

## JAMAICA STRONG AT WORLD JUNIORS – RILEY



Head coach David Riley has high praise for the athletes who performed for Jamaica at the just concluded World U20 Championships in Nairobi, Kenya. Riley called the 11 medal haul a product of the nation's mature track and field programme and lauded the coaches involved.

Jamaica ended fifth on the medal table with 3 gold, 6 silver and 2 bronze medals.

Speaking from Nairobi after the competition ended on August 22, Riley put the team

effort into perspective. "Only two other teams grabbed more medals than we did and both of those are regional teams, Kenya and Ethiopia, just up the road pretty much, didn't have to deal with the acclimatization issues that we had to deal with, so it was a very good performance", he reasoned.

He pinpointed medal winning performances in the sprints, hurdles, jumps and throws, saying, "we certainly have a mature track and field programme, at the junior level, that we're seeing world level type performances in such a wide range of events."

The team had just 4 medals - gold for Tina Clayton and Ackera Nugent in the 100 metres and the 100 metre hurdles respectively, silver for Vashaun Vascianna in the 110 metre hurdles, and bronze for Kavian Kerr in the long jump - when the final day of competition began but finished with a rush. Riley credited the surge to preparation and resilience. "One of the themes throughout, we've been talking to them about, is resilience, is we have to bounce back whatever the disappointments and setbacks there are and I think the general thing where the Jamaican athlete never want to go to an international competition and not return with a medal so that idea helped to galvanize team effort so relays become a very important outing for our athletes", he recorded.

Jamaica set a world junior record in the girls' 4x100 and won silvers in the boys' 4x100 and both 4x400 finals. "We've been practicing. We've had the relay camps, the time to work the combinations in practice and so it was very easy for them to just go out there and repeat what we've done several times. We've been doing this for at least 2 and half months so what we saw today is what we should see from all our national teams, once we can get them together and practice", he affirmed.

With Ralford Mullings and Jayden Hibbert taking silvers in the discus and the triple jump respectively and Devontie Archer getting third in the 400 metre hurdles, Jamaica took 7 medals on the final day.

Riley doesn't believe that the absence of the USA and Great Britain devalues the Jamaican performance at all. "It doesn't take away from what our performances were. When you think about the fact that we have national records, world records, world leads, the performances speak for themselves. It's been a long season and these kids are in the best shape of their lives. it's a great outing, great showing for the coaches who manage these athletes", he reviewed.

HL