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VCB weighs her options for 2009

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STAR SPORTS

VCB weighs her options for 2009



Jamaica's Veronica Campbell-Brown (left) is congratulated by her great rival, the United States' Allyson Felix, after winning Olympic **gold** in the women's 200m final at last year's Beijing Games. - file

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There will be no major changes to sprinter Veronica Campbell-Brown's preparation this year, following an outstanding 2008 season capped by an Olympic gold medal in the 200 metres, but shadowed by the disappointment of failing to make Jamaica's team to run the 100 metres in [Beijing](#).

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And, despite Campbell-Brown's status as defending champion in the 100 metres, which guarantees her a lane in that event for the IAAF World [Championships](#) in Athletics in Berlin, [Germany](#), in August, she has not ruled out competing in the shorter sprint at Jamaica's track and field trials in June.

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According to the Trelawny native, like in 2008, she will skip the indoor season and set her focus squarely on getting ready to run the double - 100 and 200 metres - at this year's major outdoor championship. Since she has already qualified for a place in the 100 in [Berlin](#), based on her 2007 victory in the event in Osaka, Japan, she would only have to finish in the top three at Jamaica's trials in the 200 metres to qualify to run the double at the World Championships.

Knee surgery

However, Campbell-Brown, who lives and trains in Florida, has not yet closed the door on running the 100 metres at the trials. There she would likely face at least two of the women who beat her out of a top three spot at last year's trials and a chance to run the event in Beijing. Olympic 100 metres champion Shelly-

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Ann Fraser and bronze medallist Kerron Stewart are expected at the trials. Sherone Simpson, who won [silver](#) in Beijing, is likely to be out after undergoing knee surgery. Campbell-Brown is relishing her opportunity to choose.

"I am fortunate because I have the option of whether or not I want to run the 100 metres," she said last Thursday here. "As the defending champion in the World Championships, you don't have to compete in that particular event at the trials. So I have no pressure right there for the 100 metres. So I can decide whether or not I run at the trials."

Too early to decide

When asked if she will, Campbell-Brown said it depends on the way her preparations go up to that point.

"It's too early to decide," she explained. "As time gets closer to trials, then I'll decide; when coach and I, and my management team, sit down to decide what is best, then at that time I'll decide. But for now I don't know. I guess I have that option."

Coach Lance Brauman said Campbell-Brown's failure to make it to Beijing in the 100 metres did not detract from the sprinter's 2008 season in which she lost twice, once each in the 100 and 200 metres. Based on that record, he added, there is no need for radical changes this season.

"As far as last year goes ... there was nothing that you could take from that as negative," Brauman said while explaining the plan for this year. "She lost one (100 metres) race (at the trials). I mean, just one race. It just happened to be the wrong race to lose."

Stiff competition

"You know she beat all those girls anytime she saw them the rest of the year. And to my knowledge, that's in the only race any one of those three has ever beat her in the 100 metres. So, I mean, you can't blow up an entire year based on one day."

One advantage for Campbell-Brown to run the 100 metres at the trials would be facing expected stiff competition from Fraser, Stewart and several other outstanding Jamaican sprinters without the pressure to finish in the top three. It would also provide an opportunity to sharpen her start, which is not the strength of her race. According to Brauman, that technical area is receiving more attention this season.

"We've put some extra time into that," he said. "She's doing a lot of things better at this point and we'll just wait and see how it all pans out when the time comes."

Great success

Campbell-Brown did not have the best start in the 100 metres at Jamaica's trials last year. Nor did she in Osaka, but her terrific stretch run caught the leaders in one of the closest 100 metres finishes ever at a major championship. She beat American Lauryn Williams for the gold, although both clocked 11.01 seconds.

She's had great success at every level of competition. Now 26, Veronica Campbell-Brown is married and happy.

What's ahead for the sprint star? See The Gleaner on Saturday.

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