned meet, and JAAA has the responsibility to ensure that an athlete does not lose a record because of lack of compliance to international standards. While JAAA sanctions competitions, it does not send coaches to high schools to assist individual athletes and coaches. When I was

working as a volunteer coach in central Jamaica, only one person from JAAA ever came to practice, and he was there in a private capacity.

In Jamaican high schools, the head track and field coach makes all decisions about practices and competition. As the volunteer coach of long and triple jumpers, I coached only athletes who could not sprint fast. Those who could sprint remained sprinters, all others were sent to jump. I soon discovered that many of my jumpers had very poor running technique. My first task was to teach them how to warm up and run with proper technique. High school athletes had no clue why they were slow. They did not realize that the faster their arms move, the faster their legs move. Most had no idea that their arms had to be driven straight backwards with a 90-degree bend at the elbow, in order to generate thrust to run fast. In addition to arms, the athletes had not learned how to relax while running, jumping, and throwing. The best way to relax is to smile!

After teaching athletes how to warm up properly, they were introduced to a variety of jumping drills. Unlike sprinters, jumpers had to learn how to run down the runway and hit the take-off board. In order to consistently hit the take-off board, and not foul, the athlete had to run the same way each time. This called for discipline and a constant stride pattern. Athletes had to learn the technique of converting running speed into vertical jump. This called for an understanding of the laws of basic physics, where “rate x speed = distance.” Repetition and daily practices are keys to being a good long and triple jumper. Some athletes are natural jumpers, while others are not. It takes years for an athlete to become an excellent jumper. Unfortunately, I discovered that once my athletes learned proper running technique and became faster, the head coach would take them to run, and send other slow athletes to the jumping pit. Thus, Jamaica has great sprinters but few excellent long and triple jumpers.

Poor Athletic Facilities: One Factor Why Jamaicans Sprint So Fast

The entire nation of Jamaica has only five all-weather tracks, and most schools do not have equipment for pole vault and high jump and throwing circles. High school athletes in Jamaica run on grass tracks. This may be a blessing. Some coaches believe that grass tracks are superior to all-weather tracks, especially for practice. However, everyone agrees that all-weather tracks are faster than grass surfaces. As a triple jumper (NCAA, All-American, 1975), I never did jumping drills on all-weather tracks, but instead worked

on the grass infield of tracks. Running on grass has advantages, especially for younger athletes. The grass tracks are soft, and they force athletes to work harder, because they do not have the bounce of all-weather surfaces. Because grass is softer than tartan and cinder tracks, it minimizes injuries, as compared to tartan and cinder surfaces. Because grass surfaces are slower than tartan, the athlete has more time to perfect technique and must work harder to run on grass. The grass absorbs force and minimizes the pounding on legs. After practicing on grass, the athlete runs much faster when he or she competes on all-weather tracks.

In the United States and many developed countries, most high schools have all-weather tracks, on which athletes practice and compete. All-weather tracks were made for competition, not for practice. Before the advent of tartan surfaces, some tracks were cinder, while others were simply grass. During rain, the cinder and grass tracks deteriorated to mud, making running events difficult, and field events dangerous. In the 1960s, tartan tracks made their appearance, and today they are the norm throughout the world, except in Jamaica. The tartan track costs about US\$500,000 or 45,000,000 Jamaican dollars. This is much too expensive for Jamaican schools. Not one high school in Jamaica has an all-weather track. There are only five all-weather tracks in all of Jamaica. Two are at the national stadium, one at Usain Bolt's training facility at the University of the West Indies and Racers Track Club, one at GC Fosters, the sports college, and one in Montego Bay. Everyone else practices on grass.

Many Jamaican high schools have rudimentary weight rooms with free weights. Some athletes go to private gyms, which are popping up throughout the island, especially in urban areas. Some coaches utilize the local beach, while others have athletes run up and down hills and mountains. Each head coach selects the type of conditioning program he or she sees fit for the team. Coaches utilize a host of up-to-date equipment, including parachutes and harnesses attached to free weights. Some coaches even construct graded surfaces, while others have athletes run on sand or in the sea. There is no centralized body to regulate the types of programs for high school athletes. Over time, a number of schools have built excellent programs, and they attract the faster athletes.

Many Jamaican coaches are former athletes, while others received athletic training in the United States, Cuba, GC Fosters Sports College, or at IAAF seminars.

Because Jamaica is a small island, many coaches know each other, and some exchange ideas and pass on their knowledge. However, there is intense competition among schools, and many coaches do not share their techniques with others. Over time, different schools have developed reputations for hurdles, short sprints, long sprints, or field events. Athletes seek out schools with excellent programs, and some high school athletes leave home and attend schools far away, where they receive scholarships that include tuition, fees, room and board. The alumni of track and field powerhouses support their alma mater with financial gifts or even room and board for athletes from distant communities. Some coaches even have dormitory rooms attached to their homes where athletes live during the school year. Over the Christmas holidays, some high schools house athletes on campus for weeks of intensive training, in preparation for competition starting in January. Tropical Jamaica has no indoor season.

Independent Jamaica still has vestiges of former colonial rule—the English ruled Jamaica from 1655 to 1962—and track and field was the only sports where merit determined the composition of teams. In sports like cricket, soccer, golf, and tennis, selection to colonial teams was based on class, color, and social background. Selection committees made decisions according to whom an athlete knew, instead of his or her athletic qualification. Track and field was and is, the only sport where the winner gets the gold medal, silver goes to second place, and the third-place athlete receives the bronze. The 100-meters is the same distance for everyone! This equality on the track permits all Jamaicans to have faith that the first person across the finish line will get the gold medal. The equality of all athletes in track and field should not be underestimated by those studying sprinting in Jamaica.

Jamaica: The Preponderance of Sprinters of Africa Heritage in the Americas

Over 90 percent of Jamaicans are from sub-Saharan African ancestry, and many Jamaicans are not of mixed blood; some even have distinct West African phenotypes. I remember living in West Africa, where my skin color was darker than many Africans. There has been a lot written about why the world's fastest sprinters have African heritage. During the post World War II epoch, after Black Africa and the Caribbean gained independence from European colonial powers, most of the fastest men and women

in the world have been Black sprinters from the United States and the Caribbean. A look at the finals of any recent Olympic games, except during the steroid-ridden Cold War, reveals that the world's fastest men and women were Black. While the reason will not be settled here, it is important to briefly discuss race and sprinting.

Only one White sprinter, the Frenchman Christophe Lemaitre has run the 100-meters in less than 10 seconds, and that was done just in 2010. The question is, why do Black sprinters dominate? Australian scientists have discovered a gene called ACTN3, which they attribute to Africans, and claim that it explains why individuals of African heritage dominate the sprints. Recently, the American sprinter Michael Johnson claimed that Blacks athletes are so fast because of slavery in the Americas. As a Historian of Slavery of Africans in the Americas, I remind Michael Johnson that enslaved Africans did little sprinting during slavery, and their food and living conditions were unhealthy. Furthermore, many enslaved Africans had a very short life expectancy, especially those enslaved on sugar plantations in the Caribbean. Furthermore, not one African from Africa has ever won an Olympic gold medal in the sprints.

That said, it is clear that athletes of African heritage who live throughout the Americas have dominated the sprints in the recent history of track and field. The exact reasons have not been established scientifically. However, a look at sprinting in the 1960s and 1970s, reveals a few very fast White sprinters. For example, the UCLA sprinter, American, Tom Jones won the 220-yard dash in the NCAA championship in 1966, but he was the last White sprinter to do so. The school record in the same 220-yards at “sprint-factory” Arizona State University is held by the White sprinter Jerry Bright, and not by Olympic medalists--the Black American sprinters Henry Carr, Ulis Williams, or Dwaine Evans. In 1976 the Swedish sprinter Chris Garpenborg even won the US outdoor National Championship in the 100-meters, in the pedestrian time of 10.39—he was the last White man to do so. As a University of Texas-El Paso (UTEP) runner he was permitted to compete in the US championship, as were other foreign born sprinters who attended American universities. After the 1970s, White Americans lost interest in sprinting, and sprinting became a Black event. Then there were the Communist sprinters in the 1970s and 1980s, but most of them were on steroids.

During the 1970s, track and field athletes were still classified as amateurs; however, many were paid under the table. When I attended the University of Texas-El Paso (UTEP) in 1971 and 1972, and then Arizona State University (ASU) from 1973-1975, I received cash, a new car, and other financial payments, and I was only a triple jumper. My teammates and friends who were sprinters and world record holders drove new Mercedes Benzes, and held no jobs, except running. UTEP boosters gave us \$20 and \$50 bills in the proverbial handshakes after home competitions. We received free rental cars on weekends and some athletes received free first-class airplane tickets to fly to meets. Other athletes had work study jobs, including guarding the track. At Arizona State University (ASU), boosters took our check deposit slips, which they used to deposit cash into our bank accounts. Banks never question a person making a cash deposit. At Arizona State University, I lived in affluent Scottsdale and drove a new Dodge Challenger, purchased with cash from boosters. Since a mere triple jumper like me received such benefits, one can only imagine what the Olympians and world record holders got!

Professional Track and Steroids: Changing Athletics Forever, 1970s to 2005

During the last third of the twentieth century and the first 5 years of this century, track and field was transformed by illegal drugs and cash payments to amateur athletes, and finally cash payments to professional competitors. During the 1970s, when I competed, cash payments were made under the table, but by the 1980s, athletes were paid legally by shoe companies, invitational meets, corporate sponsors, and national governments. Throughout the Cold War (mid-1940s to early 1990s), Communist athletes were employed and paid salaries by Iron Curtain countries. Western governments responded by looking the other way when their amateur athletes received money under the table. In the United States, student-athletes received university scholarships that paid tuition, fees, books, and room and board, but no cash, except \$15 per-month for laundry. However, coaches and university administrators turned a blind eye to under the table payments athletes received from boosters, shoe companies and invitational meets.

Communist athletes, especially the East Germans and others in the Soviet Block began abusing steroids since the 1950s, when they first competed in the Olympics. By the 1960s Western athletes, mainly in the field events joined the steroid regime. During the 1970s and afterwards, steroids dominated the sprints, throws, and jumps in Communist

and Western track and field. Western governments knew the Communists athletes were using drugs, and ignored drug use by their own athletes. When I competed in university athletics in the United States from 1971-1975, there were no drug tests in the NCAA, and steroid use was rampant.

Performance-enhancing drugs dominated track and field from the 1970s to 2005, and a look at pictures of athletes in the magazine *Track and Field News* shows athletes metamorphosing from slender men and women to muscle-bound weightlifters. Women sprinters on steroids began to run as fast as high school boys, and some women were as muscular as men—especially the East Germans. The affect of steroids on track and field is most pronounced in women's sprinting and weight events. For example, the present world records in the women's 100-meters, 200-meters, 400-meters, 800-meters, 4 x 100-meter relay, 4 x 400-meter relay, and 100-meter hurdles were all set from 1983 to 1988. Present-day women are not running anything close to any of those world-record times set twenty-five years ago. Most telling is the women's world record in the 100-meters, which is 10.49--the fastest woman in 2012, before the London games, is a Jamaican running 10.70.

Before 2005 it was easy for track and field athletes to take drugs and still not fail drug tests. This was because athletes selected the meets where they would compete, and their medical staff calculated when they had to stop using drugs in order for the drug to leave their system. There were few out of season random drug tests, and in the past, athletes could simply hide from drug testers. Without mandatory random drug tests, athletes easily beat the system year after year. Then, at the 1988 Olympics in Seoul, the Jamaican born and Canadian running Ben Johnson ran so fast that even an ignorant spectator knew he was using something illegal. Johnson was caught only after the Olympic officials used a very sophisticated electronic microscope to detect the steroid that everyone knew was in his system. However, Ben Johnson was not the only gold medal winning sprinter in that Olympics who was on drugs! Six out of the eight finalists in the 100 meters in Seoul were implicated in performance-enhancing drug scandals. Ben Johnson showed the entire world that track and field was dirty. This was an open secret to any world-class athlete who competed in the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and early twenty-first century. Performance-enhancing drugs would dominate track and field until 2004-2005.

The Death of Amateurism and the Advent of Professional Track and Field

In 1972 International Olympic Committee (IOC) president, Avery Brundage retired, and after that Olympic rules of amateurism steadily relaxed until professional athletes were welcomed into track and field and the Olympics. At the end of the 1970s, the United States passed the Amateur Sports Act, prohibiting national governing bodies from having more stringent standards of amateurism than international bodies for those sports. In 1992 when the United States sent professional National Basketball Association (NBA) “dream team” of superstars to win the Olympics in Barcelona, amateurism died in the Olympics, except for wrestling and boxing.

During the 1980s, track and field stars began to legally earn millions of dollars from shoe companies, corporate sponsors, television commercials, and invitational track meets. In 1982 the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) abandoned amateurism. Then in 1997 the IAAF paid prize money in championships, and a year later the Golden League, precursor of today’s Diamond League, paid prize money above the table. As we have seen, for years before that, invitational meets in Europe and America had paid athletes under the table. I received such payments from invitational meets in the 1970s, and I was a mere All-American Triple Jumper.

Paying the best athletes millions of dollars annually gave some of them a financial incentive to cheat, and not retire, even in their thirties. Some athletes won by taking performance-enhancing drugs. Many of the top athletes in track and field employed doctors, chemists, pharmacists, professors, graduate students, trainers, coaches and even publicists to assist them in taking performance-enhancing drugs, and not being caught by drug testing officials. Track and field became big business, and like many profitable cash-based businesses, money attracted unsavory characters. The officials who governed and regulated the sport at the end of the twentieth century were always a few steps behind drug-abusing athletes and their cohorts. Primo Nebiolo, only the fourth president of the IAAF in 80 years, paid little attention to performance-enhancing drugs. After he died of a heart attack in 1999, his successor Lamine Diack introduced a new drug-free culture to track and field, and he and the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) are responsible for cleaning up the former drug-infested the sport.

Steroids and performance-enhancing drugs had dominated track and field during the Cold War when both superpowers and their satellites protected drug-taking athletes. Both superpowers used the Olympic Games as a battlefield to prove the superiority of their system. Track and field became embroiled in the Cold War, and athletes from non-superpower states like tiny Jamaica and other nations followed the lead of the Americans and Soviets. Since most American Olympians in track and field came from American colleges and universities, the NCAA athletes took steroids en masse, especially when there were no drug tests. I competed in NCAA championships in 1972, 1974 and 1975, before the advent of drug tests in collegiate athletics. During those days many world-class athletes took performance-enhancing drugs, without ever taking a drug test.

In the early 1990s, the Berlin Wall fell, and Communism came crashing down. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, hundreds of millions of dollars in state funding to sports programs ended, and so did the secret Communist bureaucracy that promoted performance-enhancing drugs. All of a sudden those world-dominating East German sprinters vanished and could not make the finals in international meets. Communist women sprinters who had easily run sub-11 seconds for the 100-meters could not break the 11-second barrier. Soviet women who once ran 47 and 48 seconds for the 400-meters could not break 50-seconds. Communist women went from running 3.15 for the 4 x 400-meter relay to running in the 3.20s. Gone were the steroids and the super-fast Communist sprinters.

I am not picking on women athletes, but steroid use made women sprint very fast when compared to drug-free women. Although men also abused steroids during the Cold War and up to 2004-2005, drug-free men have broken world records in the 100-meters, 200-meters, and sprint relay, while drug-free women are not even approaching drug-induced sprint world records. Today, not one drug-free woman sprinter is running anything close to any world record! Yet, track and field officials ignore the drug-induced women's world records of the 1970 and 1980s.

During the 1980s, 1990s, and first five years of the twenty-first century, some of the fastest men and women in the world took performance-enhancing drugs, passed drug tests, and made millions of dollars. According to *Track and Field News*, the "Bible of the Sport," in the 1999 World Championship in Seville, "the IAAF gives out a \$60,000 prize

along with each individual gold medal at the Worlds (silvers are worth \$30K, bronzes \$20K). Relay teams split prizes of \$80K, \$40K and \$30K. (Athletes) also picked up a \$50,000 prize for a World Record.” (*Track and Field News*, November 1999, p. 77). The best track and field athletes earned additional millions of dollars annually from prize money, shoe contracts, sponsors, appearance fees, and commercial endorsements. Speaking fees and memberships on corporate boards of directors proved lucrative for star athletes, who had the monetary incentive to cheat.

Catching the Drug Cheaters and Cleaning Up Track and Field, 2004 to the Present
The performance-enhanced drug world of track and field came tumbling down on the sport’s biggest stars in 2004, and 2005, after the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) received a syringe from an unidentified source and secretly developed a test for a previously undetectable steroid. American law enforcement agents traced the syringe to the American-based Jamaican born track coach, Trevor Graham. Before 2004, he coached the two fastest male and female sprinters in the world, multiple Olympic gold medalist Marion Jones and the then world record holder in the 100-meters, Tim Montgomery, as well as the 2004 Olympic gold medalist in the 100-meters, Justin Gatlin. All three and many others world ranked athletes also failed the new drug test. After Jones and Montgomery had split from Coach Graham, he sent the syringe with the undetectable steroid to American track and field officials!

The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) and Dr. Don Catlin of UCLA used the drugs in the syringe to develop a test for the previously undetectable steroid, and then tested athletes and caught many of the fastest men and women in the world. The world best sprinters and other athletes had been using steroids that were undetectable by drug tests. Olympic champions, world record holders, world champions and stars in track and field, and other sports, were shown to have been using steroids—even during the Olympic Games, where they were tested and passed drug tests.

American law enforcement officials traced the undetectable steroids to the Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative (BALCO) and its founder, Victor Conte who had developed a designer steroid--“the clear and the cream”--that allowed athletes to take steroids and still pass drug tests. Those in the inner circle of track and field knew that a number of the world’s best athletes were taking steroids, and now there was proof. The

former world record holder in the 400 meters hurdles, Edwin Moses, kept complaining about performance enhancing drug use while he competed, and after he retired, but he was ridiculed by drug taking athletes and the powerful men who governed track and field. After WADA developed the new drug test, many athletes were forced to return their Olympic gold medals and prize money. Marion Jones went to prison, not for using steroids, but for lying to federal officials. Some athletes who had not failed a drug test were shown to have been taking performance enhancing drugs, as in the case of the Greek sprinters, the Olympic champion in the men's 200 meters, Costas Kenteris, and the silver medalist in the women's 100 meters in the Sydney games, Katerina Thanou. Both failed to show up for random drug test, and faked an automobile accident, but were shown to have been evading the new random drug testing protocol. In addition, a number of star athletes suddenly retired from track and field, while others came down with so-called career ending injuries. Most of the fastest older athletes who dominated the world of track and field from the 1990s to early twenty-first century, abruptly vanished from the sport. In their place came a new group of younger, drug-free athletes, starting with the 2004 Athens Olympics. These younger athletes were not muscle-bound looking weightlifters but looked like normal women and men.

Jamaican Sprinters Emerged as the Fastest Men and Women in the World, 2005 to Today
Jamaica has had great sprinters since the London Olympics in 1948 when the island's first Olympians won gold and silver medals. However, Jamaican sprinters had not won multiple Olympic gold medals in individual events until 2008. In Sydney in 2000, Jamaican women sprinters won five silver medals, and two bronze medals, and the men won two bronze. In Athens, Jamaican sprinter Veronica Campbell-Brown won the 200-meters and joined her teammates to win the 4 x 100-meters relay, the women also won the bronze in the 4 x 400meter relay, and one man won a silver medal in the 400meter hurdles. Then after that, Jamaican sprinters began to dominate the world.

Four years later in 2008 in the Beijing Olympics, Jamaican men and women sprinters won a remarkable 6 gold medals and swept the top three positions in the women's 100-meters. Jamaican sprinters placed first and third in the women's 200-meters, won silver in the women's 400-meters and took home the bronze medal in the women 4 x 400-meter relay. On the men's side, the sprint star of the Beijing games was

Usain Bolt, who won the 100-meters and 200-meters in world record times, and also ran on the 4 x 100-meter relay that won the gold in a world record. However, Bolt was the only Jamaican man to win an individual medal in the Beijing games! After Beijing, the world began to ask, why are Jamaicans running so fast?

As stated above, the Jamaican culture, its perfect weather, excellent food and water, strong tradition in sprinting, and its Africa heritage all helped Jamaicans sprint so fast. However, by 2008 a number of other factors came together to create the fastest sprinters in the world. First, the BALCO scandal and the newly discovered WADA drug test caught a large number of sprinters who took performance-enhancing drugs, and suddenly removed them from track and field. Second, many sprinters not caught by new drug tests retired from the sport. Some concluded they could not compete without performance-enhancing drugs. Third, Communism had ended in the early 1990s, and neither the Communist or Western nations were protecting drug cheaters, the way they did during the Cold War. Fourth, the conviction and prison sentences given to athletes, coaches, and drug dealers forced a number of athletes to abandon track and field, especially when the sport and WADA introduced new, radical and stringent anti drug protocols, including year-round random testing. Athletes were now responsible for everything in their bodies, with no excuses, and they had to inform WADA of their location, 24/7, and be available for drug-testing. Missing a drug test, constituted failing the drug test. Fifth, a new younger generation of Caribbean athletes, coaches, and administrators saw a lucrative financial opportunity in sprinting—now that the athletes were running on a level track.

Perhaps the greatest revolution to global sprinting came when Jamaican athletes decided to stay in Jamaica, instead of accepting athletic scholarships to run at colleges and universities in the United States. Since the 1940s, the fastest Jamaican sprinters had accepted athletic scholarships at American colleges and universities and migrated north. However, in 1999 Stephen Francis decided to coach Jamaican sprinters at home. He and Bruce James established the Maximizing Velocity and Power Track and Field Club (MVP), in Kingston, Jamaica. In addition, the IAAF established a High Performance Centre for Sprinting and Hurdling, also in Kingston. Initially, the programs were based at the University of Technology (UTECH), where Jamaican athletes received athletic

scholarships enabling them to attend the university and run track. For the first time, the fastest Jamaican sprinters stayed at home, and did not go to American colleges and universities.

As a former student-athlete at the University of Texas-El Paso (UTEP) and Arizona State University (ASU), I had joined thousands of Jamaican athletes who accepted track and field scholarships to American universities during the second half of the twentieth century. As a freshman at UTEP I jumped in 15 meets, and traveled from El Paso, Texas, to compete in Philadelphia, Detroit, Oregon, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona and California—all while taking 18 semester hours. At the end of my freshman year, I flew from the NCAA Championships in Oregon to my parent's home in New York City and was physically exhausted for weeks. I am lucky that I only triple jumped, sprinters ran up to four events per meet. American universities burned out foreign and American athletes. We began training in September and competed both indoors and outdoors. Coaches cared about winning meets, and not about the health of athletes.

With the advent of professional track and field at the end of the twentieth century, sprinters began to stay in Jamaica, instead of accepting athletic scholarships to American universities. Track and field clubs popped up across Jamaica. Racers Track Club, based at the University of the West Indies (UWI), began to rival MVP Track Club at University of Technology (UTECH), and the two clubs competed for the best athletes. Jamaican sprinters had the choice of remaining at home, going to university, running track, and making money. Unlike American colleges and universities where NCAA athletes are amateurs, Jamaican universities gave athletic scholarships and permitted athletes to make money running on the professional circuit. The opportunity to stay in Jamaica, run track, get a university education, and make money led many of the fastest athletes to stay at home, instead of accepting athletic scholarships in the United States. In Jamaica one American dollar equals eighty-eight Jamaican dollars, and this exchange rate made the fastest Jamaican sprinters rich men and women.

Initially, the MVP Track Club progressed slowly at the beginning of the twenty-first century, and only one athlete competed in the 2000 Olympics, and she did not medal in the sprint hurdles. Coach Steven Francis of MVP took the unknown sprinter Asafa Powell and improved his 100-meter time from 10.5 in 2001 to a world record of 9.77 in

2005. Then in the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, MVP women athletes won gold medals in the 100-meters and 400-meter hurdles, silver medals in the 100-meters and 400-meters, and three women ran on the bronze medal winning 4 x 400-meter relay. MVP men ran three legs on the Olympic-gold medal and world record-setting 4 x 100 meter relay. This domination of sprinting by one Jamaican track club shocked the world and proved that Jamaican sprinters who remained at home could become fastest in the world, while attending university and making a lot of money. American universities could not compete with Jamaican universities and track clubs!

The best example of a Jamaican sprinter eschewing American universities and running in Jamaica is Usain Bolt. He has dominated sprinting in track and field since 2008, when he won three gold medals in world record times in the Beijing Olympics. Bolt had won the World Juniors in 2004, running a juniors record 19.95 for the 200-meters. In 2004 he turned professional but was injured in 2005 and 2006. He regained his health in 2007 when he ran 19.75 to break the national record of the legendary Olympic gold medalist and former world-record holder Donald Quarrie. Then in 2008, he broke the world record for 100-meters, running 9.72 in New York City. After his world record performances in the Beijing Olympics, Bolt replicated the feat in the World Championships in Berlin in 2009, when he broke his world records for the 100-meters, and the 200-meters, and ran on the gold-medal and world-record setting Jamaican 4 x 100-meter relay. Bolt's 9.58 and 19.19 for the 100-meters and 200-meters respectively, and he revived global interest in track and field.

Bolt is coached by Mr. Glen Mills of Racers Track Club, based at the University of the West Indies (UWI). Coach Mills has guided other top sprinters including Raymond Stewart and Tim Collins, and is known as one of the best sprint coaches in the world. This year, 2012, Bolt has been beaten by his teammate Yohan Blake, who won the 100-meter World Championship in Germany, and then ran the second fastest 200-meters in history, after Bolt. Recently, in the just completed Jamaican Olympic Trials, Blake beat Bolt in both the 100-meters and the 200-meters. Some are claiming that Blake will beat Bolt in the sprint-double in the upcoming London Olympics. We will have to wait and see—but I will remind spectators—do not count out a healthy Bolt.

Finally, sprinters who stay at home in Jamaica run only a small fraction of the meets run by athletes at American universities. World-class Jamaican sprinters run only three or four meets annually in Jamaica and run just one event at money-making Diamond League Meets in Europe, Asia and the United States. Sprinters who live and train in Jamaica probably run one-fourth of the meets that a typical NCAA athlete runs in the United States, per year. Where college sprinters in American universities run the 4 x 100 meter relay, the 100-meters, 200-meters, and sometimes finish with 4 x 400-meter relays, Jamaicans who stay in Jamaica run one race per meet. Some coaches in American universities, including Jamaican coaches, run student-athletes indoors and outdoors from January to June, and like me, some athletes run up to 15 meets per-year--and remember sprinters run multiple events in each meet. . By staying home Jamaican sprinters can practice on grass tracks and run only one race in a few meets.

Conclusion

Jamaican sprinters have dominated the world over the last few years because of the transformation in global track and field, and cultural variables that make Jamaica a paradise for Afro-Caribbean people to run very fast. As the largest English-speaking Caribbean island, Jamaica is blessed with clean spring water, a hot climate, rich volcanic soil, a pristine tropical island, few poisonous insects and animals, and a plethora of fresh fruits, vegetables, and food crops. The Jamaican government has established an excellent system of primary, secondary, and high schools where almost all children under 17 attend school. Jamaican mothers neither drink alcohol nor smoke, and their families and neighbors ensure that pregnant women have the freshest fruits and foods. Most Jamaican children walk to school, which builds strong muscles in their formative years. Parents provide natural home-cooked food daily, and the Jamaican child grows up in a healthy environment grounded in a strong Afro-Caribbean tradition.

Almost all Jamaican children run track at a young age, when they take off their shoes and run barefoot on athletic grass fields surrounding schools. The fastest athletes matriculate to schools with well-established track and field programs, some dating back over a century. Jamaican high school coaches, some of whom were Olympians and world class sprinters and jumpers, coach youths how to run fast. Track and Field administrators

across the island have established a series of island-wide meets that lead to a high school national championship called Boys and Girls CHAMPS, where the best athletes compete against each other year after year. In the former colonial society where upward mobility is still based on a hierarchical structure of class, politics, color, income, religion, and profession, track and field is the only area where success is based solely on merit. Track and field is also a vehicle for upward mobility, which permits the fastest athletes to escape poverty and become rich and famous, regardless of whom they know or what they look like.

In the past, Jamaican sprinters accepted athletic scholarships to American universities, where some succeeded but most became burned out. But with the end of the Cold War, the birth of professional track and field, and a scientific, almost fool-proof drug-testing protocol of the IAAF and WADA--since 2004, Jamaican sprinters began to stay at home. Instead of going to American universities and running as amateurs, Jamaican athletes remain at home where they attend university, run, and make money as professionals. In Jamaica sprinters never experience cold, and do not run cross-country—they only sprint.

Finally, in 2004-2005 the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) discovered a new drug test that caught large numbers of the world's fastest athletes who were taking performance-enhancing drugs. This led to a sudden exodus of most sprinters from track and field, and the birth of a younger generation of drug-free Jamaican, Caribbean, and American sprinters. Today, most of the best Jamaican sprinters are staying at home; however, some still accept track and field scholarships to American colleges and universities. In one week the London Olympics will begin and Jamaican sprinters will compete and show the world that this small Caribbean island has some of the fastest women and men on the planet, and is a sprinter's paradise.