

SPORTS

Strachan's World Relays performance stamps her as authentic "elite" athlete

She stands as one of the greatest CARIFTA athletes, ever.

Anthonique Strachan reigned supreme in regional and international junior sprinting in 2011 and 2012. She was the sprint queen of CARIFTA, winning in both years, the 100 and 200 meters gold medals. She won the World Junior Championships titles in the 100 and 200 meters in 2012 and the year before Strachan was the Pan Am Junior champion in the 200 meters.

Her post-junior career has not followed in form. Injuries, plus a relay mishap hampered her as a senior competitor. In fact, not until Sunday, April 23, did she win anything on the international scene as a senior elite performer.

Her breakthrough at the senior international level came before a house of adoring fans. The oc-

casian was the final evening of the Third International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) World Relays at the Thomas A. Robinson National Stadium.

Running the third leg of the historic Bahamian mixed 1600 meters relay team, Strachan was superb. She countered the strategy of the United States team, which opted, to pit one of their male runners against her. Clearly, they picked on Strachan, thinking that going after her with a male was their best option for overcoming the host country.

What Strachan did was solidify the view that she has the capability to be a quality open 400 meters runner. Her 52.88 split enabled her to pass off the baton in fifth position in the eight-nation field and provide anchor

Michael Mathieu with a safe run against Claudia Francis of the USA, to capture the first gold medal for The Bahamas in World Relays competition.

Strachan's time, proof of her ability to sustain over the entire one lap of sprinting, was significant. However, for me, most compelling was how she refused to be intimidated by being forced to keep The Bahamas in a manageable position, in search of the gold medal.

American Paul Dedewo was on a pace to run a split of 45.23, but he was unable to catch Strachan until approaching the final turn for the homestretch. It was too late. In a gutsy fashion that she will be long remembered for, Strachan hung on and handed off to Mathieu, having served her country quite well. It was a fitting performance for a

champion caliber athlete.

Her moment on the podium at an international senior event was rather long in coming, but there she was, along with Steven Gardiner, Shaunae Miller-Uibo, and Mathieu, smiling and gleeful.

At 23, Strachan, once able to avoid the injuries, will make many more podiums. She and Miller-Uibo are the two most versatile sprinters in the nation. Miller-Uibo is 23 also, and has personal bests of 11.19 in the 100 meters, 22.05 for the 200 meters and 49.44 for the 400 meters.

Strachan although not comparable in achievements as a senior athlete, has appreciable numbers, 11.20 over 100 meters; 22.32 for the 200 meters and a best of 52.40 in the 400 meters.

The view here is that the performance at the World Relays signaled the arrival of an Anthonique Strachan who will become a major force to deal with in the very near future.

Best wishes Anthonique!

(To respond to this column, kindly contact Fred Sturup at sturup1504@gmail.com What-App 727-6363).



MIXED RELAY – Anthonique Strachan receiving baton from Shaunae Miller-Uibo

Sports Scope

By Fred Sturup



Grand Bahama athletes prominent in national women's sprint relay mix

SHAYNE STUBBS
FN Sports Reporter
Shayne@nasguard.com

Grand Bahamians were prominent during the recent International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) World Relays in New Providence.

It was historic, as Grand Bahamians were pushed to the forefront of the female sprint relay team, to go along with Michael Mathieu and Demetrius Pinder of the men's 1600 meters force.

The women's 4x100m quartet featured three Grand Bahamian sprinters who were instrumental in The Bahamas qualifying in the event for the IAAF World Championships in August.

Significantly a party of the youth movement of Grand Bahama, Devine Parker, Brienne Bethel and Tynia Gaither, along with Tayla Carter provided The Bahamas with its season best time of 44.01 in the women's 4x100 meters on day two of the competition (April 23).

Parker had recently competed in the 2017 Flow CARIFTA Games in Willemstad, Curacao the weekend prior (April 15-17). The young dynamo came away with a silver medal in the Under-18 girl's 200 meters with a time of 23.87 seconds. She came close to her season best time of 23.80 seconds, which she registered back at the CARIFTA trials on April 1. She also helped team Bahamas land a silver medal in the Under 18 girls' 4x100m.

Parker also boasts a season best time of 11.51 seconds in the 100 meters, which she turned in at the National High School Track and Field Championships in March.

Bethel may have missed the CARIFTA trip this year but proved she could perform on the IAAF stage, despite a rocky time of it at the 2015 edition of the World Relays. The current Houston (University) Cougar was a multi-medal winner during her CARIFTA stints in 2013-



DEVINE PARKER (left) and TYNIA GAITHER (Right)
(PHOTOS: BY JENNEVA RUSSELL)

2016 and won numerous medals at the High School Championships here in The Bahamas.

So far in 2017 Bethel has registered season-best times in her specialties (100m and 200m). Competing in the 100m at the Houston Alumni Invitational April 8, she clocked a wind-aided time of 11.55 seconds. At an event on April 14, Bethel logged a wind-aided time of 23.73 seconds in the 200 meters.

Gaither, the recent University of Southern California (USC) graduate, has moved into the professional rank. She competed on the Olympic stage in 2016 at the Rio de Janeiro Olympics, in the women's 200 meters. She

finished in the top 25 with a time of 23.45 seconds.

Her professional career has gotten off to a rather solid start. She competed in the women's 200 meters at the Grenada Invitational April 8 and walked away with a silver medal in the time of 22.71 seconds. The former Trojan finished behind Felicia Brown of the United States and ahead of Jura Levy and Veronica Campbell Brown of Jamaica.

With the World Championships a few months away, the 4 x 100 national team with its great Grand Bahama flavor, has some time to get stronger and better prepared for world peers.



BRIENNE BETHEL

*Don't Just Spectate participate
in the sport of your choice!*