

SIREN

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\$70



WOMEN

AND SPORT

- THE INDOMITABLE
DEON HEMMINGS
- GRACE JACKSON-SMALL:
GIVING SOMETHING BACK
TO SPORTS
- THE NEAR DEATH AND
MIRACULOUS RE-BIRTH OF
ANA QUIROT
- VILMA CHARLTON - SPANNING
THE YEARS
- MERLENE OTTEY'S UNYIELDING
SPIRIT

SISTREN OUT DEH!

REGIONAL

Sixth International Inter-disciplinary Congress on Women Australia

Beverley Hanson from Jamaica, represented Sistren at the 6th International Inter-Disciplinary Congress on Women April 21-26, 1996 in Adelaide - South Australia. As Keynote Speaker Ms. Hanson presented a paper on "Cultural Expressions of the Oppressed". The paper examines Sistren's experience in Popular Theatre, with working class women, and women in general as one oppressed group. The paper was presented on April 24, in the Napier Lecture Theatre, University of Adelaide. Co-presenter was Dr. Roberta Sykes (Australia), a graduate of Harvard University in the field of Education, a black community activist, poet, academic and author. Her presentation was titled "The UN's Declaration of 1996, as the Year of the Eradication of Poverty".

Extract from Bev's Paper

As it relates to communication through the media, Sistren is considered "Alternative Media." We aim to develop this medium as we aim to succeed in this medium. As one of our "learned" friends would say, "when we as Media Practitioners portray the lives, situations, concerns, failures and successes of any individual, group, or organisation, both male and female we should do so in a way that dignifies them". I truly believe in this statement because as a member of Sistren Theatre Collective dignity is a true and living example for us. We choose drama as a tool to highlight our circumstances, analyse them and make them better.

Workshops at University of Maryland

Afolashade and Mrs. Myrtle Thompson-Rose conducted a series of workshops, and did small performances at the University of Maryland - Maryland, USA in April 1996. These were based on the Polyseminar Series: "Thinking about Women and Gender in an Era of Global change: Internationalizing and Engendering the Curriculum".

Presentations were done from extracts from the Lionheart Gal Book stories: "Di Flowers Vase", "Country Madda Legacy", "Rock Stone a River Bottom".

There was a cultural presentation on how people see beauty, and the soap operas.

The workshops sessions looked at techniques using women's bodies for the sale of commodity.

Cervical Cancer Meeting - Barbados

Lana Finikin attended a meeting in Barbados, October 7-10, 1996. The meeting was held:

- To discuss lessons learned from the recently concluded Cancer Control Project and their implications for prevention and control of cervical cancer in CARICOM countries.

- To identify regional goals, targets and strategies to

guide the development of national programs for reduction of the incidence of and mortality from cervical cancer in CARICOM countries.

- To identify opportunities for Technical Cooperation among Countries (TCC) and strategies for PAHO's technical cooperation to CARICOM countries, addressing common issues and supporting national priorities in cervical cancer prevention and control.

The conference was attended by medical practitioners who practise gynaecology or obstetrics and members of NGOs. However, because of the clinical jargon that continues to be used throughout the conference by persons in the medical field, it was sometimes difficult for members of the NGO body to understand and fully participate.

It was stressed that since the information and findings of the project are targetted at the women who are high-risk then practitioners need to speak in layman terms so the women can participate in understanding more about PAP Smear and Cervical Cancer Screening.

LOCAL

FES Workshop

The Coalition for Citizens participation in Local Government, the Department of Government - UWI, in collaboration with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, put on a symposium entitled "Civil Society and the State: Towards Community Participation in Local Government and Authority".

This was designed to strengthen and widen the base of the Coalition's demands regarding Local Government reform in Jamaica. It also seeks to deepen the knowledge and involvement of citizens in the reform process, especially at the community level. Sistren was represented at this symposium.

Members of Sistren participated in some of the activities celebrating International Women's Day 1996.

- Dinner in honour of Mrs. Peggy Antrobus at Jamaica Pegasus Hotel.
- Launch of a Candidates Fund at the Wyndham Hotel. Main address by Mrs. Beverley Cooper, wife of the United States Ambassador of Jamaica.
- Luncheon/Seminar Leadership Effectiveness Communication at Medallion Hall Hotel located at 53 Hope Road.
- Performance of "The Family through the Eyes of the Child" a reading from Lionheart Gal, at Book Wise book store on Old Hope Road.

Internet Seminar

Five members of the Collective participated in the "Internet Seminar for Business Professionals and Internet Enthusiasts" put on by the Jamaica Association of Marketing Professionals (JAMP), held at UTECH Entrepreneurial

cont'd on pg. 36

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Sistren is produced three times a year by the **Sistren Theatre Collective** as part of its ongoing efforts to highlight issues of concern to women in the society. **Sistren** is a non-profit collective of women. Other activities include theatre, workshops using Drama-in-Education methodology, and research. **Sistren** has also experimented with film and video and produced a book of members' life stories. **Lionheart Gal. Sistren Textiles** is the group's income-earning project. Contact: 20 Kensington Crescent, Kingston 5, Jamaica, West Indies. Tel: (809) 92-92457 / 92-96171

ACQUAINTED



Dawnette Hinds with her son Alezxi Harris

SISTREN PROFILE

Alezxi Steffon Chevonne Romario Harris. Quite a mouthful huh? I'm never called by all five of them at one given time though.

I'm usually called Alezxi or affectionately Lex. By the way, this profile is about me, but before I give you anymore 'his' story of myself I want to tell you a little 'her' story about my mommy, Dawnette Hinds. At present she works with the Sistren Artistic Team (SAT) as an Actress/Popular Theatre Animation.

This is her official job title since February 1995, when she began to work with

Sistren Theatre Collective full-time. Her relationship with Sistren started in 1993 when she was invited to work as a guest actress in their major production "All Age Right". The title was later changed to Kulchafushan.

I prefer the first title but the latter title fitted in with the content of the production better. I say this because I was put in my mommy's stomach by my daddy **Ralston Harris** when "all age was right" and by the time I was big enough to be kicking mommy and upsetting her stomach when she ate anything, it was Kulchafushan!!

cont'd on pg 43

Personal Notes

CONGRATS: Keidre Kogle - "Big son" of Sistren's only female drummer, **Joy Erskine**, was successful in his common entrance exams for 1996 and now attends Calabar High School. Jackie her older daughter is working and studying in the United States.

AWARD: Peta Ann Baker, Chairman of the Environmental Foundation of Jamaica, was recently awarded the CUSO Thirty-Fifth Anniversary Award for meritorious contribution to development. She was awarded in the volunteer category.

"TUUHEDBETA DAN WAN": Carolyn and Cecil Gutzmore 'jump de broom' on September 1, 1996 at the University Chapel, Mona. Congrats C&C.

BIRTHS: Mrs. Annie Blake-Williams, who recently gave birth to a bouncing baby girl in April of this year. The proud mother and father, Eugene Williams are really excited and proud of the new addition to the family.

Maxine Osbourne who played the character 'Junior' in our last major production, 'KULCHAFUSHAN', also had a baby girl in April of this year. Maxine we hope to see you soon and congrats.

DEATHS: We give our heart felt condolences to members of the Sistren family who recently lost loved ones.

Joy Erskine who lost her father **Lorna Burrell** lost her grandmother **Annie Blake-Williams** whose mother passed away in August.

Jenny Jones-Levy and **Horace Levy** who lost their mother and mother-in-law **Hertencer Lindsay**, former play director, QPH, now working and residing in the United States, lost her husband Ike.

'HATS OFF': To **Beverley Anderson Manley**, who was awarded the Order of Distinction (Commander Class).

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REFLECTIONS ON NATION-BUILDING

"Eternal Father , Bless our Land... Jamaica, Jamaica, Jamaica, Jamaica, Land we Love..."

In the last few months of 1996, cinema-goers witnessed, and were part of a new phenomenon.

The drums roll, heralding the playing of the National Anthem before the start of the film at Sovereign

Cineplex. On the screen is the image of a young woman flushed with the pride of victory, and deeply moved, overwhelmed even, by the realisation that she has created history, overcome by the emotion of the wonderful moment as the distinctive Jamaican flag unfurls and flutters. Maybe she wants to sob, or shout Alleluia! And we, with her. The anthem ends, but for a few seconds the audience seems unwilling to let go of the moment and collapse back into their seats.

Sure, everybody in the audience wishes that we had the chance to see Merlene Ottey standing for once on the highest rung. But somehow, Deon Hemming's extraordinary victory has not diminished Merlene's stature in our eyes. Deon has not superseded Merlene; she has come to stand beside her. Perhaps as a nation we are beginning to appreciate the true significance of winning , the pride of accumulated triumphs. The process is very similar to growing up: effort, struggle, triumph, pride.....

Phillip Sherlock keeps trying to tell us of the many things we should take pride in; the many achievements which are the building blocks of nationhood; the psychic loss of not celebrating and re-

warding our victories. We also must not forget that each winner's triumph is a team effort. On the first leg of

Merlene's long road to glory, Mrs Joan Bowen Ottey was there holding her hand on that lonely journey to Kingston; when Deon surged over her final hurdle her mind flashed to Pat Anderson, the man who had helped her see this day in her future; and as they watched Grace Jackson take her historic silver in Seoul, her sisters must have smiled at the memory of the conspiracy to get her to her first CARIFTA Games. Effort, struggle, triumph, pride, the building blocks of nationhood... but it is for the society as a whole to provide the opportunity for each child, each citizen, to reasonably hope that effort and discipline can reap triumph. Effort that leads only to despair will crush the nation's spirit and the citizens' will.

The triumphs do not have to be gold-medal winning, world-shaking ones. Some are quite small; but each one counts for something. Some new platform reached, some new bridge crossed, some new threshold passed, some symbolic happening that makes us grow in our own eyes.

Those of us who are old enough, will recall the mixed feelings about the Jamaican flag at Independence in 1962. The flags we had grown up with, the only flags we knew, were the flags of Europe and North America, the flags that ruled us. They defined our preference- red, white and blue- the colours we were used to, the colours of empire and domination. The bolder colours of our flag, black, green and gold, and its equally bold pattern, seemed just so loud!

But time teaches us lessons, and new preferences. Which Jamaican now, at home or abroad, does not feel a sense of proud ownership when our bold, bright flag unfurls in a fluttering breeze? The story of our flag can teach us something about getting used to our own symbols, about developing our own preferences, about performing as equals on the stages of the world. The stories of our sports heroines teach us about the triumph of hope and effort over disadvantage. And the sweetness of victory.

Q



Photo: The Observer Newspaper



Photo: Observer Files



Photo: Charles Ferguson

MESSAGE FROM
THE HON. PORTIA SIMPSON, M.P.
Minister of Labour, Social Security and Sport

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR WOMEN WHO ARE INTERESTED IN BEING INVOLVED IN SPORTS

Today, building on the foundation laid by the pioneers of the past, Jamaican women are excelling in sports, especially athletics and netball. In the early days, it was no easy task to break into the male-dominated field of athletics, but women such as Una Morris, Andrea Bruce and Vilma Charlton gained entry and performed with distinction. They were the forerunners who passed on the baton to Merlene Ottey and our other great female athletes of this period.



These days, women have gone further afield, showing talent in football, cricket and even boxing, proving the point that ability has no gender bias. The field of sports is wide open with opportunities for all who are willing to make the sacrifices and stay the course. It is true that because sports is not a field existing in isolation from the rest of the society, as in other areas, barriers of prejudice exist in some quarters. However, the success record of women in sports is helping to break down

these barriers and there are many good examples of women who have demonstrated sheer grit and determination, pursuing all opportunities for development with great dedication, despite the odds.

I would like to encourage every girl and every woman who has the talent and the interest to become involved in sports, not only as performers on the track or on the court but in the area of administration. We need more capable female sports administrators, in the tradi-

tion of women such as Leila Robinson, to be part of the leadership in sports development, helping to shape policy, give direction and, generally to be catalysts who make things happen.

We women are strong and capable, so let us not limit ourselves. Let us pull on our own full potential and achieve our goals.

♀

History of Sports

Sports, which can be broadly defined as physical exertion for recreation or in competition, date so far back that modern historians cannot determine with certainty what the first sport or sports were. A reasonable assumption is that sports began the first time a person used physical energy under recreational conditions. Such sport could well have been fishing or hunting for pleasure or merely engaging in a playful demonstration of physical prowess.

Modern sports, however, are often thoroughly organized, with complicated sets of rules; sophisticated equipment; precise timing, measuring, and scoring devices; spectators; and extensive coverage by various media. Much of the development in sports, no matter how old such physical pastimes are, has taken place in the past two centuries, and the preponderance of this growth in sports has occurred in the last 50 years.

Evidence obtained from archaeological excavations indicates that the Sumerians practiced WRESTLING as a sport about 5,000 years ago. Wrestling was essentially a survival skill that required practice in order to perfect various holds and grips. That it became a sport was almost inevitable. The same may be said for fishing or hunting: these were activities that acquired the status of a sport the first time they were undertaken for fun rather than for self-preservation.

From a historical standpoint the ancient Olympic Games, first recorded in 776 BC, could be called the birth of organized sports. Although the ancient Olympic Games were recorded in writing and statues in honor of the winners were erected at the Olympic site, serving as an additional historical record, even those games have an undetermined origin that historians believe may antedate 776 BC by at least two centuries.

When the Olympic Games were revived in AD 1896 (they had been abolished in AD 394), Olympic accomplishments were precisely recorded using tape measures, stop watches, photographs, and newspaper reports. In 1896 sports were on the verge of a true golden age, far surpassing anything in the approximately 49 centuries since the Sumerians were believed to have wrestled for fun. Sports in the 20th century eventually became a lucrative business, often involving highly professional athletes playing at an increasingly competitive level. With industrial progress giving people more and more free time, sports came to be an important diversion for greater numbers of people.

The development of sports from the end of the ancient Olympics to the mass sports events of the 20th century was a slow process, however. The conquest of Greece by Rome almost brought to an end the early golden age of sports. The Romans, although initially scornful of sports,

placated the Greeks by allowing them to continue their Olympic Games with the religious connotations of the games left intact. The Romans, in fact, later popularized sports of their own, such as gladiatorial battles and chariot racing, and built coliseums in which to stage the contests.

Interest in sports dwindled under the Christian dogmatism of the Middle Ages. By AD 1200, however, sports for entertainment and diversion reemerged on a small scale in some countries. The French, for instance, had a hockeylike game called la soule in which teams used sticks to knock a ball across an opponent's goal line. Like many rough games of that era, la soule was suppressed (1369) by authorities. The interest such early sports generated led to other sports that used a ball, such as TENNIS, which rose to popularity in the 1400s.

The rise of sports in general in England merely whetted people's appetites for more sports. Records show that an unorganized track-and-field competition was held in England in 1510. Mary, Queen of Scots, because of her own interest in GOLF, popularized the game during her reign (1542-67). Her son, James I (r. 1603-25) of England, lifted the ban on football (the ancestor of modern soccer) in 1603 and openly endorsed other organized sporting activities. Queen Anne (r. 1702-14) of England introduced the first sweepstakes in horse racing in 1714. Continental Europe also fostered many sports during this postmedieval era that led to the surge of sports in the 1800s.

What differentiated pre-19th-century sports from those that followed was organization. For example, James Figg (1695-1734) of England claimed the world title in boxing in 1719, although he did not win it in official competition because there was none. During the 19th century many sports that were invented or had evolved from existing sports became highly organized. The first modern track-and-field meet was held in England in 1825. Oxford and Cambridge universities participated in the first intercollegiate athletic competition when they held a rowing match in 1829. Ten years later Cambridge students popularized an accidentally invented sport they called Rugby's game, the forerunner of other similar games.

With the growth of sports organization and interest, governing bodies were established for sports ranging from the international Olympic Games down to local softball and bowling leagues. With increased coverage of sports events by newspapers and then radio and television, sports began to consume a larger percentage of people's free time than it had prior to the 20th century.

(Information extracted from "The New Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia") ♀

WOMEN AND LAW

INTRODUCTION/FOREWORD by Gina Morley and Suzanne Dodd

Women are the bedrock of our society. Yet, we are becoming more marginalised and inconspicuous. Our economic role in society is perceived as silent, undermeasured, ignored or plainly unaccounted for.

Our Jamaican society is essentially a matrifocal one and each day our unsung heroines religiously pull themselves together and go out to work. They are/we are the major breadwinners in this society. They work, we work, irrespective of any bias, ignoring the disparity and vast difference between our status and that of men in this society.

LABOUR LAW

"Despite attempts to avoid the deliberate disparity in wages between the sexes, there is still the clear discrimination in women's work" states Dodd.

The relevant Acts here are:-

The National Minimum Wage Order 1975 although not strictly a 'woman's act' was of particular relevance because women tend to have the lower paid jobs.

In 1975 Employment (Equal Pay For Men and Women) Act was a first step in attempting to eliminate discrimination between the sexes in the payment of remuneration for the performance of similar work for same employer.

According to Dodd, "a title therefore, will protect the employer from prosecution where he pays the Administrative Assistant (a woman) half of what he pays the Management Consultant (a man).

'Male' occupations attract a higher level of remuneration than 'female'. Construction work, a male dominated field, is vastly higher paid than 'pink collar' office work, which still appears to be less than that of man's. ♀

FIRST FEMALE PRESIDENT

OF THE JAMAICA CYCLING FEDERATION

BY MARIE GREGORY

When the twelve member executive of the Jamaica Cycling Federation meets, there is one woman present. She happens to be the President. Her name is Hyacinth Josephs.

Interestingly enough, Hyacinth is not a cyclist, her brother Charles is; and thereby hangs a tale!

Hyacinth tells the story willingly. "My brother is small in size. He's a keen cyclist, yet when he finished in the top ten, he was overlooked, the judges never could see him. He would come home with 'chips' and bruises but no prize for his efforts. I advised him to get out but he wouldn't."

Soon Hyacinth went along with him for support. Cyclists need someone with them to take along spare wheels, water and other necessities, so she followed by car whenever he entered a race.

On a race from Kingston to May Pen, Charles was about fifth. The winner and second place rider were clearly identified, others came in a group. Charles was overlooked, as usual. Hyacinth was not amused. She voiced her opinion clearly!

From then on, she started to attend all races, took a keen interest and was gradually drafted into activities for the Federation. Last year she was elected Vice-President, this year President, the first woman ever to hold the position.

As President, part of Hyacinth's duties is to seek sponsorship for the activities of the Federation. She explains that the year is divided into two seasons; January to June is the road race season, where the endurance and stamina of the riders are tested as they go all over the island, culminating in the road championship in June. From August to November the track races, speed trials take place at the Stadium Velodrome. Says Hyacinth, "There are more road riders than track competitors, despite the heat and rough roads. All in all, there are about eighty cyclists regularly involved."

There is reasonable support for events, many people come to watch road races but a particular crowd supports stadium activities. Hyacinth sees it as part of her task to get more people interested, both actively and in support of the cyclists.

"Prize money should be improved," she says, "because bikes are so expensive and often get damaged in spills, Cyclists often maintain two bikes, one for road work, one for track and these can cost upwards of thirty thousand dollars each. Those who can afford only one often make changes to adapt it for the track season."



Hyacinth Josephs

Photo: Charles Ferguson

Since the inception of cycling on a competitive basis, major sponsors have always been Kentucky Fried Chicken.

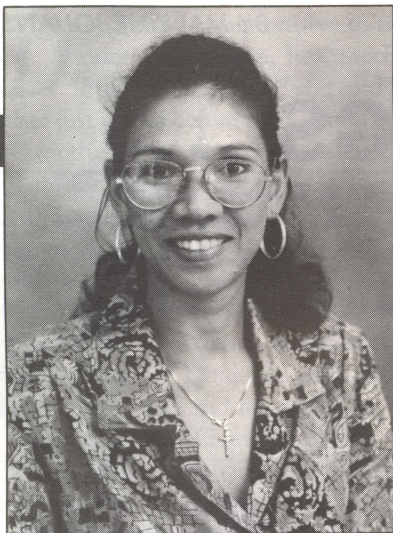
The Chinese Benevolent Association sponsors two all-island road races and D&G has also participated. There are others too, but more would be welcome.

Asked whether it was difficult taking up her position in such a male-dominated sport, Hyacinth replied, "They all knew me because I had been around for so long. This helped me to ease into my position without problems." Yet it hasn't all been smooth sailing recently, "A group came in and tried to take over the running saying a woman couldn't know anything about cycling. That attempt was squashed, after all, the men elected me!"

Clayton Solomon, at the helm for many years, has been a great help. If she needs help, Hyacinth goes to him, he listens then tells her where to turn.

Chief among Hyacinth's ambitions for the Federation is the desire to see more recognition for cycling, "To have teams go out to represent Jamaica so that other countries can see that cycling isn't dead!"

At one time, Jamaica entered the Olympics and Hyacinth



"I only play for the love and discipline

TERRY LEYOW, BADMINTON CHAMPION

of this sport"

BY CHERRY NATURAL

Badminton is one of the biggest participatory sport in Jamaica. It is played by many in sports and leisure centres, schools, church halls and clubs, all over the country. It is a family sport that most ages and both sexes will enjoy.

Badminton is an Olympic sport for two or four players in which long-handled rackets are used to hit a shuttlecock (also called a shuttle or bird), which is made of goose or duck feathers, over a net stretched across a marked court. Badminton's growth both as a backyard recreation and as a highly developed competitive indoor sport has been greatest since the end of World War II, although the game dates back to the 1800s. The International Badminton Federation (IBF) has members in more than 90 nations and an annual world Grand Prix circuit for both men and women.

The game is believed to have been invented

in India in a version called poona. British army officers learned the game about 1870. In 1873 the duke of Beaufort introduced the sport at his country estate, Badminton, from which the game derives its name. In 1887 the Bath Badminton Club was formed; it was replaced in 1893 by the Badminton Association of England, which codified the rules that still govern competitive play. In the United States, meanwhile, the first badminton club was formed in 1878 in New York City.

Few sports can claim to be suitable for everyone, but badminton genuinely can. It can be played both indoors and outdoors. Once you are committed to the sport it will help you to improve your stamina, speed, agility, co-ordination and mental abilities.

You can play singles, doubles and mixed doubles like any of the tennis games.

Terry Leyow and her cousin Paul are now rated the number one mixed double players in the Caribbean and third in the Pan American. When asked how she started, she said: "My family is one of the biggest badminton players in Jamaica and I am among the second generation as my mother, father, aunts and uncles all represented Jamaica."

It all started out as a social event among family members and friends, eventually they formed a club call 'Chisholm Champs'. "As a

child", Terry said, "I would sit and watch until I could hold a racket."

Terry pointed out that in her childhood days, badminton was seen as a high society sport and her family's involvement helped to break down a lot of the social barriers.

Coming from a humble background in the Chisholm Avenue area in Kingston, Terry is grateful for the exposure she received from her involvement in this sport. With pride in her eyes she said, "most of my family represented Jamaica and did well".

She was only thirteen years old when she represented Jamaica at the International Tournament in Guyana, and she has not looked back since. Her representation of Jamaica for the past sixteen years, has taken her across the Caribbean, Canada, South America, Mexico and Argentina. When asked about the benefits one received from playing badminton, Terry said: "We only played for self-satisfaction, as this sport does not offer much, especially in Jamaica".

"I only play for the love and discipline of this sport as it helps me to be focused. I would encourage people to get involved in this sport as it is a good social sport and highly competitive."

She also pointed out that badminton is not as easy as it looks, as it requires a lot of training and discipline. Badminton is now being played more widely at sports clubs, schools, colleges and business places.

"I do not play for a club", Terry said, "the top players are not affiliated to any club as they are represented by the Jamaica Badminton Association (JBA)."

Terry has a family of her own and they are quite involved in the sport. Her daughter Amanda who is five years old, has her own racket and her husband who is very supportive, is very knowledgeable about the sport even though he is not a player.

There is going to be a lot of hard training and a tight agenda come next year, as she should be going to a tournament in Europe and Canada.

We know that good results come from hard work and discipline and we wish Terry all the best.

First Female President *cont'd from overleaf*

would love to see this happen again. She believes it can happen "with the right attitude."

At present there is no coach for the cyclists Ted Gray once held the position but he is now in Cayman.

Hyacynth points out the discipline required of the cyclists. "They train in the mornings around 5:30 and need to ride at least a hundred miles per week to keep in shape."

There is also a junior section for ages 15-16, and four new juniors began this year. It is important to build stamina, to get advice from peers and to participate in the

road races as they move through the categories.

Asked what being a president has done for her, Hyacinth answers, "It has given me late nights, lots of running around, lots of work! Also I have to take some abuse if things don't go right."

Based on improvements she sees in the future, she will decide whether or not to run again for office. She would like to see cycling encouraged in the schools but feels the right infrastructure is not in place. Another concern is that there is only one female rider, a situation Hyacinth hopes will change. As for her brother, he is still riding;

Hyacinth is a sales represent with Life of Jamaica. She lives in Spanish Town.

SISTREN SALUTES DEON HEMMINGS ...

BY MARVINE JOHANSEN



Photo: Gleaner Files

One Indomitable Jamaican Sister

On July 31, 1996, the rest of the world and all Jamaica watched as Deon Hemmings outran and outpaced her American and other counterparts to take the first gold medal ever won by a Jamaican woman at any Olympic game. Her time of 52.82 seconds was the fifth fastest of all time, which makes it a Jamaican and a personal record.

Deon Hemmings will readily concede that her gold medal; is the reward for talent, yes, but moreso, for hard work and the will to win. She knew within herself that she had the potential to win, and WIN BIG, but there were no shortcuts on the road to victory.

Born in St. Ann on October 9, 1968 she attended York Castle High School and spent her final high school years at Vere Technical High in Clarendon. But she was not running well enough to make the

team at Vere and didn't make the Penn Relays team either.

Although disappointed that she never obtained a scholarship, she was offered hope in the person of Alcan sports co-ordinator and community relations officer, Patrick "Pops" Anderson. "Pops" who had by now become her mentor encouraged her to remain hopeful while she took a post with the bauxite company.

She shone in the 1990 Business House Athletics Championship for Alcan as she was voted the most outstanding athlete having won three events, the 100 metres, 200 metres and long jump.

With assistance from Anderson, Deon was finally offered a track scholarship to Central State University in Ohio. Here, her talent was recognised by her coach, former US Olympic bronze medallist, Josh

Culbreath, who helped in honing her prowess in the 400 metres hurdles event and guiding her to her rendez-vous with history.

She never bragged or boasted about what she thought she could do, but she listened to those who were good at doing that — bragging and boasting about winning. She trained hard and strengthened her determination and her confidence until she recognised inside her the gift of gold.

Hearing her competitors "mouthing off" about their ability she resolved that she was just as capable of winning, yet no one knew that this quiet, 'country girl' had made up her mind to stretch herself to the limit in ensuring that the gold in the 400 metres hurdles would be taken by her. And none other.

Deon confided her resolve to only one other person, her mother. "Pray for me Mom," she told her mother just weeks before the Games. "I'm going for the gold. I am going to take home the gold for Jamaica."

And on July 31, 1996, she did. All Jamaicans remembered that poignant moment when she stood on the podium facing her country's flag to be medalled. We watched as the tears welled up and trickled down her cheeks. No doubt tears flowed for you too, as they did for me.

Soon after the Olympic Games she took the first place in the Women's 400m hurdles at the Cologne IAAF grand prix athletics meet in August. This was done in a time of 53.67 seconds.

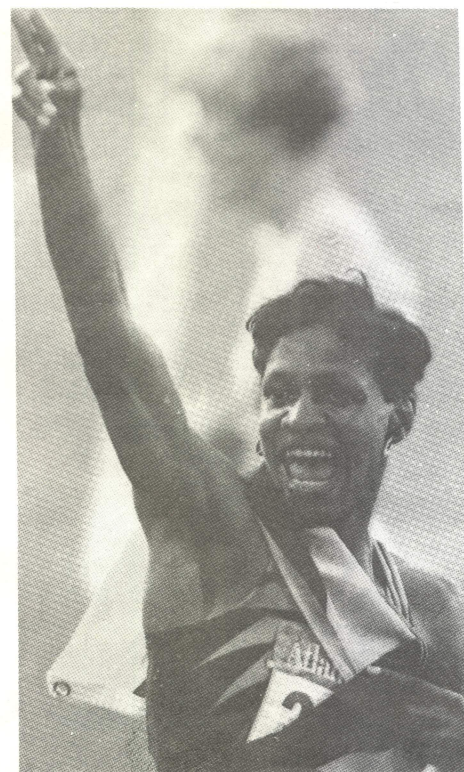
On her return home to a hero's welcome in August, Deon had this to say: "It has taken me ten years to get here." Quoting Buju Banton, she reflected: "It's not an easy road, and I know that nothing good comes easy."In Goteborg, a lot of people said I was lucky to win bronze, and

that I was running against the big girls. This time all the big names are here, and I beat them!"

Surely the words of Jimmy Cliff rang true for Deon Hemmings and can do so for all who dare to believe in themselves and act on such belief. "You can get it if you really want, you can get it if you really want, but you must try, try and try. You'll succeed at LAST!"

For Jamaican women, Deon Hemmings' spirit reminds us of our countless sisters, whose humility hid spirits with the ability to soar beyond adversities and the impossible, in their quest to touch the sky and experience its limitlessness.

Let us then as Jamaican women, look towards the challenges before us, especially in this time, and resolve to capture the spirit which moved Deon to excel. We will not be daunted by the seeming difficulties. We too can go for gold. Believing in ourselves is a good start.



DOROTHY HOBSON - *Encouraging Women in Sport*

BY MARIE GREGORY

which met at R.J.R. to be coached by Mr. Ken Chin. She enjoyed cricket which took her back to those childhood days. The big difference was that this time she didn't have to make the ball!

Once there were five or six women's teams established, it was possible to organise an association, plan tours and consider a Jamaican team. Dorothy played for Jamaica then. On the formation of a Caribbean Association, she was selected for the West Indies. As a member of the West Indies Cricket Team, she toured England and India and played against Australia in the West Indies. She should have gone to New Zealand but that tour was cancelled because of New Zealand's contacts with South Africa in the days of apartheid.

In addition to playing, Dorothy was involved with the administrative side of the sport, serving as President of the local association and, until last year, of the Caribbean Women's Cricket Federation.

It was cricket that gave Dorothy her first trip to England. She then returned to

spend three years on a Commonwealth Scholarship to complete a B.Ed. in Physical Education at Bedford College. "I enjoyed the time there but was never tempted to say," she admits. "I came straight back to Jamaica the minute the course ended."

Since then Dorothy has taught in several schools but perhaps her special favourite was Camperdown where she went from Mico and remained for seven years.

"This was a great experience, it was special. A group of us started at the same time. Things were different then, there was an openness about it. We discussed problems, helped each other. Most of us are still friends. You don't seem to get that nowadays."

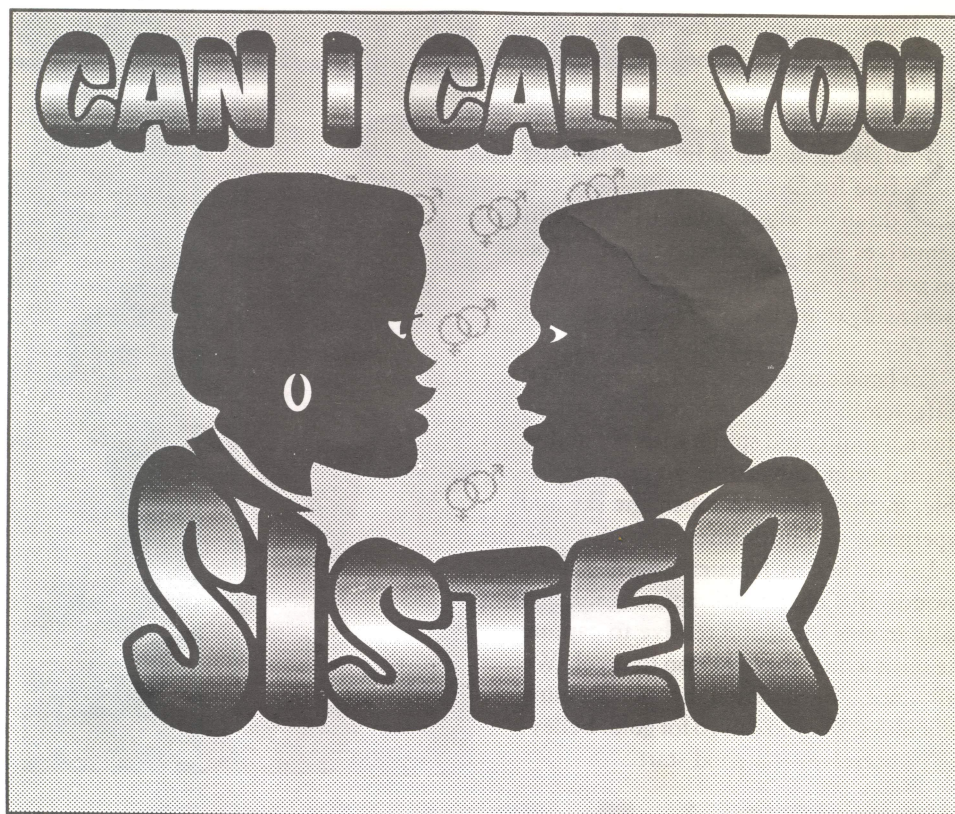
She also worked at Insport then at St. Andrew High after her return from England.

Ten productive years were spent at the
cont'd on pg. 42

"I grew up with three brothers, so I not only played cricket and football but actually made the cricket ball! No one bought balls in those days; I could lace one, so I was useful to have around!" So says Dorothy Hobson discussing her lifetime of sports activity.

At primary school she began netball and this continued at Excelsior High then at Mico College where she made the netball and athletics teams.

It was while at Mico that she also was invited to play cricket for a women's team



In continuation of our series "Can I Call You Sister", we spoke to David McNeil, an ardent sports fan and supporter of gender issues, about his thoughts on 'women in sports'.

Unusual for so small a country, Jamaica is accorded a great deal of respect by many because we have consistently produced outstanding citizens who have made their mark internationally ... whether it be in music, science, the arts, politics or sports. Not only are we well known, we have contributed a great deal to the freedom and building of many other nations.

Sports has been one of our most successful arenas and is currently the one which highlights the contribution of our women internationally.

David is very supportive of women's participation in sports and sees no reason why more women shouldn't be involved. "Sports has become a lucrative career option and one many women can take advantage of. It is unfortunate that in some countries,

religious and social mores militate against women. Whenever or wherever this happens, it helps to reinforce discrimination against women. This is intolerable".

When told that some of these objections about women being involved in sports came from the feeling that some activities were too strenuous, David replies, "It is foolish to continue to promote the myth, the delicate nature of women. Delicacy can be a quality of both sexes just as toughness can be. In fact the only sport I would object for women is boxing, and that's only because that's a sport I would ban for anybody".

There is also a myth in society, that women who are involved in sports such as weight lifting, becomes tough and lose their

femininity. "First of all, if a woman decides to risk her femininity for something she loves, that's her choice. But I don't think that participation in sports can cause that. That's like saying that woman is less of a woman because she is promoted to executive level, or that a man loses his masculinity because he likes ballet.

"What I'm against however, is that in countries like Jamaica, sportswomen are not given the financial and moral support that their male counterparts get. It's ridiculous the support that some of our male teams get even though they deliver less. Netball for example, hasn't got the recognition that their world number 3 status deserves".

And can schoolgirl athletes survive the rigors of training and studies? "I don't see why not. To gain a competitive edge, athletes, both male and female, have to start early. If schoolboys can do it, why not school girls? To think otherwise is to fall prey to sex discriminatory practices".

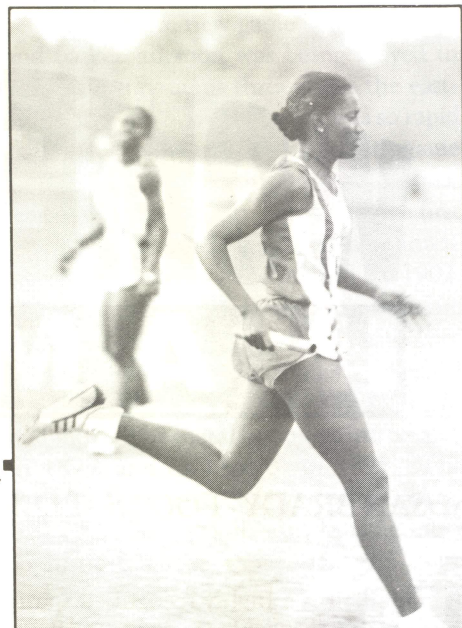
David McNeil also thinks that there is a great deal of potential for our sportswomen to be role models. "The discipline and perseverance exhibited by our world dominating female athletes is an example for every girl, boy, man and woman. Jamaican women are performing at the very highest standards worldwide and that's great. But the way for us to help them make their best contribution is to strive to emulate them".

What I'm against is that ... sportswomen are not given the financial and moral support that their male counterparts get.

THE MANY FACES OF PAULA DAWSON

Sports Woman Extraordinaire

BY GRUDGY



Paula Dawson competing in Trinidad at an Inter-Campus Games

After closely examining what she describes as the "paper that sums up my life", her résumé, one gets the feeling that Paula Dawson has dedicated significant portions of her life to the development of sports for herself and the institutions with which she has been in contact.

This second year medical student at the University of the West Indies (UWI) was voted Sports Woman of the Year on Taylor Hall (a hall of residence) for two consecutive years, 1994-1996. In 1995, she represented the UWI on the track and field team at the Intercampus Games held in Trinidad. She placed second in the 100 and 200 m events, and third in the high jump event. In the same year, she was awarded a trophy by the University for her outstanding performance in hockey and track and field, an award she had also received in 1994.

Paula's involvement in Sports is not centred around any one event. She's not only an athlete but a manager as well. She recently offered her managerial skills to the Taylor Hall netball team, which competed in an international tournament in Miami early last year. This created history, as it was the first time a netball team from the UWI campus competed overseas, and more importantly, won the competition. Speaking of her involvement in netball, Paula confessed that her real love for sports does not lie in this event: "I play very little netball. My real love lies in motor racing", she revealed, pointing to yet another side of her dynamic spirit.

Starting out as a member of the Montego Bay Motoring Club, where she played the role of navigator to several drivers, Paula developed the love for the sport. "When

I joined the club, I was the only female, and this caused a slight stir in the camp. I however decided to stick it through as I got support from close friends and family members". Since Paula's entry into the field, she has seen the gradual acceptance of women by their male peers. The number of female participants have grown steadily as well.

Reflecting on her last competition, she said: "My most recent meet was in November of last year. On the first day of the competition, my team placed third. On the second day we were less fortunate as the car turned over." To date, she has teamed up with the likes of Jodie Sommerbell, David Watkins and Peter Moodie Jr.

To add to her long list of sporting activities, she also represented Block F -Taylor Hall, where she lived for four years, in table tennis, cricket and volleyball. Considered a 'Jill of all trades', Paula cannot be dubbed a 'master of none', as her long list of achievements attests to considerable mastery of several.

Paula's interest in sports dates back to her childhood days at primary school, where she would compete for her house. This was later developed at Mount Alvernia High School, Montego Bay.

"At Mt. Alvernia, I used to swim as well. I no longer compete in this event but I still enjoy it," the 26-year old athlete stated.

The medical student says she is motivated by success, but is further encouraged and feels gratified by people's response to her efforts to impart her knowledge of sports or any other topic.

As a student, she finds it even more challenging to balance her extra-curricular

activities, which she still pursues with the same level of commitment and dedication as before. A very confident Paula states that she will use the experience gained from pursuing her Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry and Zoology and apply it to her current studies.

A very creative person, Paula tries to marry her medical knowledge, though limited at this time, with her sports background, as she recently returned from Los Angeles where she participated in a camp, 'Dream Street'. ('Dream Street' is a Michael Jackson sponsored camp for terminally ill children.) There she dedicated her summer holidays as a volunteer to assist residents at the camp. "I got the chance to assist less fortunate people, and I saw the opportunity as a chance to express my true self and be creative as well," Paula pointed out.

And as if her hands were not already full, Paula has been a sub-warden on Taylor Hall for the last two years, where she assists with the overall management and operation of the Hall.

Paula graduates from Medical School in the year 2000, and upon completion, she intends to continue her involvement in Sports. "Sports is an essential element to the well-being of an individual. It helps to maintain the spiritual, social and emotional and physical realms of an individual," Paula adds.

WOMEN COMPETING IN A MAN'S WORLD

BY CHERRY NATURAL

SUSAN BRADY - FOOTBALLER

Football is a highly recognised sport in Jamaica and also traditionally a male-dominated game. For the past ten years, however, women have been coming together in groups to satisfy their natural instinct for the sport.

The first team of girls came out as a side called the 'Boogie Girls', organised by radio personality Barry Gordon. It is said the reason the women's team is not reaping the same amount of success as the males is that they are not consistent and that women are too delicate for the rigid training required for football. All that is a myth. History has proven time and time again that women are capable of participating in so-called male-dominated fields if given a fair chance by their counterparts. Susan Brady is one such woman.

The last of six children (two brothers and three sisters), Susan Brady describes her childhood days as filled with a lot of excitement. "I have been told over and over that I was a very hyperactive child," she said. "Whatever I was involved in, whether it be work or play, was always filled with a lot of energy. I could not keep quiet for very long, too much silence would bore me to death." Being the 'wash belly' of the flock, Susan found herself alone most of the time and had to seek playmates among the other children in the community.

Susan was not understood by most of the adults in her community, as she was seen as a mischievous person. "I use to get into a lot of trouble during my search for excitement," she explains.

Playmates were not easy to come by, as the others thought that she, Susan, was too rough, so Susan played with the boys. Any



Photo: Charles Ferguson

games they played, she kept up with them. Be it cricket, football, flying kite or playing marble, she was right there.

Because of her 'tomboyish' attitude, she may never have had a lot of female playmates, but she had a lot of friends. She is a dependable, loving and caring person, whom her friends found difficult to be upset with for long periods of time. "I think most of them value my friendship because I was someone whom they could depend on."

Ever since childhood, Susan had the desire to play football, but did not know where to turn as there wasn't any opportunity for her. When she reached the age of sixteen, she heard about the 'Boogie Girls' and did not hesitate to make contact. She played centre forward. They practised a

great deal and because there wasn't another women's team they played against the men. She remembers quite clearly when the team played a match in Port Antonio and gave the brothers one- love.

A short time after that, other women's team started to form in the different communities, but they didn't last long because majority of players went off to have babies, so competition lapsed. Susan, being the person she is, did not sit around idle but gathered the female players from her community and went to Stadium East to challenge the boys in football matches.

It was May of 1996 when she seriously got involved again with an all-girls' team. On Labour Day she went to the National Stadium to watch the entertainers play and was really fascinated to see a women's team playing. When the game was over they announced that if any girl would like to join the team they could speak to the coach downstairs, so she went and spoke with Mr. Latimore. She started training with the team which is called the Jamaica Women's Team. The girls are from the corporate area.

"I'm called 'Skillachie'. The reason for this is they say I am very skillful with the ball. I love to bounce my ball. Our team is doing quite well, we played Mico and won. We also play regularly at Tinson Pen Aerodrome, mostly against males," Susan reports.

To be a footballer, one has to be very disciplined, train hard, obey the coach and be consistent. Football can enable you to get a scholarship if you have a fairly good educational background, if you don't they will send you back to school. "I have dedicated part of my life to football and I am looking forward to getting a scholarship."

"I would encourage young girls who have the inclination for the sport of football, to get involved," she said.

It is very easy to get involved, just ask the coach of any team if you can train with the team and once they see that you have the potential they will assist you to learn the game.

Susan skillfully manipulating the ball

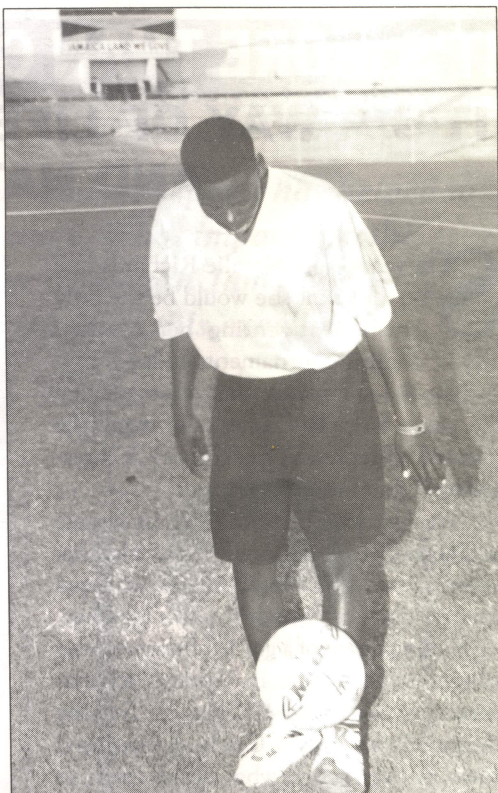


Photo: Charles Ferguson

CONNIE FRANCIS - BASKETBALL PLAYER



Basketball, extremely popular around the world, is a court game played by two teams of five players each. The object is to put a ball through a hoop, or basket, and to score more points than the opposing team.

Although basketball can be played outdoors, it was invented to serve as an exciting indoor exercise for the winter months in a northern climate. It quickly became a spectator sport, however, and now attracts large audiences to gymnasiums and arenas, especially in the United States, South America, and Europe.

The sport is played on the amateur level by high schools, colleges, other groups, and, since 1936, by national teams in the Olympic Games. It also is played by professional athletes, notably in the United States and Europe. The foremost championships contended for are those of the National Basketball Association (U.S. professionals), the National Collegiate Athletic Association (U.S. colleges), and the Olympic Games.

James Naismith, an instructor in physical education at the International Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) Training School in Springfield, Mass., devised basketball in December 1891. Naismith, who later became a doctor of medicine, hung up two peach baskets, one at either end of the gymnasium, as goals. His YMCA athletes played the first game with a soccer ball, passing it back and forth until one team was able to throw it into its assigned basket. That first game was governed by 13 axioms formulated by Naismith. The rules of basketball, based on those axioms, were established later by the YMCA and the Amateur Athletic Union. All 13 axioms are still incorporated in today's rule books.

Word of the new game spread swiftly, and basketball soon was being played in YMCA gymnasiums throughout the eastern United States. Its growth was so rapid that the first men's intercollegiate game was played in 1897, the first professional league was founded in 1898, and the first collegiate association—the Eastern Intercollegiate League—was formed in 1902. Women also took up the game before 1900.

The growing popularity of basketball resulted in improvements in equipment and skills. The metal hoop was introduced in 1893, and backboards in 1895. The soccer ball was replaced by the first basketball. As playing skills also became more sophisticated, the game attracted more and more spectators.

Although women have played the game since the 1890s, significant growth and serious recognition of women's basketball did not occur until the 1970s.

Connie Francis, one of Jamaica's top female basketball player, who is also the captain of the Jamaica Netball Team, is a Kingstonian, with six sisters and two brothers. Connie, a graduate of Balcome Drive All-Age and Walgrove College is described by her mother, Mrs. Joyce Francis, as being persistent and strong willed. Despite her mother's disapproval, Connie went ahead and got involved in sports.

"Connie is a pleasant, hardworking, loving and caring person", says Mrs. Francis. "It's as if she was born with a gift for these sports".

I am totally impressed with her dedication and the discipline she portrays. While interviewing her for basketball she was preparing herself for her netball training.

So during intervals of sit-ups and stretches she breathlessly answered my questions. Connie Francis is a self-willed young woman who seems to have a strong belief in living life to the fullest.

This is how Connie responded to questions asked:

Natural: *How long have you been playing basketball?*

Francis: From 1984, 12 years now.

Natural: *Why did you choose that sport?*

Francis: I love contact sports, it allows you
cont'd overleaf

to have a free will on the field. But the main reason is that basketball also gave me the opportunity to further my education through a scholarship.

Natural: Did you get a scholarship?

Francis: Yes, I went to the Frank Phillip College for two years to pursue an associate degree in Art, I was supposed to do four years but because of my three year old daughter, I only did half the time, so I got a half degree.

Natural: What are some of the other benefits that you get?

Francis: I was awarded the most valuable player on the local team.

Natural: How popular is the sport for females?

Francis: Basketball has been played at club level for the past twelve years for both girls and boys, but it was not introduced into schools for girls until three years ago, so a lot of girls have been given the benefit now. Sharon Taylor and myself were the first females to be given scholarships.

Natural: What are the qualifications for such a scholarship?

Francis: You have to do the SAT (Standard Assessment Test) or complete high school and you also have to be a very disciplined and good player.

Natural: Is there any gender bias?

Francis: No, you just have to work hard as the next person or even harder.

Natural: How far do you plan to go?

Francis: I have retired from international competition mainly because of injury, but I still play on the local team for WAUL GROVEANS BULLETS.

Natural: What would be your message to girls who plan to get involved with basketball?

Francis: First thing books! You cannot divert from school work, manners, discipline and dedication. You don't have to be a sport person, once you are interested and you have all the above you will get help. I think every young person should take part into some form of sports. ♀

IT'S MORE THAN COUNTING DOTS. IT'S A WAY OF LIFE FOR VERONICA AND NATALIE

BY GRUDGY

Six years ago, Natalie Richards had no idea that she would be the only female representing her community at domino tournaments today.

Nor did she realize that after playing the game for a few times, she would be selected to represent her country at international domino competitions.

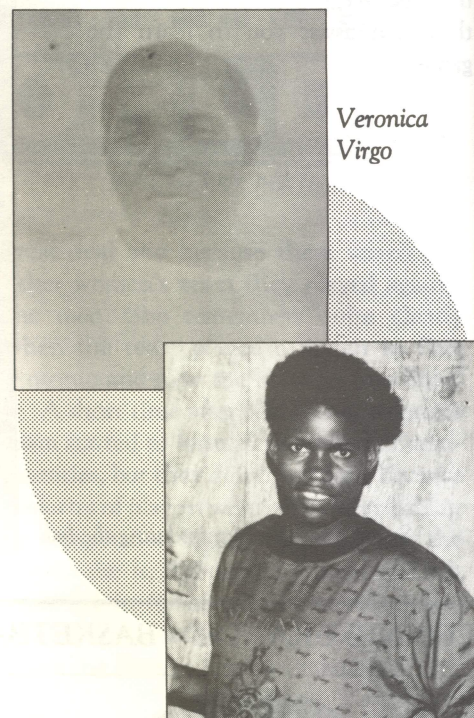
"I feel very proud to be the only female in Domino International," said Natalie, referring to the Fletchers' Land-based domino club, of which she is a member.

Having heard of a group of women who religiously take part in domino tournaments at the Dragon Gym on Sunday afternoons at Heroes Circle, I journeyed down to experience what draws them to the sport.

On entering the Gym, I was greeted by a loud thundering sound, bangs on table, cheers of various pitches, bellowing of strange names... Voices belonging to all and sundry, the smell of alcoholic beverages of all nature flowing from every corner ...But, as I drew closer to the arena, I recognized a few women in the midst. This, I later learnt is the typical scene once a domino tournament is on its way. Natalie was found in the middle of the scene, cheering on her club members who were engrossed in a heated Semi-final battle of the Jamaica Domino League. She tells of her early beginnings with the game which is traditionally known as a 'man's game': "I was watching some men play the game one night, and realized that it was very interesting. I gave it a try but was still reluctant to play at a competitive level. Then, a club member, Stanley Dixon, who later became my partner, introduced me to competitions, and since then, I have been hooked."

Having overcome the 'teething' pains, Natalie can be considered a 'Pro' at the game. She has competed in local and international meets. To date, she has participated in the Guinness, Portmore and Business House League and has represented Jamaica twice overseas, in Miami and Cuba.

Domino, for Natalie, is a voice to



Veronica
Virgo

Natalie Richards

express herself on an issue that she feels strongly about. "A lot of men believe that women should stay home, cook, clean and wash dirty clothes; and I don't join that boat. In fact, I don't respect that view," the national domino player points out; and for that, she prefers to compete against men rather than women as she believes that playing against members of the opposite sex allows them to realize that there is no difference between the sexes.

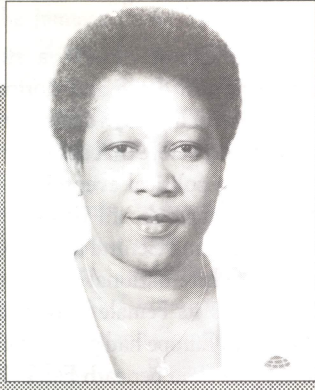
The young player encourages women to get involved in sports in general, but dominoes in particular as she believes she has benefited tremendously from the game. "I have met a lot of interesting people, established a number of life-long friendships, and have gained a wealth of experience," adds Natalie.

It is also a nice feeling to be among so many men and know that I can play just as well or even better, at a game that they consider to be 'theirs', she points out.

Natalie hopes that one day, dominoes will get worldwide recognition where it becomes an event at the Olympics, at

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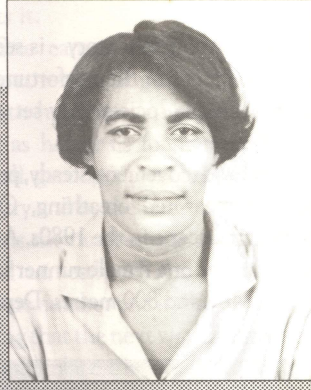
The excellence of Jamaican women in sports has helped to lift the country's global image. What impact has this excellence had on our women in Jamaica? What lessons can we learn from this excellence?



MRS. CARMEN TIPLING
Chairman, Communications Consultants Limited.

“The performance of Jamaican women in Sports has served to provide very valuable role models, particularly in the area of discipline, and a few of the names that come very easily to mind are Juliet Cuthbert, Deon Hemmings, Grace Jackson-Small and Merlene Ottey.

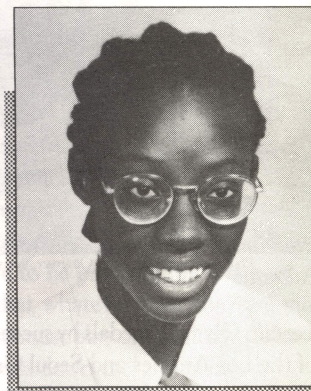
Discipline is an attribute that everyone, especially our young people should endeavour to cultivate. And, we all can emulate our athletes in this regard. It is very important to note that the performance of athletes does not begin at the ‘starting block’. It takes days, weeks, months, years of intense preparation and discipline and when they reach the block, they are fully prepared.”



MISS JEAN SHAW
Household Helper

“The way our female athletes perform both here and abroad make us all feel proud, and as women, we feel even prouder.

Jamaican women have to work so hard to provide for their families that I think they need to be motivated all the time, and I know that when I see our women doing so well, I am encouraged to keep on going.”



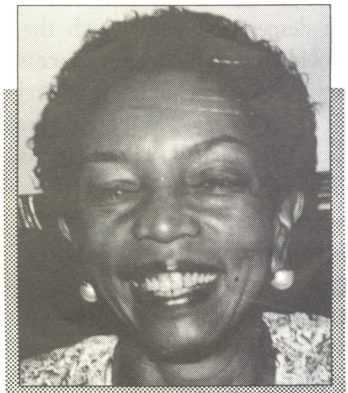
MISS CONNIEL ARNOLD
14-year old Immaculate Conception High School 10th Grader

“I think that women's performance in sports can help us Jamaican women to be

more determined, and to believe in ourselves through Christ who strengthens us. Although we are not as physically strong as men, this doesn't stop us from taking on any type of challenge and achieving at the highest level.

My mentor is Merlene Ottey whom I see as a remarkably strong woman who sets high goals for herself. I know it's not a bed of roses; it is with hard work and determination that our female athletes do so well, and they are fine examples of what we all can achieve in life.”

Conniel was a part of the successful Relay team which represented Jamaica in the 1994 Penn Relays.



MRS. AVRILL CRAWFORD
Executive Director,
Jamaica Computer Society Education Foundation and Past President of the Jamaica Netball Association

“Our women in Jamaica have always extolled excellence - the best potato pudding, the chicken baked to perfection, the high polish on the wooden floor, the daintiest but elaborate hand embroidery, the elegantly typed letter, the ability to find a file with ease, the best grades for our children.

This striving for excellence in the smallest of things, when coupled with god-given talent, will make world winners such as Merlene Ottey, Gloria Knight, the I-threes. All our women need is a chance, the support, the encouragement. We need to continue to strive for equality in access to the best jobs, the best training for our chosen sport. We need to continue to pursue excellence in the little things that we do; we need to do everything in our power to pass this value and attitude on to our children.”

OUR CARIBBEAN FEATURE

THE NEAR-DEATH AND MIRACULOUS REBIRTH OF ANA QUIROT:

The Athlete as Mirror of Desperation, and Hope

BY SAMANTHA AROSHA

Athletes have always been saddled with the burden of other people's expectations; these days, the decline of nations into penury and self-doubt has raised the level of desperation with which the shared glory provided by on-field performance is sought. Results are important, but international sport is not just about scores: it is a primary source of metaphor. Olympic gold is heralded as confirmation of national capacity. A near-victory is seen as symbolic of the closeness of economic prosperity. Sportsmen and women have become mirrors in which their societies preen or glower.

This phenomenon is not new: it was present in ancient Greece; continued into Adolf Hitler's Germany in the thirties; into the seventies in Jamaica when Hugh Crosskill's over-pitched voice cracked as Donald Quarrie breasted the 200-metre tape at Montreal; through the agony of Bert Cameron's frustration at the Los Angeles games; the endless years of elation and head-holding frustration of Merlene Ottey's sequence of almost-nearly-finally performances.

Cubans see their reflected glory in a strong female athlete with braided hair who won a silver medal in the Atlanta Olympics. Ana Quirot's second place came on top of a gold medal in the 1995 World Championships in Goteborg, Sweden. Her rise to super stardom, sudden descent into despair and determined

rebirth - her whole poignant story - is seen by Cubans as embodiment of the misfortune and fortitude of the unique society they set about creating in 1959.

With jaunty head movement, steady, pounding action and measured breathing, Quirot burst onto the track scene in the 1980s. At one time she was number one female runner in the world over both 400 and 800 metres. Deprived



Ana speaking on her cellular in Atlanta Photo reprinted from the Observer Newspaper

of almost certain Olympic medals by successive boycotts of the Los Angeles and Seoul Games in '84 and '88, she won a bronze at Barcelona in 1992 when Cuba re-entered Olympic competition after a 12-year hiatus.

Six months later, like a brightly-lit room over which a curtain is suddenly drawn, her moment of Olympic glory

turned to the darkness of tragedy and near-death.

Quirot was in her kitchen when a kerosene cooker exploded in her face. Flames covered her sweater, spread over her chest, arms, damaged nerves, almost destroyed her eyes. She was taken to Hermanos Ameijeiras Hospital. Third-degree burns covered her body. First reports said she was dead. For a while the nurses who cared for her also doubted that she would survive. And everyone thought she would never run again.

Fidel Castro, the Cuban leader, went to visit her that same night. The athlete told the leader: "I'm going to run again." She was 29.

The Ana Quirot Story - a story of tragedy, near death and glorious reaffirmation of life had a distinctly different outline not long before that dramatic night.

In 1989 as the political events that would alter the documentary record of the century unfolded in Eastern and Central Europe, Quirot was named by the International Amateur Athletic Federation as its Female Athlete of the Year. Upheaval in Europe had pulled the rug of economic support from beneath Fidel Castro's feet. Oil supplies were uncertain. Former benefactors were suddenly wary if not hostile. At home, Cuban leaders made speeches threatening a tightening of rations; abroad its critics saw in every crisis response a precursor of the end.

Quirot joined a construction brigade and helped erect the facilities in which Cuba would use sporting prowess to deliver its riposte. In 1991, at the Pan American Games in Havana she broke Games records in winning the 400 and 800 metres races and became the toast of the revolution. If the clouds were dark over the Cuban economy on the track everything seemed bathed in glory. Cuba secured more gold medals than the United States for the first time in their history. When Quirot crossed the finish line the crowd roared her name - but also Fidel's; her victory was the revolution's.

Ana Quirot was born in Oriente province, Castro's place of origin. Her parents bestowed on her a variation of the Leader's name, Ana Fidelia. When the two met for the first time in 1982 the legend impressed the athlete: no complaints came from the runner when boycotts removed the world stage on which she had trained to perform. She said, referring to Fidel: "The nicest thing he ever did for me? He made the revolution."

Quirot had been married for eight years to Raul Cascaret, the former world champion wrestler. They were divorced in 1991. When she won Olympic bronze in Barcelona she was

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Netball's Molly Rhone: CONTINUING TO AIM FOR THE TOP

BY PAT HYMAN

During her career in the sporting arena Molly Rhone has been class champion (each year she was at Knox College), captain of her school's netball team, and the Jamaica under 21, under 23 and the Business House Netball teams. She has represented Jamaica at world tournaments, was instrumental in the start-up of netball in Canada and actually captained that country's first national team.

On the administrative side of the sport, she has been treasurer, fundraiser and a vice-president of netball's governing body.

Today, Molly Rhone - wife, mother, Director of Computer and Communication Services at Air Jamaica, is President of the Jamaica Netball Association.

"I'm a natural sportsperson and I am by nature a competitive person. I strive for excellence - for the top," she tells me as we sit in her Harbour Street office in downtown Kingston. "If I had my life to live over I would be a professional sportsperson. I just love athletics."

As Molly puts it, she was born to be an athlete. She remembers as a child always running and hopping, and has many scars to prove it. At Knox College there were lots of Physical Education classes on the curriculum and she recalls doing a lot of track and field events. In fact, by age 13 she was on Knox senior netball team which was "quite an achievement", eventually going on to become their captain.

When it was time to leave school she was faced with the choice of continuing with track events or netball. She figured that she would benefit more from netball and be able to play that particular sport longer.

"The Merlene Otteys of today are very rare," she explains, laughing a bit. "Whereas you have many 36, 37, 40-year old and older persons playing netball - track people don't last that long."

Of course if she had chosen track, she said her aim would have been to run for Jamaica.

However, her success has made her not regret choosing netball. She is particularly proud of having represented her country in this

sport which she loves so much. Another big highlight for her is the fact that netball is now being given greater recognition and is getting more support, although it is still not where she wants it.

One cannot discuss netball with Molly without recognising that this is of major concern to her. Her ambitions for netball are as high as her goals for herself. "I want to see netball getting the same recognition in this country and by the media as does football; after all it is the number one sport for women," she stated earnestly. "I also would like to see us become number one in the world and I'm really hoping that the next world tournament in 1999 will take place that we will realise this goal."

Jamaica has been placed as high as third in the world. As Molly sees it there are only two teams that can still beat us - Australia and New Zealand (in her opinion these two countries also regard Jamaica as their biggest rival) and this is because of the facilities and level of support that they have.

And what happened in the world tournament? Because of the 'drawing' system all three countries (Australia, New Zealand and Jamaica) were placed in the same zone and you had to have won the first or second positions in order to move on to the next phase. Jamaica came third.

Molly still looks forward to the next tournament which will be held in Christchurch, New Zealand. (Before that, in 1998, there will be the Commonwealth World Games in Malaysia when for the first time in the history of those Games, netball will be included).

As she sees it, the Jamaican team is going to have to be prepared for whatever eventuality, so that whatever zone they are placed in the team must play to the finals. "That's just what it boils down to," she said.

Of interest, Jamaica is one of the countries being considered to host the 2003 World Netball Tournament.

Netball is not as popular in Jamaica as in Australia or New Zealand for example. However, Molly points



out that as a team sport, it has achieved the highest recognition for the country. She adds that the only other event that has come close is bobsled and willingly gives credit to the members of the team who made such an impact in a winter sport. "But prior to that netball was there," she emphasises.

And what of her role as president of the Jamaica Netball Association? Molly only plays the occasional game of netball now. Her involvement in the game is dedicated to helping on the national level to ensure the success of the team through proper organisation. She remembers beginning to take a serious look at the sport around the turn of the decade. Reports were that although they had achieved their highest position to date in the world, they were having debt problems.

"Why not give something back to the sport from which I had gained so much," she recalls thinking. And so she returned to the Association having done a stint some years before with the late netball great, Leila Robinson.

By 1993 the debt had been wiped out and so after occupying other posts, including those of fundraiser and second vice-president, she decided to run for the Presidency. She succeeded and was returned in 1995.

She is quite pleased with what the Association has been able to accomplish, in particular how members take care of the players. "We look at them as total individuals not only as athletes," she stresses. This she sees as one of the

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Vilma Charlton

SPANNING THE YEARS IN SPORT

BY MARIE GREGORY

Vilma Charlton's sporting career began at St. Andrew's High School. It was as the school's representative that she was crowned Victrix Laudorum of the games Mistresses Association Athletic Champs for the girls in 1962, the year she made the relay team in the Ninth Central American and Caribbean Games.

From then on, Vilma went from strength to strength making the track team at the Tokyo Olympics in 1964, the Mexico Games in 1968 and the ill-fated Munich Games in 1972.

She has attended other Olympics as an official or as Team Manager. According to Vilma, the attack on the Israeli athletes at Munich changed the Olympics as security became an organiser's nightmare. No longer do athletes have the freedom which allows them to meet and mix, and many countries considered high security risks tend to be isolated. Athletes from target countries may rarely be seen in the Games Village.

Another change over the years is the tremendous growth in the size of the Olympics making it necessary for some groups to reside in different areas. e.g. the Yachtsmen in Atlanta.

Changes in athletics generally have been many since Vilma began her own efforts; for one thing, coaching is much more scientific. When Vilma thinks of all the equipment, the available therapy facilities, the vitamin supplements, she realises the progress that has been made. She just ate well and managed!

Vilma believes too that women are, on the whole, more dedicated than men, possessing more "stick-to-it-iveness". Despite the fact that in the earlier days the women were never "up there" they never lost focus." The hard work and discipline of Merlene Ottey has kept her at the top for seventeen years." Vilma comments.

"Merlene takes her training schedules absolutely seriously, this is her priority and her dedication will carry over into whatever she does in the future."

Vilma believes strongly that Physical Education can teach skills which will last for a lifetime. She is proud of some of the earlier women achievers such as Una Morris, now a doctor and Cynthia Thompson, a pediatrician. Vilma herself gained a track scholarship to Pepperdine University in California where she took a B.Sc. in Physical Education in 1969 going on to complete the M.A. in Education in 1973.

Nowadays much effort on the part of local officials goes into exposing young athletes to those who can offer scholarships. Coaches come down to scout for talent at Boys' and Girls' Champs and the Penn relays which are closely monitored. Sometimes local coaches can make deals and have weaker athlete enter higher education on the coat-tails of stronger ones. Americans generally like Jamaican athletes who see scholarships as a chance to improve themselves and their families. Sometimes they take a little longer to get through as they may need more time to bring the academics up to strength but this can be done with hard work. Certainly an athlete cannot expect to have time for paid work even part time as with training and academic concentration, there will be no time available.

Some athletes used to experience a great culture shock when they first went to American colleges. Now the coaches try to prepare them by arranging a visit ahead of time. One reason for the intensity of the shock according to Vilma may be that here the coaches spoon-feed them whereas once in the States they are one of many stars, a fact to which some find it difficult to adjust.

Now there is a serious move afoot to improve the offerings at the G.C. Foster College and to link the work being done there with sciences, and some of the other options available overseas. At present some athletes feel they have to go overseas because this college and the University do not offer what they would like to do. Exposure overseas is good,

Vilma agrees but there would be other benefits for those who stay here if suitable courses could be offered and top level competition encouraged.

Vilma would also like to see a change in the way P.E. is taught in schools. This is an area of her expertise as, since 1983, she has been a lecturer in Physical Education at the Teacher Education Department of the University of the West Indies and an Education Officer of the Ministry of Education. Previously she lectured at St. Joseph's Teachers' College and at Bethlehem Teachers' College.

Her belief is that in many High Schools, the teaching of Physical Education stops too early and that the desire to hire coaches means that although the talented player is helped, the average one may be ignored. Students should be able to play for fun.

Primary schools are often too competitive, there should not be such concentration at such an early age. Vilma points out that many are lost to sports because of injuries received at Primary School when they should not be getting hurt at that level. She hopes through seminars for coaches to change some attitudes.

If she were to live her life over, Vilma would still go the Physical Education route though she sees it, in some ways, as the Cinderella of education. For all the hype over the Olympics, it must be understood that this is the end of a long process.

The Private Sector has always given financial support but Vilma is aware that the current economic climate is drying up support and also keeps volunteers away nowadays. At one time she would be inundated with offers of help for Champs, not so any more.

Vilma believes that athletes make superb role models for young students and believes the future is positive for sport in Jamaica. Society overall is more fitness-conscious which is good. Vilma herself jogs at least twice a week. The former athlete She also believes that another spin-off of her sports training is that she always keeps meetings short, insists on action being taken and is forever evaluating. One of the things you hear on the track is that time is the essence!

IT'S MORE THAN COUNTING DOTS-

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which she hopes, she would represent her country.

Currently, Natalie is a competitor in the Jamaica Domino League, which is sponsored by Guinness. "For this season, I have dropped 2 ten loves already," she boasted, making use of the domino language, as she explained the defeat of her opponent.

Even though she is surrounded by so many men, Natalie is supported by the participation of other women in the event. This led me to talk to Veronica Virgo, another female competitor of the Seaview United Sports Club.

Veronica has been playing dominoes, "for a good while now", but began playing competitively in 1992; as an effort to build and develop her community.

Unlike Natalie, Veronica is not the only female in her club, as some nine other women also play the game.

With male partner, Steadman Green, Veronica says that her Club encourages women to get involved in dominoes. "In my Club, they (the men) are en-

couraged by our presence, but on on a wider scale, I detect a sense of threat," Veronica inserted.

"The other day, a male opponent told me that he likes playing against women because we are 'saps', - easy to beat. Well it turned out that it was the other way round; because I gave him ten love and left him surprised," Veronica boasted.

She believes there is a bright future for women in the game. Her views were later endorsed by Mr. Livingstone Pinnock, President of the Jamaica Domino Association and the Jamaica Domino League, who has been instrumental in forming the female national team. Mr. Pinnock is adamant about finding new sponsors so that the female arm of the Association will flourish and continue to compete internationally.

"The idea of forming a national female team has encouraged more women to get involved, and the interest continues to grow. Every year, the number of females in the sport increases. In order to make females compete overseas, we now create mixed teams and select two of the better female players to come along," Mr. Pinnock pointed out. Believing that some women outshine men at the game, Mr. Pinnock encourages women to enter the sport: "If a woman has the ability, I do not see any reason why she should play. A great future lies ahead for women in this sport." It is anticipated that the once vibrant female team will be revamped in an effort to maintain interest, growth, development and continuity of the sport among women.

AN INSIDE LOOK INTO THE JAMAICA DOMINO LEAGUE

Mr. Livingstone Pinnock, who is the President of both the Jamaica Domino League and the Jamaica Domino Association gave us an inside look into some of the organisation's activities.

The women domino team which comes under the umbrella of both the Jamaica Domino League on the local level and the Jamaica Domino Association on the international level, comprises 33 women who are incorporated from clubs over the Island.

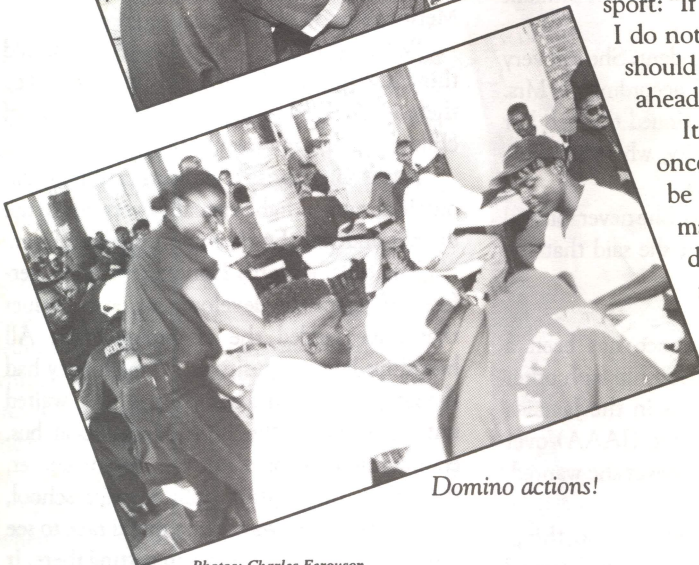
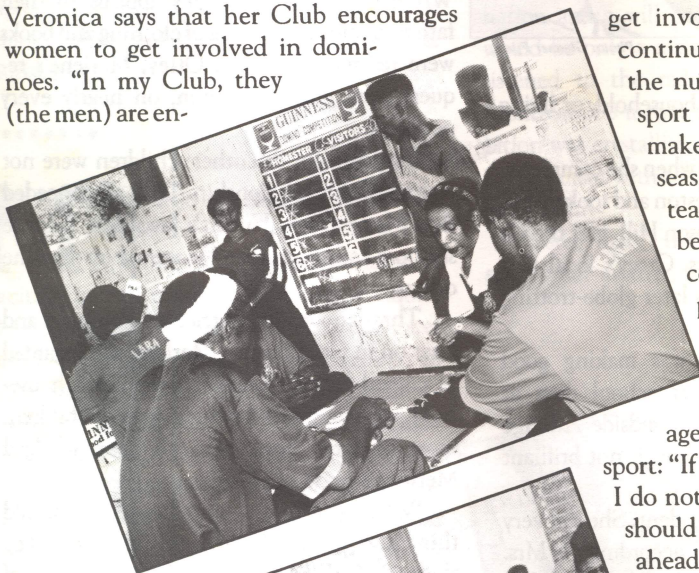
The women have been playing dominoes over the years but now more than ever. The International Domino Federation, based in London, of which the Jamaica Domino Association is a member, came up with the idea of the women having their tournament separate from the men. In 1993 the women's international team was formed.

The organisation feels that creating a separate team for the females makes it possible for the women to shine and bask in their own accomplishments.

The Jamaica Domino League operates like any other sport with its rules and guidelines to monitor players. There are 45 rules in this organisation, three of which are:

1. No form of hooliganism, indecent expressions or the use of drugs, prohibited by the laws of Jamaica, may be used by players or persons on the premises where competitive dominoes, under the auspices of the Jamaica Domino League is being held. Clubs are responsible for the conduct of their followers as well as their teams. Players can and will be suspended for violations of these rules but the entire club can be affected, where the followers are concerned, since the League has no control over their followers. Rigid enforcement of this rule will be applied by the League and could result in disqualification from the competition of either players or entire teams.
2. All registered players must be issued with an identification card and every player should be in possession of his or her card when participating in Matches for the referee to look at such cards to identify such persons. Each player will be identified by club and I.D. These I.D. cards will be kept by the referee until the end of each game.
3. During the progress of play (no party in the ring)

cont'd on pg. 37



Domino actions!

Photos: Charles Ferguson

THE EARLY YEARS

The fighting spirit of Merlene Ottey has mystified track and field disciples around the globe. Throughout her long campaign on the international circuit, perhaps the most asked question was, how did she find the strength and determination to hold her own for so many years among the world's elite sprinters?

The answer may lie in the tough and uncompromising nature of her early upbringing and the spirit of the parents who guided her in her first steps toward her golden destiny.

Her family background, with its economic struggle, interminable squabbling and internal strife which characterized the relationship between the households of Merlene's parents and grandparents on both sides, shaped her personality. As a result, she emerged as a fiercely competitive individual, introverted, with a 'loner' style, and a mental toughness often mistaken for arrogance and coldness.

Merlene was born on 10th May 1960, in the tiny rural community of Pondside, Hanover. She was the fourth of seven children in the modest, but ambitious, household of Hubert Ottey and his wife Joan. Her brothers and sisters included Desmond, the eldest, Yvonne, Beverley, Janet, Ruthven and Hugh.

Joan Bowen-Ottey was a woman with a goal. Despite her adversities she had ambition. She wanted her children to leave their 'mark' in life; and she was willing to make major sacrifices to ensure that this goal was achieved. She expected, and was adamant, that her children support their endeavours with hard work and a disciplined approach to life.

Joan Ottey was typical of most struggling Jamaican matriarchs. She seldom found the time to dote on her children, or demonstrate her affection openly. She was, instead, a tireless provider, and demonstrated her care and faith in her children through her consistent support. And she was always there for them when it mattered most.

Joan's work ethic kept the family together through the nomadic years. As a midwife, she was required to live in the approximate centre of the area to which she was assigned. This



Photo: Gleaner Files

meant moving the entire household, or living away from home at times.

Such was the situation when she completed her formal training in Kingston and took up her first assignment in Thompson Hill. Her travels around Hanover were Mrs. Ottey's local version of her star daughter's later globe-trotting lifestyle.

Meanwhile, Merlene was making good progress. From her earliest school days at Gurney's Mount and then Pondside All-Age schools she was a steady, though not brilliant student.

'She was a very good student. She did very well in English and Art,' according to Mrs. Ottey. Her love of art continued through her years at Nebraska University, where she pursued courses in that subject.

'She was very determined. She never romped around,' Mrs. Ottey says. 'If she said that she was "done", she meant it.'

This no-nonsense stance has been a feature of her relationship with other athletes and officials in the Jamaica Amateur Athletics Association (JAAA) over the years. She fought for whatever she wanted, but she was never a bully.

'When "Merl" sets herself to do anything, she wouldn't really stop, unless she had proved

MERLENE

(Extracted from the book 'Merlene Ottey - Unyie')

she could achieve,' Mrs Ottey adds.

By the tender age of seven Merlene was displaying the kind of fleet-footedness which her older sister Beverley had established as an Ottey trait. She disdained running against girls of her age, since they posed no challenge, and opted instead, to compete with her male contemporaries, holding her own, and often beating them.

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As Merlene grew it became evident to the family that she was the undisputed champion of Mr. Ottey's affection. Hubert spoiled her unashamedly. He catered to most of her whims and fancies. While the other children's appeals to their father for money, or items of clothing and books were redirected to Joan Ottey, Merlene's request were granted by him, on nearly every occasion.

Surprisingly, the other children were not jealous of this relationship. They all conceded that Merlene was Hubert's favourite, because she bore a stronger resemblance to him than the others.

Throughout the district of Pondside and later on in Cold Spring, Merlene was regarded as a 'good-looker'. Every day, the Ottey household prepared itself for the swarm of children, most of them boys, who all acknowledged Merlene's pride of place in the group.

'When you came by my house, you would think it was a school. All the children would be there in the yard playing ball. I raised a lot of children beside my own,' Mrs Ottey says.

It was no surprise that Merl could outrun, outclimb and outfight virtually every boy in the district and was the champion marble player.

The hills of North Hanover were the perfect setting for the development of the values that have guided the champion's life. All hardships became positives. Though they had the fare, Merlene and her siblings often waited until they heard the horn of the local bus, echoing around some not too distant corner, then they would start their run for school, almost two miles away. They would race to see if they could outrun the bus in getting there. It

OTTEY - Fielding Spirit

Fielding Spirit' written by Claire Forrester with Alvin Campbell)

did not hurt that, in the process, they also saved the bus fare for more 'important' things, such as purchasing marbles.

Hanover is the smallest of Jamaica's fourteen parishes and is also one of the poorest. The communities of Pongside, Cold Spring, Cascade, Thompson Hill and Great Valley cover the hillside above the famous Tryall Golf and Beach Resort, currently the home of the famous Johnny Walker World Golf Championship. But the districts are virtually forgotten in national terms. Only at election time is there intense activity in this area.

When Merlene lived in these hills, one bus plied the route. It took passengers to Lucea, the parish capital. In Lucea, one could make connections to Montego Bay, the country's tourist capital; as well as to Negril, which was then a remote fishing village, but is now a booming tourist mecca.

Merlene enjoyed Hanover as if it belonged to her and not she to it. Her early life there was a succession of exciting events and new worlds to conquer. Over time, however, the negative experiences with her parents' families led the track star to retain feelings of ambivalence about Hanover. Today, her attachment to the parish is based solely on the fact that her mother lives there.

There is absolutely no question that Merlene has acquired many of her mother's attitudes and values. Like Joan Ottey, she is proud of her accomplishments. She insists that these will not be marred by her hanging around the track and field circuit when her performance begins to fade.

Merlene also strongly believes that her accomplishments came with little or no outside support, but rather, result from hard work, dedication, discipline and perseverance. Her willingness to put 100 percent into each endeavour, is the same quality which persuaded the boys in Pongside to treat her as an equal, in her early years.

'Imagine,' Joan says, with obvious delight, 'when the boys were playing games, the team captains would leave some boys unpicked and

choose Merlene.'

Not surprisingly, Mrs Ottey speaks proudly, and gratefully, about her daughter's support. 'Merlene has been very helpful to me since making it big overseas. Sometimes I think my husband must have been able to see the future, hence his favouritism.'

The Jamaican speedster has also made track and field very popular in Hanover.

Not only has Merlene popularized the sport in Hanover, but she became a symbol of her country's immense accomplishments through her long international career.

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It seems more than fate, that after listening to the broadcast about Quarrie's Olympic run in 1976, Merlene decided that her mission in life would be to win an individual performance gold medal for Jamaica. And she was determined that nothing, neither injury nor any other setback, would keep her from that achievement. That was the moment of realization, the moment when an inner fire forged a youthful stubbornness into a mature determination and a will of steel. From then on, it would be only a matter of time. As Merlene listened to the radio commentary on the Montreal 200 metres finals, an incredible ambition was crystallized. She knew the goal she would pursue with all the unrelenting fervour of her youth.

'Sister Joan,' the sixteen-year-old Ottey said to her mother, 'I am going to win a gold

medal.'

'And just how are you going to do that?' her mother asked.

'I am going to train and train and go to the Olympics, just like Donald Quarrie,' she retorted with confidence.

Joan Ottey looked at her daughter in amazement. 'The Olympics? Do you know what you are saying?'

Merlene nodded. Her face beaming as she saw herself atop the winner's platform. 'Yes, Sister Joan,' she responded firmly.

Mrs Ottey was moved. Her faith in her daughter was boundless. She would not dash her hopes. 'Of course you can do it, my child.'

A whole new world was opened up to Merlene, as that shy admission to her

mother about her future began to move from an impossible dream to a fierce determination to make it a reality. The die was cast. Merlene started to savour her dream, and saw her way out of Pongside, Hanover and Jamaica.

Merlene had no plans for an athletic career up to this point in her life. However, she had shown significant talent for running, jumping, netball, softball and just about any game that attracted her interest. But according to a former Pongside school mate Carol Warburton, Merlene wanted to be a nurse.

Above all else, however, she loved to run.

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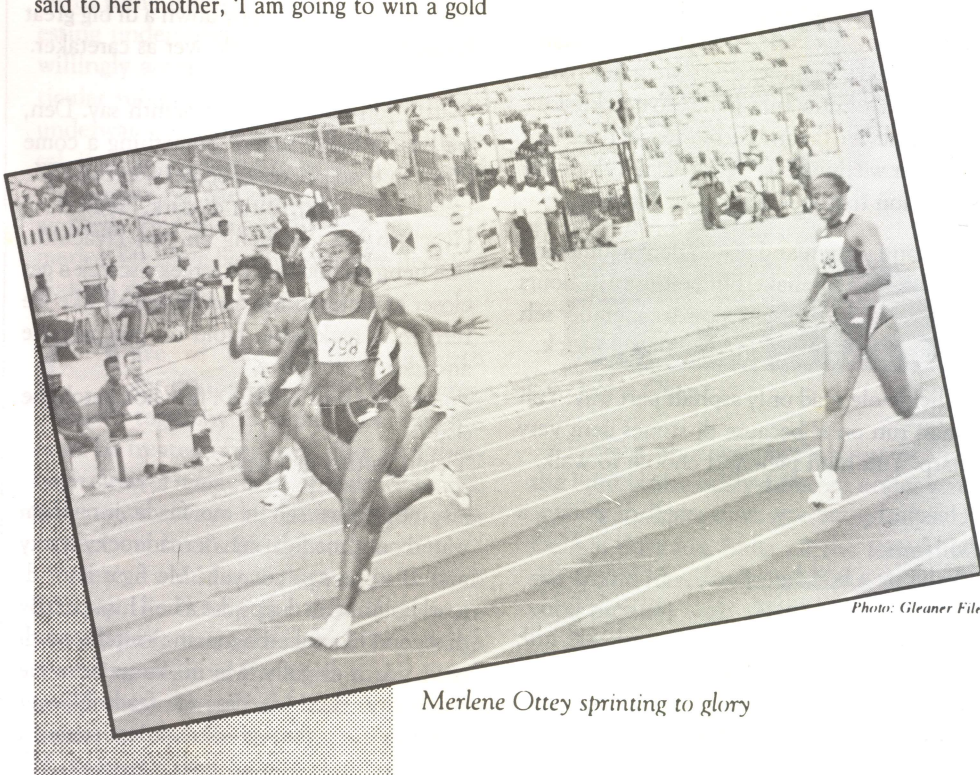


Photo: Gleaner Files

Merlene Ottey sprinting to glory

REBEL PICKNEY

EXCERPTS FROM THE BOOK 'LIONHEART GAL'

All my life me live in fear. So, when my faada send me straight through di night, wid my sister, to buy tobacco fi him - is punishment. Him know we fraid fi duppy and fraid fi walk pon dat deh dark road a night time. In spite of dat, him deliberately wait till we done sweep up di yard, wash di plate, go to shop fi buy kerosene oil, carry four pan of water. After we finish walk and pick up di breadfruit fi cook di hog feeding, me siddung and settle down and me say 'It done now'. Darkness come down and me fraid as pickney. Then hear him: 'Bet Bet, go a Sawyers Square go buy tobacco fi me'. Dat time him siddung a di backstep wid him two foot inna one a dem board washtub wid di iron round it, claim seh him a soak corn, while we haffi walkpon dis ole lickle rocky-rocky road in di dark night.

Our district name Cottage, but Sawyers is di lickle town. Di square have a upstairs shop and a big ole parish church. Me never like di church. In deh too quiet. Outside di shop our grand-madda always used to keep meeting. She was me faada madda and me did name after her. Him gimme di whole a her name. Tru dat me know him must have lickle love fi me. She live far and we hardly get fi see her. So, after we done buy di tobacco, it draw our attraction fi stop fi watch our Granny.

We stand up deh and watch dem a jump and clap hands and shake tambourine till hours tek we. When tings get slow we member seh Papa a wait pon we and we haffi go back.

Di lickle ole road only asphalt part way. Yuh cyaan run on it because di stones dem very sharp. Yuh haffi pick and choose to walk.

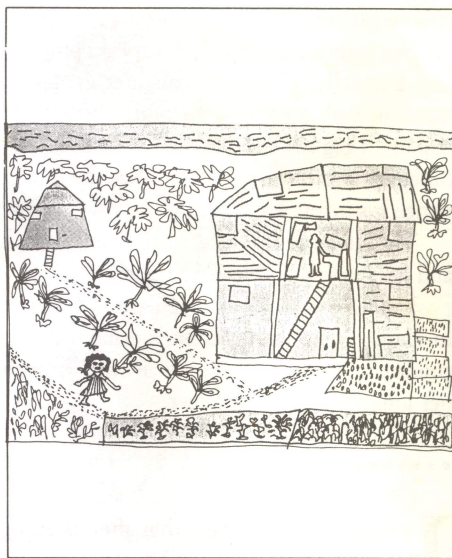
'Hyacinth,' me say, 'yuh smell di potato a boil?'

'A duppy a boil him pot.'

'How we going pass?'

We stop right at a corner pon a lickle hill, rocky-rocky and bush. Very dark. It come in like me stuck.

'Mek we stop and wait if anybody a turn Cottage Road,' me say.



We cotch off pon one big stone and wait. Me start consider pon di duppy dem and di darkness. We spend a good few minutes waiting and den Hyacinth say, 'Betty, it a get later and later and nobody nah pass.'

'Wait lickle more.'

'Papa going beat we.'

'Me no fraid a man like how me fraid a duppy.'

'It a get late.'

Me still stuck. Plenty duppy deh bout inna fi we district and me live in fear a dem - yuh have Whipping Boy, Rolling Calf, Coolie Duppy and Ole Hige. Pon top a dat, dem have a set a white duppy down a di big great house Uncle Eustace tek over as caretaker.

'Betty, yuh nah come?' Hyacinth say. Den, we hear a lickle sound. Something a come down di road. 'Screeky-screaky-screak.' We cyaan see nobody inna di dark. 'Wah dat?' Hyacinth say. Me heng on pon Hyacinth. She heng on pon me. Di screeky-screak a get closer and closer. Me and Hyacinth like we turn inna rockstone. Hold on pon we one anodder cyaan move.

Something slap a lick. Di first lick ketch me sister.

'Damn wutliss pickney.'

As me realise seh a me faada inna him waterboots, me figat seh di road rocky-rocky and di stone can cut yuh. Me figat bout di marl hole and di duppy dat a boil him pot. By di second like fi ketch me, me switch pon di next side a di gully. Me no know how me reach over deh. Me pass me faada like jet plane running through di darkness to reach home and hide from di licks. ♡

MERLENE OTTEY

cont'd from pg. 23

'The Otteys could run. All of them could run,' recalls Pauline McKenzie, a teacher at Pondsides All-Age School.

In 1978 Merlene, with the support of her mother and uncle, sought and gained a transfer to Vere. It was there that the young athlete finally found the support that she needed to develop her career.

Merlene's short but impressive career at Vere was the quintessence of that school's performance in sports. It was in 1979 that the circuit truly began to experience the Ottey magic. Jacqueline Pusey's record stood, and Merlene had a lot to prove.

Now eligible to compete for Vere at Girls Champs, she trained with a single-minded concentration and determination that impressed her coaches. There were goals to attain and medals to be won and her first target was the sprint double at Champs.

The records confirm that in 1979 Merlene was unstoppable. She demolished Pusey's sprint records despite the unfavourable wind readings during the meet. Pusey had by then left school and accepted a track scholarship from a North American university.

The 1979 CARIFTA Games, the Junior West Indian track and field Championships, was held that year in Kingston. In her first full test against her Caribbean contemporaries, Merlene won three silver medals in the individual and relay sprint events.

While at Vere, Merlene made good progress both on and off the track. At graduation at the end of that school year, she was voted by the staff as the most outstanding student and awarded the school's most prestigious trophy, the Hugh Lawson Shearer Trophy for Excellence. It was a significant accomplishment considering her short stint at the school.

Merlene's accomplishments in 1979 were by no means confined to Champs and the CARIFTA Games. She also led Vere to record-breaking success at the Penn Relays and made good use of other opportunities that same year to show her class.

The years between 1979 and 1989 were indeed "a long and winding road" for Merlene Ottey. Undoubtedly a "star", internationally admired for

cont'd on pg. 41

SMILE PLEASE! I WANT YOUR PICTURE!

BY MARIE GREGORY

Debbie Chen uses her camera every weekend. She takes excellent pictures despite the refusal of her subjects to co-operate. They move when she would like them to stay still for a second and do not have the patience to remain in one place so that she can get in a second shot. Debbie is a photographer with a difference. Her subjects are fish and corals, her studio around a hundred feet under water.

Debbie came to under-water photography via deep sea diving which she loves. Curiously enough, she took up diving when she was in England training to be a nurse. She had been a keen swimmer during her school days at Holy Childhood; the diving came about in the colder water of Devon. Once back in Jamaica it became a regular weekend hobby, through which she met her husband James.

The camera aspect developed when she acquired an underwater camera one Christmas. This opened up a whole new world. It is expensive but Debbie has been able to re-coup some of her costs by mounting photographs and selling them to those who admire the colourful undersea world.

She can use a roll of film on every dive if conditions are right. One major problem is that fish do not stay still and have a complete disregard for the wishes of the photographer! Debbie can spend a long time waiting for the right fish to appear only to have it swim away before she has taken a satisfactory picture. All the time she is concentrating on her moving subject, she has to be aware of the air in her tank and to observe the strict regulations of the Jamaica sub-aqua club, an affiliate of the British sub-aqua club. The hobby is therefore quite demanding.

Debbie has entered her pictures in the National Photographic Competition organised by the Jamaica Cultural Development Commission and has gained Silver and Bronze awards as well as merits.

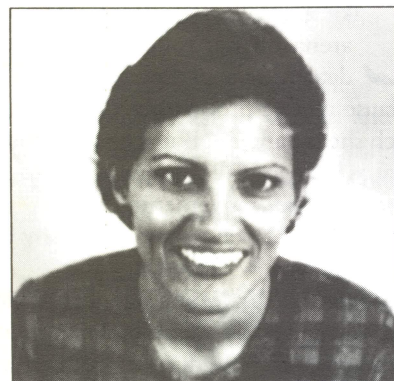
This has led to her being offered specific assignments either to take pictures of special fish or corals or some interesting underwater formation. Which she willingly accepts if she can find the particular subjects. She has also undertaken underwater photography for environmental, if an area is about to be developed and the impact on the environment is being audited. Her pictures of the reefs and marine life have been used in the decision making process.

Care of the equipment both for diving and for undersea photography is vital. The cameras must be treated after each dive to a thorough clean or it may develop leaks. Sub-aqua gear must always be treated with great respect - a diver's life depends on it!

Debbie would encourage enthusiasts to take up the hobby but only if they are already proficient underwater. Two things are being done at the same time, diving and photography. The rules of diving must never be forgotten absorbing though the photography may be.



Underwater scenes

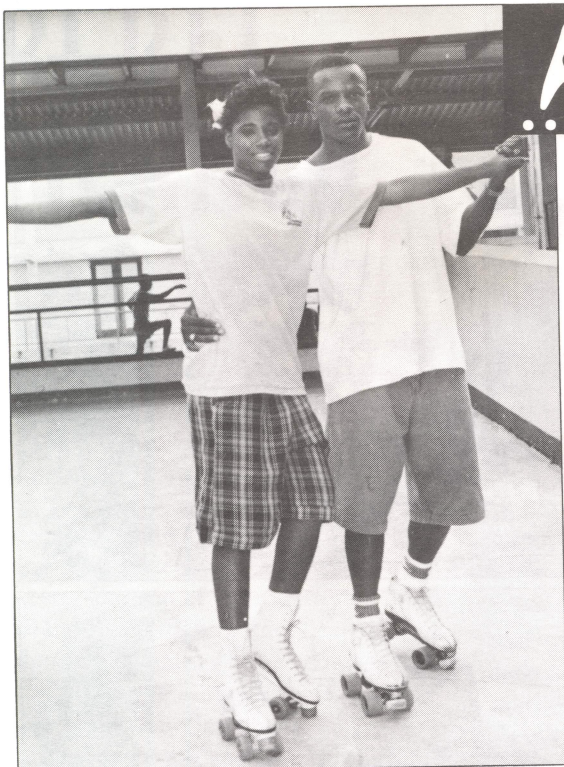


Debbie Chen

From a photographer's point of view, the light is obviously different under water and the settings have to be adjusted. Debbie does not have all the lenses that she would like, so the challenge is to take good pictures with what she has.

She reveals a world of brilliant colour alive with corals, crabs and fish. Although she speaks of the darkness of the depths, her pictures reveal a world of light.

AGAINST ALL ODDS



Laurece Williamson with dance partner Carlton Lee

LAURECE WILLIAMSON - DANCER, ARTISTIC ROLLER SKATER

BY GLENDON WEST

Like a gazelle she glides across the arena on her roller skates to the deafening sound of applause. The applause almost drowns out the music to which she is dancing. But she never misses a beat as her pencil-like frame arches to the choreographed movements. She is the darling of roller skates. She is the shy but affable Laurece Williamson.

Laurece Williamson, age 22, is the third of four children. She had meningitis at two months old and up to age nine was not able to speak clearly.

She began her schooling as the average Jamaican child but meeting her goals was far different from her peers. At age three she was enrolled in a basic school and then went on to Central Branch All-Age school at six years old.

At Central Branch the teachers realized that she was not functioning at the level of her classmates. So she was referred to Mico Child Assessment and Research in Education (Mico CARE) Centre. The diagnosis was that her development was

delayed and she would need special education. She was placed at the School of Hope.

It was at the School of Hope that Laurece found her niche.

She started improving in her academics and self esteem. If was there also that she enrolled in Special Olympics, an international sports and recreational programme for persons who are mentally challenged.

"Laurece was shy and never thought much about herself but she had the talent to excel in sports and the performing arts," says Mr. Roy Reid, teacher at the School of Hope. It was through these activities that Laurece became confident and began to think highly of herself. She participated in a number of sporting and dancing activities.

It was dancing that brought Laurece to prominence at the School of Hope. Her creative dance movements always wooed her audience. According to Mrs. Hilary Ricketts, dance teacher at the School of Hope, "She is not only a good dancer, she is an excellent dancer."

The pretty and petite Laurece is truly "a multi-talented person," reflects Roy Reid. In athletics she showed grace and prowess. However, it is in Floor Hockey, and to a greater extent, Artistic Skating, that she excelled internationally. Incidentally, it is her moments on skates that she cherished most.

As an accomplished dancer and roller skater, it was not difficult for her to make the transition from dancing on the floor to dancing in the rink.

"Laurece excels at whatever she does and she is a hardworker," claims Mrs. Ricketts. Her broad and ready smile, which is infectious, would belie the seriousness and intensity with which she tackles her task. Her goal is excellence and she stops at nothing to achieve that. It is small wonder then that when she steps into the rink she warms the hearts of her audience with her out-

standing performance. "I'm nervous when I perform but I work hard."

Laurece had high praises for her coaches Mrs. Carole Mitchell and Miss Older Gordon, and her dancing partner, Carlton Lee, for her success. "My greatest moment came when Carlton and I won two gold medals in Artistic Skating at the last International Games," she relates. At these games, the 1995 World Summer Games in Newhaven, Connecticut, U.S.A., Laurece won a total of three medals - two gold and a silver - with her awe-inspiring moves on roller skates.

At present, Laurece is employed to Goodwill Industries as a Sales Clerk. She plans to become an artistic roller skating coach as soon as she gives up competitive skating. Laurece is a member of the newly formed "Athletes for Outreach". This is an advocacy group that deals with issues for, and on behalf of athletes. She is the secretary of the movement.

Through sports, Laurece has realized her full potential. She has learnt that with determination and hard work, success is possible even against the odds.



Laurece and Carlton at the end of a performance

AGAINST ALL ODDS

SYLVIA GRANT - PARAPLEGIC ATHLETE

BY SHIRNETTE WILSON

With a look of serenity and confidence, the thirty-three year old Sylvia Grant began to relate her life as a paraplegic athlete.

"It is never easy", she said "but with God as my help I am able to persevere," she added.

Born with a congenital deformity on January 8, 1963, Sylvia was left by her parents at Mona Rehab when she was only 3 months old and there she stayed until she was a twenty-three years old adult.

At Mona, she got involved in sports in early 1986 after being encouraged by friends to start training as her physical build looked strong enough for her to participate in a sporting event of her choice.

The race is definitely not for the swift, but for those who have the endurance, and Sylvia displayed that strength of endurance. Sylvia relates her difficulty in getting to training in the evenings.

"Getting to training on-time was very difficult as I could not always get time off from work," she said "and when I leave work it was extremely difficult to get into a bus to reach the complex to do any significant amount of training."

Sylvia eventually had to leave her job at the Freezone as it was proving too difficult for her to train. Eventually, she was able to secure a job in the Mona Rehab's office.

Being a pentathlon athlete means preparing for events such as 200 and 1500 metres sprint, shotput, discus and javelin throwing. Despite the constant challenge faced by Sylvia, she always 'fared' well in these events.

"She is very determined and persistent," said her coach Errol Williams, who describes Sylvia's training as involving half hour freehand exercises, track work which include push ups on the grass and hill, sprinting around the basketball court and swimming for muscle toning.

"Once she puts her mind to her train-



Sylvia as she prepares to throw her discus

Photo: Charles Ferguson

ing, she is not going to stop until she has achieved her goal."

It was this persistence, discipline and commitment that made her continue training even when she didn't make the team for PamAm games in Puerto Rico in 1988. She was able to make it for Seoul that same year.

Mr. Williams, who is her track coach, commented on her willingness to try new techniques. "She is always open and receptive to changes." Her other coaches, Neville Sinclair and Jefferson Davis who coach her in discus and javelin throwing, respectively.

Extensive operation procedures performed by Dr. John Golding, corrected Sylvia's birth defect (born with her feet crossed), and she can move around without her wheelchair but must not place too much pressure on her legs.

This has not slowed

her down in any way, as she continues to tread the road to being successful. Her list of medals, prior to the Atlanta games, includes 2 gold and 1 silver from the Pan Am games in Venezuela in 1990 and 1 silver and a bronze from the Barcelona Games in 1992.

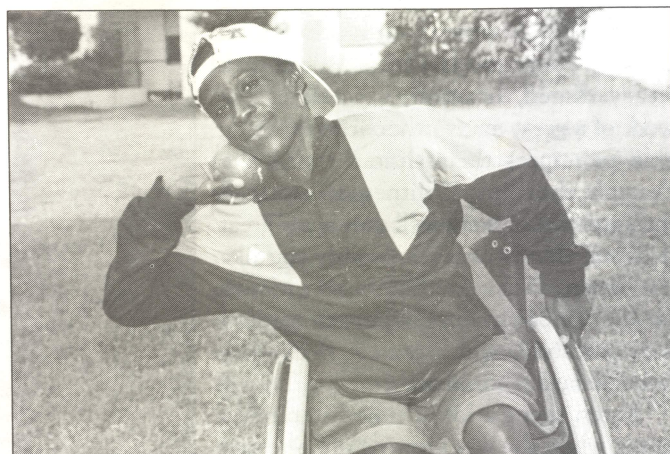
As the only Jamaican female paralympian who entered the 1996 Olympic games in Atlanta, USA, Sylvia was placed in a higher category than she was used to (i.e. the group she was placed in, included both wheel chair athletes and 'walk foot' athletes), which made it extremely difficult for her to compete. Nevertheless, she was placed third and came home to Jamaica with a bronze medal added to her tally.

With a look of sadness in her eyes she said, "We are not given the same support as the 'able bodied athlete', even though we all went to Atlanta to represent our country."

She is extremely disappointed by the lack of sponsorship for the paraplegic athletes. She feels that through sports, athletes like herself can build their self-confidence and self-esteem.

Esso is their only sponsor and Air Jamaica who donates airline tickets for travel are the only support they receive. Additional support would be most welcomed.

Sylvia lives on her own with her 13-year old daughter, Johnalle Gordon, and had this to say to other women, "If you have the will, continue to shine because one day your dream will come true."



Sylvia, the shotput athlete

Photo: Charles Ferguson



WOMEN IN THE ARTS

BY PAT HYMAN

The Effervescent Karen Smith

At age three she knew she wanted to be on stage, and today Karen Smith one of Jamaica's most talented cabaret singers is fulfilling her dreams. When you see her on stage performing, you cannot help but notice her exuberance and feel drawn in by it. You feel that she's enjoying herself as much as you enjoy listening to her, whether she's doing a jazz number or reggae. So when Karen states that she prefers being on stage to recording an album because she 'feeds' off the exchange between the audience and herself, you can understand what she means. To her there is no sweeter sound than the applause. This Virgoan finds the studio to be 'very lonely'.

Karen, who believes that "effervescent" best describes her personality, is seen primarily as a jazz artiste but she'll tell you that she got involved in this music form relatively late. She could not have had a better influence, as it was an Ella Fitzgerald tape that turned her on to jazz. The late entertainer remains her number one musical influence and favourite singer.

Her earlier influences are people like Diana Ross, Marcia Griffiths, Desmond Decker, Toots and the Maytals and rock steady. Karen, however, appreciates the work of a great many other artistes, being able to respect their various styles. For example, she thinks Whitney Houston can interpret a song very well and has a great delivery; that no one can touch you like the Queen of Soul, Aretha Franklin. Marcia Griffiths is particularly important to her - someone she would listen to twenty-four hours a day.

Karen spent a lot of time listening to music when she was growing up. She says she did not have the time to climb trees and learn to ride bicycles and 'stuff like



Karen Smith in one of her commanding performances

that' (or perhaps she did not feel so inclined) so she read books and listened to music instead. Later on in life she would study at the then Jamaica School of Music under the late Vibart Seaforth and Robert Williams.

She did her first public performance at St. Hugh's High School during her second year. She sang a piece by Chopin during Prayers one morning and, despite knocking knees, confirmed what she had told her mother at age three - the stage was the place for her.

Her first opportunity for a stage performance came as a teenager in 1976 when she was invited to participate at a fundraising concert at the Church of Holy Spirit in Portmore. Karen remembers the two songs she did (one doesn't forget momentous occasions like that) — "Lean On Me" and "Ain't It Funny How Time Slips Away". She remembers too that the backing band was Byron Lee and the Dragonaires and that the response was really, really very positive.

"That was my first time being in front of a full-fledged, really big audience and I remember working so hard to get it right. When the response was so good I was overwhelmed," she reminisced.

Due to the fact that she was soon to begin her 'A' Level studies, she had to put any plans to continue her career on the back burner for a while. Even had she been tempted to forgo those plans her "educator mom just put her foot down". (Karen's mother Mrs. Smith, is currently headmistress of Montego Bay High School.) Karen does not regret that.

"Talent is important but if you have no 'backative' it makes no sense; education opens a lot of doors and I learnt its value at a very early age," she stated firmly.

Her advice to persons pursuing a career in the entertainment industry is that they

... women have a vital role to play because they make up so much of the Jamaican population and are the 'backbone' of so many homes and at all levels of society in this country.



Karen as she captivates her audience

be true to their talent and adhere to a belief that has guided her over the years. This is that the performer is just a vessel, the blessings comes from God.

"The glory should go to Him - always," was the emphatic statement. "You have a gift and you have a responsibility to use it in a positive and a good way. Music is such a powerful communicator, it touches everybody; it is such a powerful force you have a responsibility to use it well - to do good- to soothe and to calm and to heal," she commented.

The singer believes she has many added blessings. She had her first child a little less than two years ago.

"I love being a mummy, just lovveee being a mummy!" she said with joyous laughter.

She also realises that she now has additional responsibilities.

"Having a child makes you look at life differently. You want to change the world. Things that you hear, whether they are

said in a positive or negative way, make you think of it in terms of your child," she reflected.

She is enjoying motherhood and looks on it as a challenge.

The lady has some strong views on the role of women in society. Women have a vital role to play because they make up so much of the Jamaican population and are the 'backbone' of so many homes and at all levels of society in this country. She emphasises that she is not discounting the value that men offer.

As she sees it the strength of the woman is shown in areas such as their majority count in the classrooms teaching our children and the fact that there are more women being trained at university level for all facets of life.

"One of these days you will see our dominance in society. Nowadays maybe a lot of men are still there in the top echelon of business and the government but give us ten to fifteen years and we are going to come in and fix everything that is wrong. Women are a strong, strong force and there is no getting away from that."

What else makes Karen Smith tick? She sees herself basically as a 'down-to-earth' person who likes simple things in life- a quiet evening at home with her husband and daughter, visits with her family, having tea with her friends.

She also likes meeting people on the road who will tell her how much they like what she does.

"That means a lot to me - knowing that people react positively to what I do. It is always good to know that what you are trying to do is working, that you are finding satisfaction from what you're doing and that other people are liking it as well," she says.

We wish her continued joy.

♀



THE COACHES' VOICES

CAROLE MITCHELL - ON FIRE FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS

BY BERYL ROPER

Carole Mitchell's appearance gives the impression of a happy well-adjusted and popular sixth former. Sporting her trademark ponytail and a broad, easy grin, Carole comes across as solid and as enduring as the jeans and name brand sneakers that typify her wardrobe.

It comes as a surprise to learn that under the trim school-girl exterior is a woman of 30 something; a highly qualified educational specialist with over fourteen years experience in her field; and who because of the quality of her work in sports for persons with mental disabilities, commands tremendous respect not only in Jamaica and the region, but in international circles as well.

Special Olympics, which Carole readily admits is in her blood, was started in the late 1960s in the USA by Eunice Kennedy-Shriver, of the famous Kennedy clan and herself the parent of a child with mental retardation. This programme which began as a summer diversion for her child and a handful of others with mental disabilities has grown into a world-wide movement offering a range of 22 sports to over one million persons in 150 countries.

The programme, Carole explains, came to Jamaica in 1978. It offers year-long training in 11 sports including football, floor hockey, volleyball, track, bocce, discus, swimming and horse-back riding.

In alternate years the movement holds world class Olympics type meets in winter and summer sports in various parts of the world. Jamaica has always done exceptionally well in these meets.

In 1995 for example, Jamaica sent a fine bunch of athletes to the World Summer Games held in Connecticut and they, like our other athletes, stole the spotlight in their sports of choice. Next February,



Carole Mitchell (centre) at the 1993 World Winter Games in Austria

the floor hockey and speed skating teams will go to Canada for the Winter Games to participate - like our bobsleigh team - on ice! Bear in mind that these athletes have disabilities.

How did we get this far? This was a question I put to Carole who modestly admits to pioneering floor hockey and a number of other sports for persons with disabilities, not only here in Jamaica but in several other parts of the English, French and Dutch-speaking Caribbean.

"We are coming a far distance" she mused. "Looking back to 1981 when I became involved, our athletes had no opinion of their own then; you had to make every choice for them. They were of various ages (this programme has no upper age bar) but were all babies in development."

"We have over the years, deliberately fostered a climate of treating them in a manner appropriate to their ages. We allow them opportunity and a voice to say what they like, to be creative and to take on new challenges. Now they are no longer babies. In each thing that they excel, they gain more confidence to the extent that

their disability becomes secondary".

Carole cited many examples of athletes who had become so good at a particular sport that as an offshoot of the confidence gained, they have been able to take on the challenges of life in a far more positive and determined way, compelling people to develop new attitudes and a new respect for persons with disabilities.

"Sport is life training and I firmly believe that without Special Olympics many would never have gotten the opportunities that they got to fit them for life", she pointed out.

Carole who attended St. Catherine High School, went on to Mico Teachers' College where she majored in what was then a new discipline, Special Education, which prepared teachers to meet the educational needs of children with visual, hearing and mental disabilities as well as those with learning disabilities.

Upon graduation, she took up a teaching engagement at the School of Hope which is the largest facility of its kind in Jamaica, offering education to children with mental retardation. It also provides most of the

cont'd on pg. 33

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THE COACHES' VOICES

athletes and a significant number of volunteer coaches for the Special Olympics programme.

Very soon, she was asked to help in the preparation of students for participation in floor hockey.

"I had played field hockey before but knew nothing about floor hockey. I had no choice but to learn the game, study the rules, while at the same time conducting the coaching. I just naturally got into coaching other areas such as swimming, roller skating and many others".

Carole explained that Special Olympics International, as well as the Jamaican body, demand very high standards from their coaches and other volunteers. Certification is thus an important prerequisite to offering coaching. "I have been certified in so many areas over the years", she reflected, "but I have been giving up some roles to let others grow".

Other persons in the Special Olympics Circle attest to Carole's dedication and single-mindedness when it comes to Special Olympics. Avril Daley, educational specialist and volunteer with Special Olympics has been working with Carole for the last six years. "In our line of work, professional behaviour and good work ethics are a must", said Avril.

"Carole is well-disciplined and hard-working. She will not accept work that is not properly done. She will research her subject until she feels that she will be assisting her clients to the best of her ability.

"The basis of success is simple - the love of the athletes and the love for sports. She believes that all athletes can succeed if given the right climate and coaches".

Carole's expertise not only benefits Jamaica Special Olympics but the entire region. She has conducted dozens of coaching seminars throughout the length and breadth of the Caribbean.

A number of sports that Jamaica pio-

neered have been passed on to sister movements in the other islands.

"I've coached everywhere in the region, athletes, referees and coaches, and some sister countries have asked if we (Jamaicans) are not afraid of creating too much competition. But I don't feel that way. Getting the best for the region raises the level of competition and that is good for everybody," she insists, "and Jamaica still remains a world leader in many of the sports we enter."

Carole has earned high honours over the years. She has been an international referee, has run several successful training schools and conferences and is currently the Caribbean Referee-In-Chief for floor hockey. She will be part of a small select world group to determine who will be referees at international games.

When Carole and I spoke recently she had just returned from a month-long visit to South Africa, Botswana and the Seychelles.

"I was invited by Kathryn Clark, who

was Director for Special Olympics in the Caribbean and who is now responsible for the development of the movement in all of Africa.

"In South Africa I helped to select the team for the World Winter Games coming up in February 1997. They wanted an outsider because it was difficult for them to choose 14 players out of the 200 they have playing floor hockey. There are these difficulties associated with race, sex, age, region and religion, so it was good to have an outsider. I think everyone was satisfied with the choices I made after watching the athletes play.

She also ran a number of training schools for coaches and referees and was a conference speaker at a major forum put on by South Eastern Africa and the Seychelles. She also helped in the preparation of training plans, readying coaches and referees for certification and also directed her hosts in the methodologies for developing indigenous sports.

"I not only dealt with Special Olympics business but when people heard I was from Jamaica, or saw me wearing my National Sweat Suit (it is Winter in South Africa now) I ended up giving many impromptu talks on Jamaica.

"At one University in South Africa, a 15-minute talk turned into one hour. The students really wanted to know everything about Bob Marley and Jimmy Cliff's country. Some were not even aware that Bob Marley is dead!"

Being engaged so fully in what could be termed a past-time begs the question of how Carole is able to juggle home and marriage, career and volunteering for Special Olympics.

Fortunately there is a tight network relationship between the agencies involved with disabilities, hence support is readily given to Carole to pursue these multiple interests.

Presently she is employed as Director of the Primary Intervention Programme which is a project of the Jamaica Association for persons with Mental Disabilities. This



Carole (centre) speaking to other officials

organisation, (JAPMR) in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, bear responsibility for the Schools of Hope island-wide.

Carole was classroom teacher, assessment clinician and also a vice principal at the School of Hope before moving over to the Association in her new position.

In the midst of all this, she has made the time advance her own educational development by earning a Bachelor's Degree in the clinical aspect of special education and a Masters in Educational Psychology from the University of the West Indies.

"She always has something to share.

She is ever willing to co-operate and to pull together the other members of the team. Carole is always willing to go the extra mile," declared Christine Rodriguez, Principal of the School of Hope, when asked about Carole.

So what sustains Carole? Avril Daley, her close friend and associate believes that the love surrounding Carole helps to sustain and buttress her.

"She does not try to be super-woman at home. She is not your typical house-wife. She supports and is supported by Henlin, her husband of fifteen (15) years, but she does not enjoy cooking and cleaning, though she is a fantastic baker!

"She is an avid reader and will devour

three novels on the weekend when the time allows. She has over 500 novels in her possession. She is very romantic at heart," Avril added.

In her own estimation, Carole feels that she is sustained by all those around her - Henlin, her parents, four sisters and one brother, Special Olympics and the workplace family.

"For me, anything that brings tangible results is exhilarating. Special Olympics is tiring but the tiredness is short-lived.

"Looking back over the last fifteen (15) years, I have seen so much growth in persons with mental disabilities, that for me and Special Olympics, there is no end in sight." Q

GRACE JACKSON SMALL - GIVING SOMETHING BACK TO SPORTS

BY MARIE GREGORY

What happens to an Olympic athlete when she retires? This particular one competed in the Los Angeles Olympics in 1984 and was the first female from the English-speaking Caribbean to take part in four Olympic finals. When she competed in the Korean Olympics in 1988 she gained the silver medal in the 200 metres and took the Commonwealth and Jamaican records in the process. She is, of course, Grace Jackson Small.

Grace got into athletics through Queen's High School but her entry was far from easy. Grace came from a deeply religious family who were members of the group known as Plymouth Brethren, a very restrictive sect. Because of their regulations, Grace's mother refused permission for her daughter to take part in sports day activities. Grace describes herself as being "tomboyish and disobedient" in those days, so she went ahead while trying to persuade her mother.

She actually began her athletic career in long jump then took on high jump too. Running followed. Competing for the school could be managed but when she was selected for the Carifta Games she definitely needed parental permission. One of her sisters signed the consent form, another helped her pack. She was searching



Photo: Gleaner Files

madly for her birth certificate so her mother may have suspected something. When the taxi came for her, Grace ran to it as if she were involved in an escape! The games were in the Bahamas and she came second in the high jump. When she came home, she was sure her mother would meet and beat her; she did neither.

Eventually her mother came around but left the Church. Because Grace did not apologise for competing, no one from her house could go to church.

There followed a scholarship to Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University to take a degree in accountancy then a transfer to Queen's College, New York, for Computer Science. Athletics kept pace with the academics and, on her international big time debut in Helsinki in 1983, Grace finished fifth in the 200 metres. In college she did hurdles, long jump, high jump and relays.

Throughout her time in college, Grace worked hard. She graduated with Honours and, apart from the first semester, made the Dean's List throughout her course.

It was really the move to New York that opened the door to international competition. When she became part of the track team, coach Fred Thompson took her to Europe. She said "I learned to work really hard. Then in 1987, I left New York for California to train with Donald Quarrie."

In the Olympics of 1992, Grace came sixth in the 200 metres. Perhaps this was a turning point. She explained how she felt. "I was satisfied I had worked hard but realised I had lost some of the drive, the deep drive to go on after 1988."

Though she had achieved much, Grace felt she needed a sense not only of where she was but of where she wanted to go. "I knew that I didn't have the 'killer instinct' that Merlene has, she has this special ability to be so totally focussed that nothing else matters. Merlene has a fire in her; she doesn't like to lose."

Nowadays Grace understands herself much more clearly. She can now see what

her life has been and understands that the world of athletics can create some difficulties as far as the real world is concerned. This is why she now wants to help other athletes. She believes athletes form a very special community and need counselling and therapy when they retire from it all.

Grace set her own goal to retire in 1992. She had married Hugh Small in 1990. When he was in politics, she felt she could not work in Jamaica. Once he retired, things were different. For a year and a half Grace worked with Peat Marwick then fulfilled her dream with the founding of OASIS, The Organisation for Athletes Striving for Improvement and Success, a non-profit organisation.

This is very satisfying for Grace; her concerns are for the forgotten group, the athletes who could not get scholarships to America for whatever reason. Some are here in limbo, where can they go? She hopes to provide the tools to allow them to either survive, in athletics or by using athletics as a tool to become good in some other area. When scholarships are given, some cannot take advantage because if it happens to be a half scholarship, support is still needed. Athletes who go away have the need for support at times such as Spring Break or Thanksgiving when the campus often closes down. A network of Jamaicans in various positions who can assist is needed, Grace says.

When an athlete leaves college, he/she may not be ready to return home immediately but could benefit from help to allow him/her to focus to realise their options whether to go on to graduate school or to find a really good coach.

The problem Grace is finding with OASIS is that in the present state of the economy there is not much available money around. She hopes that those who have received help will put something back, perhaps in time spent coaching.

She is very involved with her 'alma mater', the Queen's High School where she coaches, helps monitor study halls and homework sessions in an attempt to create more discipline off the track and pride on it. She stresses the importance of academics and tells the girls that life cannot depend on sport, anything can happen and they must be capable of continuing in society.

In her work with the track team, Grace coaches a few of the better runners, always monitoring the academics so as to motivate the rest of the team. She finds too many young people are motivated by the visual, materialistic things.

Through OASIS she is trying to address several problems faced by young athletes, for instance, the Inter Secondary Schools Association agreed that if an athlete competes in Champs, he or she should have a minimum of 35% in three subjects. Grace would like to see this raised to 50%. She thinks help could come for weak students through the alumnae associations.

Grace feels passionately that she was put on earth to help young people, to coach and to counsel them. She would like to create a special type of health centre whereby she could service young athletes and encourage parental involvement. She believes athletes need a hug - they are pushed hard in a tough competitive world - a hug can make a big difference.

Grace lives happily in Bog Walk which she describes as a piece of heaven, with the hills and the mist. Being there helps her to focus on where she goes next. It is her thinking spot. Retirement for her has not meant removal from sport, just a slightly altered focus.

MAUREEN HALL - NURTURING TEAM SPIRIT

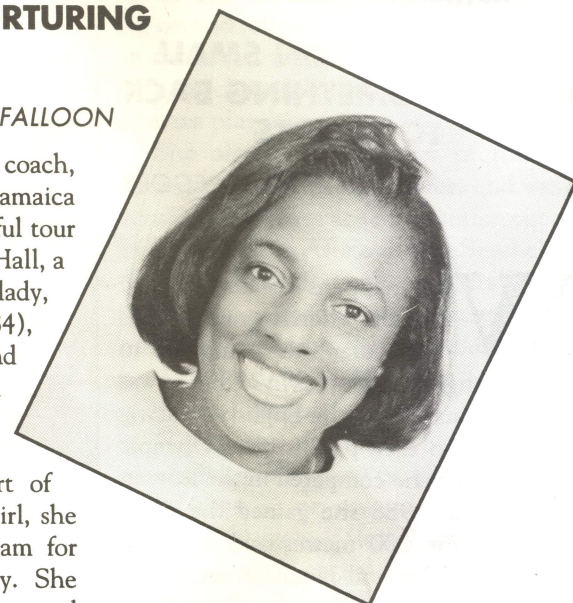
BY CARLETTE FALLOON

I caught up with the national coach, Maureen Hall fresh from the Jamaica Netball team's highly successful tour of England in November. Coach Hall, a very charming and charismatic lady, and a former national player (81-84), has been of the driving forces behind the success of the senior team and was, justifiably, still beaming at the team's performance.

Netball has long been a part of Maureen Hall's life. As a schoolgirl, she was a member of the netball team for Queen's High and Alpha Academy. She played at the club level with the Sports and Games Club before she went off to England to pursue a Bachelor's Degree in Education. There she also played, coached and taught netball.

On her return home, she taught physical education at her alma mater, Queen's High.

After serving as coach to the under 21 team for a few years, Ms. Hall became the senior team coach in 1988. In addition to the satisfaction of watching your team win, there is also the reward of overseas travel, meeting new people and experiencing new cultures. In earlier years, the demands on her time was not great, now being older coaching must compete with her responsibilities as a mother, insurance executive, post-graduate student. Nevertheless her love and enjoyment of the game remains undiminished; the real task is managing her time effectively.



"One of my concerns is that despite the fact that netball is one of the most popular team sports in the world, it is not recognised and therefore not given the support it deserves from the government and private sector," Ms Hall says. "Although I must admit that things have improved. A few years ago team members even had to contribute to their own travelling expenses associated with overseas competition. Since 1991 more funds have been received from the government through the Sports Development Foundation and the private sector."

A lot more has to be done, however, if Jamaica is to maintain or improve their current standing in the world ranking. Support from the private sector now includes more than just

donations of funds; individual companies that employ members are very considerate with giving time off for training and travelling.

For accelerated development of the game, coaches too need to access more overseas training in order to hone their skills, Ms Hall says. "And we have to have netball being played at the parish level. This would help a lot of young girls to see netball as an avenue for self-improvement. Sports is an effective tool to mould one's character, build self esteem and to become more disciplined. Girls can identify role models in senior players and coaches."

Apart from individual self-development, of course, there is the very important aspect of team-building. "When you play a team sport, you learn to be part of a team. Members have to exist as a group. They are coming from different backgrounds with different life experiences. They learn how to be happy and make others around them happy. They learn to act as a support group to each other."

Naturally, netball has also played a part in Coach Hall's own development. Her role as coach represents constant personal challenge - to give 150% of herself regardless of obstacles; to constantly motivate herself. There can be no thought of failure because there is a team of people depending on you, which means that the task at hand must concentrate all your efforts. Her efforts have not been unrecognised: she has won the National Coach Award and the Senior Umpire Award.

With each new member comes new problems and new challenges and she has to become the mother figure to help the player feel a part of the team. What keeps her going, she says, is the difference she makes in the lives of the girls.

Coach Hall and the team are looking forward to 1997 with the tournament in New Zealand in May and June and the Caribbean Tournament in August. In 1998 netball will be admitted as a team sport in the Commonwealth Games. She hopes that by the next Olympics, which will be held in Australia in the year 2000, netball will also be admitted as a sport. If this should happen she hopes to be there to help Jamaica make its presence felt in another event outside of track and field.

EILEEN CLIGGOTT FEMALE HORSE TRAINER

BY GRUDGY

Destiny had its way with Eileen Cliggott from very early in her life. She grew up on a farm in London, England. There, she was surrounded by animals of all sorts - horses, cows, chickens..... you name them. Her father who was a race horse trainer allowed her to ride the horses and play with them. The response of the animals, especially the horses, to her touch and her voice, left an indelible mark on her mind.

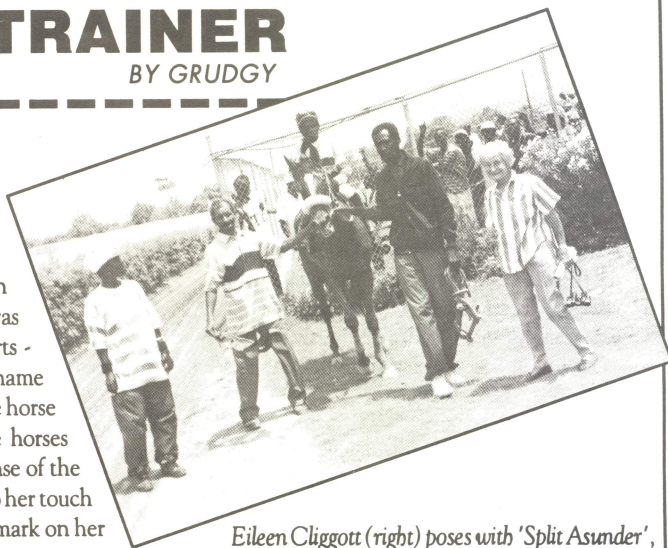
After her father retired from farming, she worked in a racing stable. In her early adult life, she got married to a race-horse trainer. It is therefore no surprise that she followed her father's footsteps, and her husband's, and became a trainer herself. Her response to the question, "How long have you been involved with horses?" could not be quantified; the simple response: "All my life." Eileen decided to expand on the brisk response. "As a toddler, all I thought of was horses. While other little girls were playing with dolls, I was playing with horses on the farm or wooden versions," she added.

Eileen created history in Jamaica when she entered the racing arena in 1958, upon migrating to the island. "I was one of the first females to work in stables in England and probably the very first here," said Eileen.

Entering a field which is traditionally male-dominated field, Eileen says she did not face any sort of obstacles. "All the males demanded was that you keep your weight at a steady 126 pounds the most. You just had to keep your weight down," she reminisces.

For her, a typical day in training begins at 5 o'clock in the morning where she "saddles up" the horses and transports them in a trailer to Caymanas Park. "We have to go to Caymanas because we have no track here," she pointed out, referring to her stud and training farm in the Caymanas Golf Club area. At Caymanas, she is helped by her assistant, Mr. L. Miller of 33 years, for almost a full day, when they return to their 'home' off the Mandela Highway.

Even after so many years at the profession, Ms. Cliggott says she is still excited to go out each day and "face the new challenge of training. To tell the truth, I don't know what motivates me," she stated. She adds "As long as I am well, I will carry



Eileen Cliggott (right) poses with 'Split Asunder', a horse which was trained by her, its jockey, Henry Meghoo and L. Miller (2nd right), her assistant of 33 years. Looking on are other assistants of Caymanas Tracks Limited.

on. My health is the only thing that I will take into consideration to stop." However, she admits that one must have a great love for animals before entering the profession, as there is no formal training ground for the job.

Over the years, she has encouraged a number of women to enter the field of race horing, either as a rider or a trainer. "Hazel Cowie has stuck it through. She is now a rider," she said enthusiastically about one of her apprentices.

When asked if she is ever disappointed by any of her horses, her reply was a short "yes, every day when I lose a race." Disappointing too, is the system of pay back, especially for the groomsmen, who receive 5% of the first money won from a winning horse. "This is good, but grooms without winning horses get only \$600 per horse." She believes this could be a deterrent to other women, but hopes that the financial issue becomes secondary when the profession is being considered.

Eileen Cliggott boasts an enviable record of winning horses, having won over 950 races to date. She speaks admirably about Rumplestilskin' which won a derby back in the 1960's and 'Thank You Sir', which was her first winner in 1963. One of her more recent charges is 'Split Asunder', which has been doing very well.

For those, especially females who are interested in horse training, Eileen said "trial and error is the game!"

Ms. Cliggott continues to train horses and can be seen every race day at Caymanas Park with her trademark binoculars.

SISTREN OUT DEH

cont'd from pg. 2

Centre. The Internet services and equipment were explained and demonstrated by the staff of JAMP.

Oracabessa Workshop

Two performances of "Oracabessa Labrish" took place earlier this year.

The **Oracabessa Primary School** was the venue for the first "Labrish". Members of the community were blessed with a performance of "The Family through the eyes of a Child". A very exciting, informative and interesting discussion took place. Members of the church community, youth reps and the elderly gave their views on the various issues coming out of the performance piece.

A second performance happened at the **James Bond Beach - Oracabessa**. The large audience enjoyed the performance and Sistren embraced the hospitality of the staff at the beach, particularly the Chef. The audience begged for "M O R E".

Sharon Green a student from the United States on internships with Sistren, along with members of the Sistren Artistic Team conducted a series of special workshops with LYNX - the community youth group in the area, focussing on "The Environment". Sharon shared with them a technique used and made popular by the famous **Agusto Boal**, called "The Rainbow of Desire".

At The Meeting Place

COORDINATOR FEATURED: Rebecca (Becky) Knowles - Co-ordinator Teens in Action was recently featured in our very own Air Jamaica In-Flight Magazine "Sky Writings", in an article entitled "Daughters of Nanny".

Rebecca Knowles Sistren
Rev. Marjorie Lewis-Cooper

General Secretary
Jamaica Council of
Churches
Defends Rastafarian Culture
Principal, Friendship
Primary School
President of the St. Ann
Chamber of Commerce.

Sharon Chacko
Enid Harris

Jeannie Dixon

Recently Becky has been invited to conduct a series of workshops by Funders and Community Organisers in the United States. We will certainly hear more about her educational exciting trip when she returns.

RETURNED HOME: Marion Bernard, former General Manager of Sistren, recently returned from the United States, where she did her **Masters Degree in Public Administration** and a **Certificate in Management and Public Policy**. She mainly did Strategic Management and Public Policy at the **Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts**. Ms. Bernard received a Fellowship from the **Kellogs Foundation - Kellogs International Leadership Programme**.

RETIREMENT DINNER: Members of Sistren performed a short skit, specially created for **Mrs. Peggy Antrobus**, based on her life and work. The piece looked at her various roles as a mother, wife, friend, leader and pioneer. Mrs. Antrobus is one of those persons who were very instrumental in establishing the **Bureau of Women's Affairs, in Jamaica** and **WAND in Barbados**. The piece was presented in her honour at a Dinner, held at the Pegasus, as she enters retirement.

Another formal dinner was held in Barbados and was attended by members of Sistren, friends, relatives and well-wishers in the Caribbean, who came to honour a special sister, who had touched their lives in one way or another. The Caribbean Region would not have been satisfied if something special was not done to reflect, recount and encourage Peggy into active retirement.

WORKSHOP: The Annual Schooler's Workshop, "Rhyme and Reason '96" was held on **August 14-23, 1996** at Sistren's headquarters on **20 Kensington Crescent, Kingston 5**. This two-weeks workshop was designed for young people between the ages of 9-19 with the focus on "Youth and Health".

The opening session started at 10:00 am with **Patricia Donaldson (Aunty Pat)**, a member of **Women's Media Watch**, as the **Mistress of Ceremonies (MC)**. Her message was: "I am glad Sistren is putting on this workshop, and particularly glad for the Theme, because without health, we cannot have wealth".

Prayers were offered by the **Rev. Marjorie Lewis-Cooper. Dr. Delano Franklyn, Ministry of Education**, gave a brief speech on healthy living, and how healthy eating habits can help the youth to learn better in school. The society should help the youths to see that unhealthy living does not encourage a long life span, and can cause illnesses and complications that medical practitioners are sometimes unable to deal with.

Field trips were made to:-

- The University of the West Indies, UWIDITE Centre where the older students got a chance to talk with students from the Caribbean, namely Trinidad and St. Vincent, through a tele-system.
- The Mustard Seed Community, Cockburn Gardens, where the younger students rapped with 'Special Children'
- The National Family Planning Clinic, UWI, where they were taught the importance for teenagers to wait until they were mature before they indulge in sexual activities, as they are prone to certain diseases, infections and other problems such as guilt and lack of self-esteem.
- The Serenity Gardens, Old Harbour Road, where they were greeted by **Uncle Vernam** from Guyana who taught them about the birds and the animals. They were also told that the same kind of love given to humans should be extended to nature's birds, plants, animals and other living things.
- Windsor Girls Home, St. Ann - Superintendent, **Ms. Barbara Byron** and three house mothers gave a session on the functions of the home. Fifty girls are now present at the home.

The closing ceremony took place at the **National Children's Home** where the students displayed their various talents in art work, skit presentation, karate and dance. Certificates and gifts were presented.

It was a very educational two weeks and we do look forward to having the good and interesting times with old and new faces at the summer workshop for 1997.

MARGINALLY FEMALE

BY DEE ROBINSON

She was standing outside the Supermarket dressed in a grotesque track suit which fit her badly, provoking the assumption it came out of a barrel.

Her hair was in one of those ugly colours and styles which certified her residence as below Cross Roads, (de facto or de jure) and her voice was more of a bark.

If she wasn't discussing how she stabbed her boyfriend Siggy with an ice pick, you'd assume she was a Lesbian, for there was nothing remotely feminine about her.

She was not a feminist. She had never had a door opened for her, or a man offer to carry her package. She was more masculine than many males who drifted around the plaza.

One couldn't image a man attracted to her if he was straight. She had all the qualities of a rough-necked centre forward in the National Team (male).

Her audience of girls in uniforms, were throwing words to keep her talking, enjoying the bull-dog behaviour. They were laughing at her. Anyone than she would know the kind of ribes she gave off.

What prompts a female to look and behave as this one?

She is not rare. There are many like her, some in dresses, some partially naked so there's no question of their sex, but all behaving as young males, or more 'macho' than he?

Is the portrait of the 'bad girl' so pervasive that even females are late? What possible explanation is there for this? Is she more 'macho' than he?

If she were a feminist, then she may have some 'poker' face, neither dressing and acting the way to provoke the male, or coming to the rescue of the latter, but she is not.

She is an average unliberated heterosexual female who stabbed her boyfriend for kissing Denise. She explained to her two listeners where she was when she heard, and having suspected him, had taken her ice pick, gone out on the lane, caught him, stabbed him for betraying her and having lied about his relationship with 'just a friend' Denise.

So here she is, a female who has lost or been denied every 'feminine' virtue to the extent of becoming a pseudo boy, yet desiring a real boy to love her.

Desiring to be a man's woman, yet being no man at all. Acting like a young girl, she is being treated as a girl, she is the double looks naked so there's no question of their sex, but all behaving as young males, or more 'macho' than he?

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This article was printed in Vol. 17 No. 2, **WOMEN AND WORK IN THE 90'S**

From Our Mailbag

THANKS

Dear Sistren

Thank you for sending me the latest copy of Sistren Magazine. I always enjoy reading this publication.

It seems such a long time ago that I was in Jamaica talking to you about Sistren.

Thank you once again for being so helpful and accommodating during my stay with Sistren last year. I really appreciated the time you allocated me.

Yours sincerely

Karina Smith

Australia

AN INSIDE LOOK

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is allowed to make any excessive noise, big cheering or instructing players or conversing with spectators.

There is a Disciplinary Body consisting of 3 persons and an Appeal Body which also comprises 3 persons. Misconduct is not tolerated and players MUST be properly attired for all matches. Players found in violation of any rule will attract the stated punishment for such an offence.

MAIN OBJECTIVES

- Get the public more involved
- Change the image of dominoes from a 'hooligan' sport to a family sport
- For the players to reach professional level so they can earn an income like other sports

The players are placed in a ring (similar to boxing) and they go through the prescribed rounds. For a tournament you have the preliminary rounds, qualifying rounds, semi-finals and the finals. The champions are given trophies and cash.

The women who are all apart of a domestic club, have travelled extensively under the Jamaica Domino Association to participate in matches in countries such as Cuba, Ft. Lauderdale and Cape Town. On the local level, the women compete against clubs to maintain their form but come together as a team when they are to compete on the international level. ♀



LIFE GOES ON

by Marva Willis

Without a thought of me
My problems
Anxious moments
Daily fights to overcome problems that
keep me down
Anger burns red hot in the furnace of
my soul
Deep inside, wanting to
Should I wait around on life?
As life goes on I'm more confused as
I grow older
I need to get somewhere
Where do I start?
Is life ready for me?
Maybe tomorrow?
Next week?
Next year?
Maybe never
That's life - never waits on anyone

THE PROUD GHETTO GIRL

by Shimette Wilson

Her head held high
Frame well structured,
The broken down fences
Could be seen through her lenses
She had high hopes, dreams
She deserves these accomplishments.

She wasn't about to take any more rubbish
from this man
He 'dis' her and made her mad
It's time to move on.
No more disrespect, disregard for possessions
Foul languages, half naked body, things thrown.

She worked hard to achieve
But he was there to deceive
To break down and take away
It was time, time for him to go his way.

THE JOURNEY

by Shimette Wilson

The sun is barely in the sky
But one has to rise early
And get into the fields
Sweat running down their face
Back aching from constant bending
Corns in various cross-sections
But the foundation had to be laid.

As the sun rises and spread across the sky
So does the progress
Children moving into building,
Moving out, away, up
Cool atmosphere, relaxation
Mind ticking, hand moving
Progress, ideas, implementations

We've grown wide and deep
Stronger, wiser, educated, informed
We're taking charge, taking control
We must move on, move ahead.

The journey is not completed
But it has started.

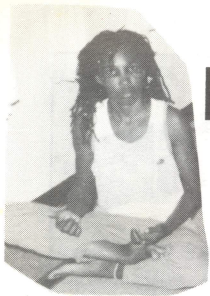
BLACKNESS

by Ta'amra Irving

Black in any state is black
Black in every way is black
Blackness the essence of glory
Black is power.

Black is beauty
The great black beauty
Black is me, a black woman
Black am I so proud.

And showing my dignity
With my head held high
Blackness a symbol of quality



MAKE YOUR BODY INTO A WEAPON

BY SHIRNETTE WILSON

From the tranquil community of Nannyville, rose a strong and vibrant woman. Although small in stature, she had the strength of mind of a giant. It was not always like this, but her involvement in Martial Arts allowed her not only to develop her self-confidence but also strengthened her mind and gave her the techniques of self-defense.

Marcia Wedderburn who is known to many as Cherry Natural, had a very developed mind as a child, and was always revolted by the hostility she saw displayed to young girls.

Back in those childhood days, Cherry Natural, who was very thin and fragile looking, was a natural 'prey' to the guys sitting at the corner. This often led to her having to take the longer route home, to avoid being 'pawed' by these men.

In school, she was known as the class clown, as she had the ability to make people laugh. "I like to see people happy," she said. Despite her popularity during school, she saw herself as a loner who was filled with fear.

During this period, being an observant and thinking person, she started to figure out ways to dispel her fear. This fear, she said, was controlling her, as the sight of the men

sitting at the corner was so intimidating, her adrenaline would start pumping and her heart would start to race.

Having a 'strong will', she knew there was a way to beat this fear and set out to find it.

Watching the television and seeing the martial arts movies, stimulated her mind to the point where she bought books and started to read about this fascinating art. Intrigued, she enrolled in one of the martial arts classes. This class, unfortunately, was not practical enough and she scouted around until she found one which she felt was practical and there she remained.

This was the first step on the road to overcoming her fears.

She 'eased' into martial arts comfortably, as she had a 'tomboyish' background (growing up with three

brothers), and so she was able to blend in with martial arts with no hitches. The training was intense, but the discipline and self-confidence which derived from training was worthwhile.

With her strong will and self-determination, she stuck to the sport. Yes, she got 'kicked down' a few times, but this only helped her to grow. Determined to conquer her fears, she trained harder.

Cherry started in this sport while she was still a ninth grade student at Kingston Senior Secondary School, and has worked her way up (over a period of time), to 1st degree black belt, which is the highest level. She still trains hard, but in addition, has acquired a Junior Instructor degree. This degree is given to those who have an inclination to teach.

Presently, she teaches at Ananda Marga Preparatory School and also judges competitions. Her aim is to train someone for the Olympics. She talks about her particular style which is "Modern Arnis", which was developed in the Phillipines during the war time. Ultimately, she would like to extract from what she has learnt and develop her own style.

Cherry Natural is also a dub poet who performs with her daughter, Little Natural, and is working on her second book of



Photo: Charles Ferguson

Cherry Natural as she demonstrates a defence style



Photo: Charles Ferguson

Cherry Natural with students in one of her Martial Arts classes

poetry. She is the mother of two children, a daughter and a son, and she continues to work hard to accomplish her goals and to meet the different challenges head on. She is a consistent and a deep-spirited sister, who was not deterred but rather has excelled in both martial arts and dub poetry which are seen as male-dominated fields.

In giving us an insight into the sporting discipline of martial arts, she pointed out that each system was different but the one she's involved in starts out at white belt, progresses to yellow (there are different stripes in the yellow), green, blue, purple, brown and black. She states that martial art teaches you to always be prepared and how to make your body into a weapon. "Martial arts is not geared towards a specific gender, size or age," she said, "but you need to get involved in a programme that suits you."

Cherry Natural gave us an insight into some of the disciplines practiced. Such disciplines are: Taichi - which has a dance movement
Tae Kwon Do - Korea Martial Art
Aikido - Japanese Martial Art
Kung Fu - Chinese Martial Art, just to name a few.

Women who are said to be the 'weaker sex', are not separated from men during training, as both male and female undergo the same rigorous exercises.

She emphasised that martial is not about 'brute' strength, but how you can use your opponents' strength to your advantage.

Cherry feels that women are held back, not because of any physical capabilities but because of their 'conspiracy of silence'. Women are not speaking out for the 'rights of women' on a regular basis.

Her word to women "Never say you can't". Be equipped both mentally, physically and spiritually. Get involved in a self defense programme and speak out on issues affecting you. It is not healthy to keep those issues 'bottled up' as it can affect your capacity to achieve. She pointed out that even though she was stricken by fear, she did not let it consume her.

"Go out there and be the best you can and face the changes as they come. Be persistent and strive for the highest, for if you persevere you will reap."

ANA QUIROT

cont'd from pg. 18

several weeks pregnant with a baby for Javier Sotomayor, the Cuban high jumper, a married man, which led to wild rumours about the circumstances of the fire, including one that it occurred during an altercation between the two lovers. "I've heard a lot of versions," Quirot said. "My relations with (Javier) were very good." Of what occurred that night, she said: "It's best for me not to remember. It's a nightmare."

Doctors treating Quirot found the baby had brain damage and induced labour. She ended the relationship with Sotomayor during her recuperation in hospital. Released after three months, she looked at herself in the mirror for the first time and had an immediate rethink about her promise to return to the track. It had less to do with her physical capacity, for the legs were still intact: she looked horrible. Tears and pain and feelings of depression followed. She felt useless and wanted to die. One of the most beautiful women in track had lost her baby and her looks and her lover. Later, Cascaret, her exhusband would also die, in a car crash.

Her first race after the nightmare was at the Central American and Caribbean Games in Ponce, Puerto Rico. Economic times were hardening; pressure was building on the Cuban system; 40 Cuban athletes requested asylum in the United States. Quirot ran with heart and muscle. Second in the 800 metres (to Letitia Vriesde of Suriname) she returned home a heroine. Fidel said of her race: "She won a silver medal for running, and a gold medal for bravery."

And Quirot's coach, Leandro Civil, said of this indomitable woman: "Her will — that's what separates her from the rest." Of that there is much evidence. Her story is the stuff of sporting legend.

It is by testing themselves against each other in contests for prizes that women and men prove how deep is the human being's capacity. They are lifted above the ordinary, soar beyond previously established boundaries. After Goteborg, Quirot expressed this notion in the following way: "I trained not only to win again, but also to draw myself out. If I hadn't been an elite athlete, I don't know if I could have made it. In sport, you learn to go beyond yourself. This is the greatest thing that has ever happened to me... I pushed myself in my training toward this race."

That is what makes the major sporting

events - the Olympics, World Cup of Football - into the defining epics of our time. Athletic performances transcend in impact even the most startling news from the world's crisis points. Inured by the incessant parade of talking heads haloed with self-importance, and images conveying mass suffering, we have come to look to sports as a source of solace.

Every Jamaican, regardless of personal shortcomings can share Deon Hemmings' glory, seeking comfort in the notion that her courage on the track reflects our own fearlessness as a people. The light from Ottey's World Championship medal illuminated us all, her endurance seen as a measure of the capacity of the island nation from which she came to persevere and strive for excellence.

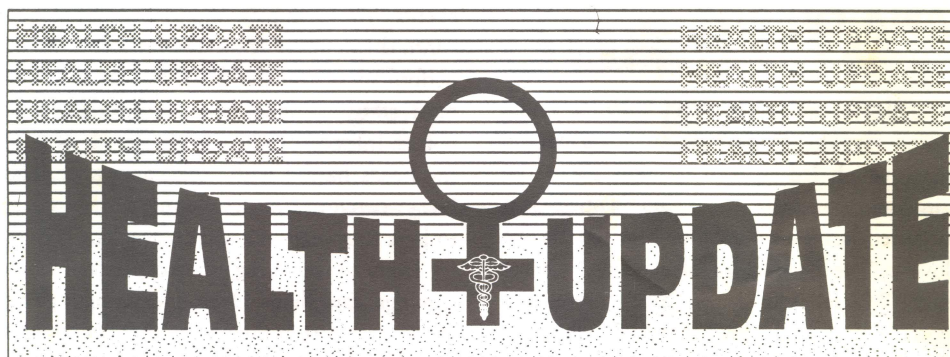
And long before Ottey and Hemmings, the Golden Quartet's victory in the Helsinki Olympics was taken as signal that Jamaica could perform on the world stage as an independent nation.

Quirot's 800 metres victory in Goteborg came by way of a fortuitous disqualification to the favourite Maria Mutola, who stepped on the inside lane in the first turn. The crowd rose to her feat on the track as much as the personal story behind it. Placing their Quirot mirror on the wall, Cubans saw no disfigurement, only an example in which they could bask. Fourth at 200 metres, Quirot made her move on the final turn, passing Letitia Vriesde and powering on the outside to overtake American Meridith Rainey and Briton Kelly Holmes. Her time of 1:56.11 was her best since 1989.

At Atlanta, she was again on the rostrum after running with heart and skill in one of the most technically difficult and physically daunting races.

The American magazine *Sports Illustrated* commented before those games that Quirot is "the prize product of Castro's socialist plan. She was born soon after the revolution and sifted like fine sugar through the regime's sports system. It is eerie how their tragedies - Quirot's and Cuba's - dovetail so cleanly."

Cuba's endurance has been stretched to the limit since 1989 by political turmoil on top of long-standing pressures brought on by U.S. hostilities. In that same period, a symbol of the system was being battered by personal misfortune without yielding to despair. Alberto Juantorena, the great Cuban Olympian, says: "It's like looking in a mirror and we're reflected."



SPORTS MEDICINE

Sports medicine is that branch of medical science that deals with the treatment and prevention of injuries sustained while participating in sports. The field also concerns the methodology of scientific research to determine the causes of sports injuries.

"Over the years, sports medicine has found a number of problems, especially with the competing athlete. At the high level competition, athletes put much more stress and strain on their bodies because of the training and the stress of competition; their bodies break down much easier if we do not provide the means to sustain them," states Dr. Herb Elliot, Medical Officer.

All aspects of the health and wellbeing of an athlete; the psychological, nutritional, injury and rehabilitation, sports medicine addresses.

He pointed out that some athletes' needs are greater than some, but they all need enough fluid in their bodies so as not to get dehydrated. The energy need of an athlete is greater than the person who is sitting at the desk.

With the outstanding display of athletic prowess that our female athletes are demonstrating, one wonders what specific medical problems relate to them.

Female athletes, whose iron intake is greater than the male athletes, not only lose iron through their sweat but also through menstruation. They sometimes have what is known as **amenorrhea**, (the absence of menstrual flow) which often happens when the body fat goes down. The fat helps to

produce the hormones and because female athletes train, their lean body weight becomes greater and their fat tissue goes down. As soon as they stop running and gain back some of the fat, this problem will disappear. There is also the problem of **dysmenorrhea**, which is painful periods. Once young females start exercising they have less of this problem.

The athlete's entire body is subject to countless varieties of sports injuries. The nature of the injuries is attributable to the individual characteristics of the athlete as well as the demands of the particular sport. A clear understanding of how these two factors interrelate is essential for prevention and treatment of sports injuries.

Sports can be classified according to the physical and mental demands imposed on the participants. There are also environmental demands such as playing conditions, equipment used, and the rigorosity of practice.

Sports can also be categorized according to the kinds of movement that an athlete must perform. There are six basic motions in sports: stance, walk, run, jump, kick, and throw. These basic motions have all been rigidly defined for scientific study. A sport may involve one, a combination, or all of these motions.

TYPES OF SPORTS INJURIES

With an athlete categorized as either loose- or tight-jointed, it is much easier to understand the nature of many common sports injuries. Whereas doctors once recom-

mended rest and inactivity as a cure for an injury, today many athletes continue to train and compete while undergoing corrective rehabilitation.

TENNIS ELBOW

Tennis elbow is an inflammation of the structures in and around the lateral epicondyle, the bony knob on the outer side of the elbow. In its typical form tennis elbow is caused by repetitive microtrauma to this area resulting from poor shock absorption on the serve and backhand stroke. This can be caused by improper equipment or poor technique but may also be associated with relative weakness of the extensors of the wrist and fingers that attach in the vicinity of the epicondyle. In fact, a person need not be a tennis player to suffer from tennis elbow. The injury may also arise from job-related activities like hammering or repetitive lifting. Attempts to treat tennis elbow include technique and equipment changes to alter stress points, elastic bands and splints to change the tension in the extensor origins, and even progressive resistance exercises to strengthen the finger extensors.

SHOULDER INJURIES

Shoulder problems are common in the so-called throwing sports of tennis, baseball, and swimming. Practising the overhand motion of the Australian crawl for four hours a day can be devastating to a shoulder with a tendency toward partial dislocation. Chronic shoulder ailments are developing at increasingly earlier ages in young swimmers and in tennis players practicing their serves.

BACK INJURIES

Lumbosacral spine, or lower back, problems are common in sports with a great deal of bending, such as ice hockey, and even more prevalent in heavily muscled, tight-jointed, weight lifters. The keys to prevention of injuries are flexibility in the spine and posterior thigh muscles and strength in the abdominals and anterior thigh muscles. This balance of strength and flexibility acts to functionally unload the spine. Cervical spine, or neck, injuries are seen most frequently in such high-velocity contact sports as football and ice hockey. Prevention is largely a function of good equipment with strict enforcement of safety rules.

LEG AND ANKLE INJURIES

The great increase in running and jogging activities in recent years has resulted in an equal rise in leg injuries that were previously uncommon. Shin splints, stress fractures, and varieties of tendonitis often result from ill-advised or overexuberant running programs imposed on musculoskeletal systems that were not prepared for such activity. Because of the increased attention being paid to the foot in the wake of the running boom, great advances are being made in the diagnosis and treatment of these injuries. This development has been of particular benefit to dancers, who are among the most demanding of athletes on their feet and ankles.

KNEE INJURIES

The most widely publicized lower-body injuries are those involving the knee. Football, in particular, has done much to further knowledge of the complexities of the human knee's functioning in health and disease. Severe knee instability is potentially dangerous; the joint must be properly braced, and a program of strengthening exercises to overcome characteristic weaknesses must be undertaken prior to competition in order to minimize the possibility of a debilitating injury.

Participants in jumping sports, such as basketball and volleyball, are vulnerable to knee problems without violent contact. These problems usually appear in the patellofemoral (kneecap and thigh bone) articulation and are manifested predominantly as inferior pole patella (area just below the kneecap) tendonitis, or jumper's knee. Treatment may involve a program of exercises to strengthen supporting muscles, or if the knee is acutely injured, immobilization or surgery may be required. Among the most useful surgical tools for knee and other joint injuries is the arthroscope, actually a family of instruments making use of fiber optics and microsurgical techniques. With the arthroscope a physician can diagnose a joint injury and perform an operation through a tiny incision rather than conducting major surgery. This allows for less damage to soft tissue and muscle, thereby speeding postoperative recovery.

MERLENE OTTEY

cont'd from pg. 24

her form and elegance, gold continued to elude her. In fact, the 1988 season ended with Merlene's career at a low ebb. As Forrester says: "To many of her fans, her dream of a world title seemed to be fading." At the World Indoor Championships in Budapest, Hungary, in March 1989, Merlene won her "first individual gold medal at a global games".

'Good things come to those who wait.' Those words aptly describe the uphill struggles and triumphs of Merlene Ottey, whose campaign peaked in 1989, ten years after she first set foot in the international sports arena.

But even so, for the next four years, despite an incredible record of wins (e.g. in August 1991, 56 straight wins in the 100 metres in international meets) Ottey seemed destined to choke on the final few metres of her most important races. In frustration and disappointment even her fans acknowledged the title "The Bronze Queen".

At the World Championships in Stuttgart, Germany in August 1993, at 34 years old Merlene Ottey finally overcame the jinx.

August 19, 1993.

'That elusive world title...' She whispered to herself for the umpteenth time as she tossed about in bed in her hotel room in Stuttgart. 'Was it to be forever a dream?' Unable to sleep for what seemed like eternity, the memories of her past kept on flowing into her consciousness.

The barefoot sprinter on Jamaica's stadium track in Kingston, Jamaica, had achieved part of an unbelievable dream. On her day she had beaten the best in the world. But there was a lot more to winning than she had anticipated. Yes, there was this insatiable desire to be number one.

The vision of the winner's platform, the sound of Jamaica's national anthem, and the roar of the crowd held sway, even as the realities on the road to that dream were becoming disheartening.

Yes, she was disciplined.

Yes, she had stamina.

Now, however, she needed to attain that psychological edge... that final nudge which separated winners from runners-up, on those occasions when it mattered most.

GETTING THE GOLD

Two days after the controversial 100 metres, (in which Gail Devers was

given the win in the 100 metres in a photo-finish) a determined, ready Merlene reported for the start of the 200. Arms akimbo, she paced and surveyed the track. She was burning up inside. There was a tight knot in her belly. She had never felt it before. But rather than frightening her, the tension pleased her. She would release it when she rose from the blocks.

When it finally came the 200 metres was another sensational race. Ottey never trailed. She covered her first 100 metres in 11.15 seconds. Rocketing the turn, she established a clear lead as they entered the straight. Storming the stretch with Torrence, Privalova and Perec in hot pursuit, she opened a formidable 0.11 margin at 150 metres. With 10 metres to go, however, tragedy almost struck. Her flawless stride suddenly went ragged and Torrence began to gain. Ottey had choked. For about five seconds, it seemed that the jinx was again at work. Prematurely excited by what seemed a certain victory 10 metres from the finish line, the Jamaican had lost her concentration and her footing.

'I just got carried away,' she said later. 'I saw the tape and said to myself, "I'm going to win this one for sure, I'm going to win!" In her anxiety to win she dipped early and nearly lost her footing. This time, however, she was close enough to the tape for the momentum to carry her through just ahead of Torrence who was breathing down her neck.

But the crowd favourite had won and there was no holding back the cheers that erupted.

When Merlene ascended the victory podium for the second time, the roar of the crowd was deafening. It was the biggest celebration of a victory at the meet. Their heroine had finally captured her world title. By their reaction to her victory, the crowd was making a statement on the earlier decision that went against her.

Glory followed glory at Stuttgart. Sally Gunnell of Britain and Sandra Farmer-Patrick gave a spanking display in breaking the world record in the 400 metres hurdles, with Gunnell winning the gold by a foot. Sergey Bubka of Ukraine won the pole vault thereby becoming the only athlete to win the same event in each of the four times the Championships have been held.

But Stuttgart belonged to Ottey. It was indeed, her long-awaited day in the sun. Indubitably, she was the star who best exemplified that if you believe in something strongly enough and work at it hard enough, joy will come in the morning.

DOROTHY HOBSON - *Encouraging Women in Sport*

cont'd from pg. 11

Cultural Training Centre where Dorothy began at the School of Dance in charge of Student Affairs and teaching the Science of Movement. The OAS began a programme through which students from other Caribbean territories could come to the Centre and Dorothy took over the role of Administrator.

Now she works at Campion College after what she describes as a disastrous spell in insurance! That was not for her!

At Campion she is involved with athletics, netball, badminton, volleyball and swimming. She is concerned at the change in attitude of some parents who may have been active supporters of their children's involvement in sport at Prep or primary school yet say that in High School the children have too much homework to

allow for sports training. She feels that first formers must learn to organise their time.

"These children are always saying they have homework or extra lessons, these are first formers! What's wrong with them? They are children and should enjoy sports!"

Dorothy would like to see what is offered by schools in sports widened so that girls are exposed to more. She feels they are often limited in what is available.

"They can learn any of the skills if they are interested and if the sport is available to them."

A great concern to Dorothy is the fact that girls' sports do not seem to merit the attention commanded by the boys.

"Sponsorship is part of it," she admits "the boys get it. Mind you, some of the fault may lie with the women themselves

though they won't like my saying this. Men are very dedicated to the development of boys' sports yet at the very top it's the women who excel. Look at Merlene Ottey, there's dedication for you!"

Earlier this year Dorothy became involved with the management of netball when the Jamaica Netball Association was putting together a support group for netball. She was manager for the senior team on the visit to St. Kitts. Most of the netballers, come from the school system, and several young ones play on the senior team. Dorothy feels it is important to encourage them while they are young and to provide the kind of support they need.

As manager she was responsible for the general welfare of the players aside from the training. This she enjoyed but points out that when on tour it is necessary to love the sport. When the team wins, much goodwill is generated and this makes fund-raising easier.

Dorothy's favourite spectator sport is cricket. She gave up watching football because of violence!



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Alezxi at 8 weeks

I travelled to Germany in May of 1994 and whoopee!! Wow!, I had a good time.

Guess what? mommy keeps a baby's diary and she records the following:

1994 NOVEMBER 8

The birth of my love child. Weight 6 1/2 lbs

1995 FEBRUARY 15

At 4 months old Lezxi's first rice grains appear

APRIL 23

At 6 months Lezxi creeping good, good. Nothing can stay within his reach and he doesn't want to move it.

JUNE 3

Today Lezi walk for good. Seven months old and has the energy of a 'Dennis the Menace'.

DECEMBER

Lezxi's words are clearer. He parrots and apes what other people say and do.

Enough of mommy's story, back to my story.

JANUARY - AUGUST 1996

During this period I was holding good conversations with anyone who cares to engage me in a conversation. I was a bit shy at times and would keep asking eeh? eeh? when I was questioned, much to the delight of mommy and daddy's friends.

I went to Sistren's Annual Christmas Bazaar reception in December '95 and met Shade who told me "likkle bwoy, yuh a guh

Molly Rhone *cont'd from pg. 19*

advantages women bring to the sporting arena - the "mother role" as she puts it.

This involves "nurturing" the players - getting involved with their home and school life, providing them with meals at school if necessary, looking about their medicals, helping them with their homework, helping them to find jobs, ensuring that their parents are kept abreast on what is happening.

"We women tend to have an innate nurturing capability," she comments.

She admits that it can be frustrating working with the youth but points to the need to be role models for them; to show them that there is a life "outside of having babies." "We want them to play netball because it not only helps them to build self-esteem but they are able to travel, to meet people, develop friendships, get jobs and develop the total person."

The Association has in fact put in place a management structure overseen by a Committee. Their overall management plan is in demand by other Caribbean nations.

Mrs. Rhone acknowledges the invaluable assistance of the Sports Development Foundation which administers the contribution made by the Jamaica Lottery Company and which enables them to carry out what she refers to as "their very ambitious development programme." This development programme also includes taking steps to ensure that there is continuity. So although there will always be seven persons playing at the top level, the search is constantly on to find new and potentially valuable players. The Association therefore seeks to secure and

tick!", she clenched her fist and looked at the muscles in her arms when she said it. Since then, whenever I hear Shade's name mentioned I would say "Shade seh, Shade seh, mi a duh tit!" and look at the muscles in my arm as I raise my fist. I will always remember a good compliment. Maybe it's the male ego. What do you think?

Although I'm a bib man now, I still use my potty, because mommy won't let me use the toilet. I like the sound it makes when I pull down the shine thing. There are plenty things that I don't like and can never get used to. Why some adults love to press their mouth on my jaw and then plant a big kiss

establish branches in all the parishes. This strategy is good too in ensuring that there is a representative team from Jamaica with players not being selected just from the Corporate Area because of convenience.

"You have to develop a vision and not think of where you are now but where you want to be in four, five years time - to have your sport continue to develop," Molly advises.

"I am proud of the fact that we are seen as a serious-minded and well-organised body. We run it (the Association) like a business but not to the detriment of the players' welfare," she reflected.

She appeals to the women in the Boardroom to assist wherever possible stating that one cannot get away from the "gender issue" as the men look after their own. Women need to ensure that "their" sport is kept alive and vibrant and that the players continue to be the best they can be, which in her opinion, is number one in the world, Molly noted.

How does she cope with her demanding role in the Association, a hectic job and her family which includes two children, one just starting high school and the other completing G.C.E.?

"It means juggling your time." A lot of her weekends are spent doing netball work and housework, finding time to go to the supermarket and do social rounds and looking after her own personal needs in order to be prepared for the executive job.

Molly accepts the challenge willingly. Her philosophy is that "to whom much is given, much is expected."

"I think that if more of us did more in our spare time, Jamaica would be a better place."

on my mouth? "YUKKY!", and daddy's friends can't seem to understand why I cry when they throw me in the air? What if they forget to catch me?

You know what's amusing? When big people talk the funny language, they say things like "tum bibi, tum" or "ahh, aahta, yu taiti?" "Bibi hundwi? aah tumtin fi eat? a tweety?"

I laugh, because I should be the one to be talking strange, because I can't pronounce my words properly as yet. Plenty more to tell you, but space won't allow it, so tah, tah, bye bye.

SISTA ANSA and GRANNY a chat bout... WOMEN and SPORT

