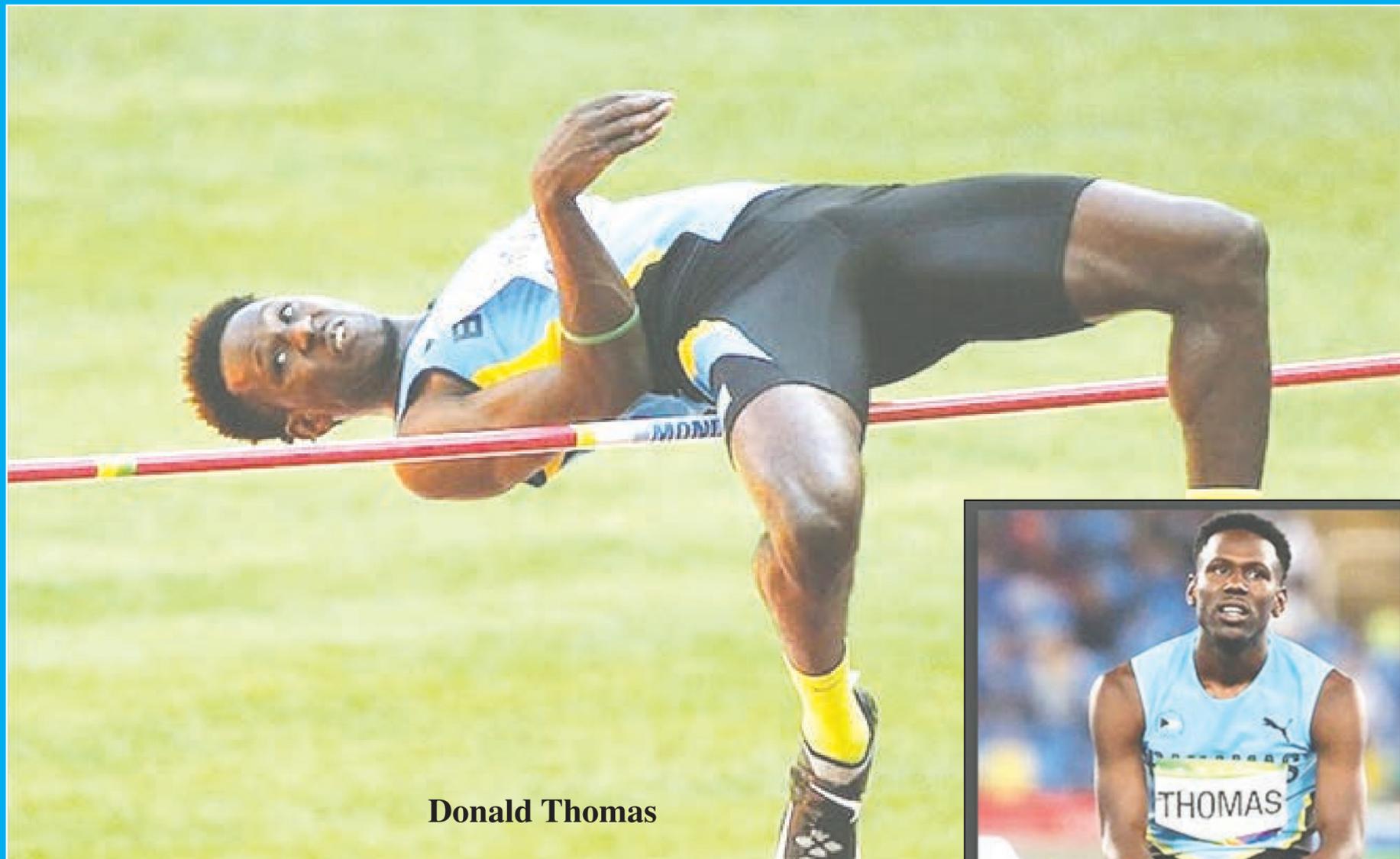
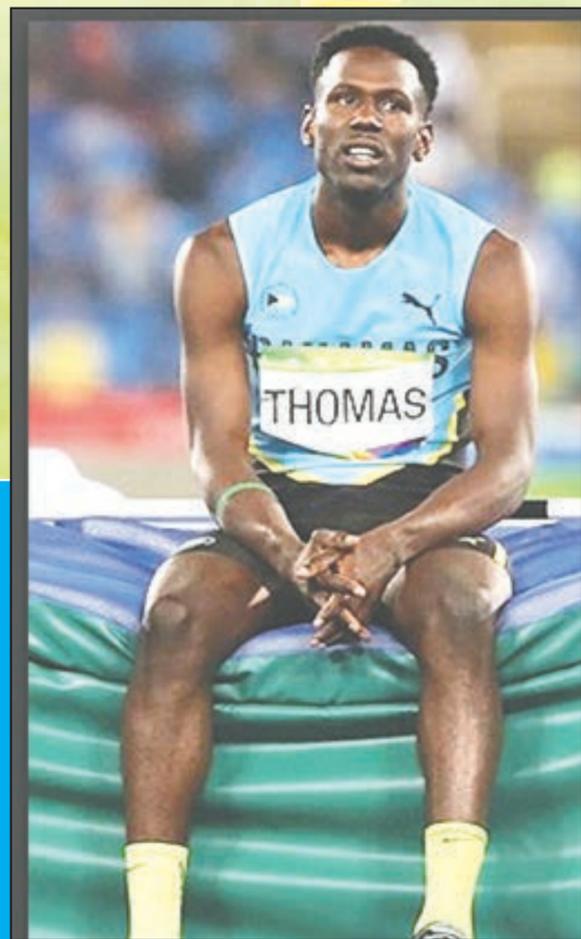


SPORTS

Thomas punctuates 2018 schedule with world Continental gold medal



Donald Thomas



West Grand Bahamian, a golden human being

When Donald Thomas persevered at 2.30 meters, based on a cleaner series of jumps to defeat Australian Brandon Starc for the gold medal on the first day, Saturday, of the International Association of Athletic Federations (IAAF) Continental Cup in Ostrava, Czech Republic, he cemented another excellent year among his elite peers.

At the end of the hot competition between two of the world's best high jumpers, Thomas was entitled to feeling quite satisfied that he had cemented one of his finest seasons in an illustrious career. At 34, he is still capable of beating his regional and international rivals. He said as much in an article by Bob Ramsak for the IAAF.

"It was an absolutely great competition. It's a different feeling when you represent The Bahamas internationally. Look, I became world champion nine

years ago and I'm still here able to win at major competitions. Could I be 'more' happy?"

We communicated afterwards as well and Thomas emphatically said: "It feels good to win here."

So, he turned 34 on July 1 of this year, and at what is considered old age for a high jumper, Thomas, amazingly, is consistent at attaining the highly recognized standard height of the upper elite performers, 2.30 meters (7-6 1/2).

That's incredible!

This year, he won the Central American and Caribbean Games gold medal for the second time (he won before in 2010). He placed third for bronze at the NACAC, 10 days later. Two weeks ago, he finished fifth at the IAAF World Final. He capped 2018 on Saturday with a golden effort once again.

This season, he has best jumps

of 2.32 meters outdoor and 2.31 indoor, demonstrating an impressive consistency. He has soared to personal bests of 2.37 meters (7-9 1/4) outdoor and 2.33 (7-7 1/4) indoor. Thomas and the Eternal One Chris Brown are easily the two most decorated male performers in Bahamian track and field history.

With the 2019 season on the horizon, the 2007 World Champion now sets his sight on another age-defying campaign. Of course, the 17th version of the IAAF World Championships is scheduled to be staged, September 6 in Doha, Qatar.

Then, there is the 2020 Olympic Games, set for Tokyo, Japan. Already, he has had a career of superb proportions, and continues to take his body to the limits and come away with gold in high class fields. It must be noted also that Thomas has become the elder statesman of Bahamian athletics in every sense

of the term.

He still demonstrates the characteristics of preparing mentally and physically for high performances. Thomas is a mentor for sure, but also, the one who looks far beyond his personal competitive responsibilities. He looks out for the welfare of fellow Bahamian representatives, as he did at the CAC Games most recently, when he provided health beverages for fellow teammates.

Donald Thomas, the West Grand Bahama native, has indeed, evolved into a golden human being.

The Bahamas is blessed to be able to boast such a son of the soil.

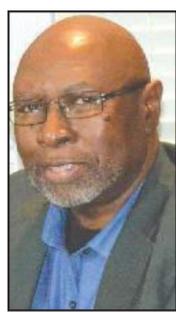
Go Donald!

Continued best wishes.

(To respond to this column, kindly contact Fred Sturupp at sturupp1504@gmail.com or on WhatsApp at 727-6363).

SPORTS SCOPE

BY FRED STURUP



American Sprinter Justin Gatlin landed for athletics clinic in GB

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The IL Cares Foundation's latest initiative in giving back to the youth and the community, is just a week away. A track and field event is slated.

This coming September 21-22, the On Your Mark Track and Field Expo will feature world renowned American sprinter Justin Gatlin. The American Olympic and World sprint champion will be sharing his wealth of track and field expertise with a number of aspiring athletes by detailing some of his experiences while rising to the top.

The clinic is scheduled to take place at the Grand Bahama Sports Complex.

Gatlin will be joined by Ohio State University's Joel Brown who also serves as a sprint/hurdles coach and recruiter. Bahamian

throws coach Don Johnson and jumps coach Peter Pratt will round-out the list.

Event coordinator Davina Rutherford spoke with *The Freeport News* this past Friday to outline just what the up-and-coming junior athletes can expect from next weekend's clinic.

"We wanted to do a pre-season clinic to assist with training techniques that runners can use to improve their times, skills and so on. So, we'll be featuring Olympic Justin Gatlin and Ohio State coach Joel Brown. We'll also have two coaches out of New Providence. Don Johnson, he will be focusing on the throws and Peter Pratt, the jumps.

"So we're inviting all schools, all track clubs, all persons that are interested."

A scrimmage meet is expected to take place on the final evening of the clinic, which will feature the 100, 400 and 4x100-meter

throws coach Don Johnson and jumps coach Peter Pratt will round-out the list. races. Rutherford noted that the foundation found it appropriate to ensure that athletes on the island get the ball rolling early, just to see where they are at physically and mentally, before their regular season training begins.

"We figured it would be a good idea for athletes to see where they are before the season actually started and see what they have to work toward.

"Obviously IL Cares wanted to give back to the community in a major way so they decided to partner with us because they saw it as a good way of pouring into the community and the youth. It's an opportunity for a scout to look at you and of course work with Justin Gatlin."

"Thanks to Gatlin's relationship with an unnamed Bahamian athlete, Rutherford described having Gatlin be a part of the clinic as a "gift."

"Honestly, having Justin

Gatlin, I would say, is a gift. He actually trains with someone from The Bahamas, so he wanted to do something in Grand Bahama."

Rutherford furthered that athletes can expect to receive a wealth of knowledge and advice from the Olympian.

"He'll be going through some of his experiences - Olympic experience; World Championships experience; his training regimen; what he eats; his workouts, - things like that. And there will be a surprise for one or two lucky schools because he'll actually be visiting the schools, because he loves talking with children and just giving them tips he didn't have when he was coming up.

"He's very excited about coming. He can't wait and he's really looking forward to meeting all of the athletes and parents. That Friday the parents are invited to come out and watch the clinic as it goes on," she concluded.



JUSTIN GATLIN