

15th May, 2017

NGC Combined Events Championships

Why is the King of Sprint so famous? Yes, he is “the fastest man alive” and probably the fastest that ever walked (or more precisely, ran) the face of the earth...but is speed really more impressive than being the strongest? Then what’s the point in being the strongest if someone else can throw things further than you? Or jump higher? How about if one person can be great at all of these things? Won’t that person be really impressive? Shouldn’t that person be “the greatest athlete in the world”? Well, that’s exactly what combined events such as the Decathlon and Heptathlon, set out to prove.

This past weekend many of our local aspiring athletes convened at the Hasely Crawford Stadium (commemorated to celebrate our aforementioned first Olympic Gold Medallist winner) for the NGC NAAA Combined Events Championships 2017 in a bid to stake a claim to being the “Greatest Athlete in Trinidad and Tobago” by being able to compete not in a specialist race but across various types of athletic events.



Athletes ranged from as young as under 10 (u-10) years right up to the Open category competed in various track and field events to prove their prowess across the foundation blocks of athleticism: the skills of running, jumping and throwing.

In the end, Kerlon Ashby of Kaizen Panthers has the biggest claim to the title with a massive 6022 points in the boys u-20 Decathlon ahead of his teammate Franklyn Stanislaus. Both managed to outpoint Open champion Herdis

Hernandes of Toco. Kechelle Douglas of UTT was able to ensure that the same did not happen on the Ladies side however, as she amassed 4624 points compared to the Under-20 Champ Anya Akili, also of Kaizen Panthers, who managed 4462 points en route to winning her gold.

The Cougars sports club proved to be the most successful club on the day amassing over 100 pts, including four bronze, three silver but just a solitary gold medal. Kaizen Athletics dominated the older age groups winning two gold and three silver along the way.

xZC Athletics Club captured two gold at the u-10 level but Memphis Pioneers were the major powerhouse at the younger age groups with two gold a silver and a bronze across four events. In addition to these champions, there were many impressive performances throughout the day in the various age groups. The two-day event showcased the upcoming talent in Trinidad and Tobago as the NAAATT continue their goal to produce more podium ready athletes for the 2020 Olympics and beyond.

The U-10 category comprised of a “triathlon” of sorts with each participant required to do one running event (80m sprint), a throwing event (ball thrown) and a jump (long jump).

Tenique Vincent of ZC Athletics was able to triumph in the Girls’ category with a total of 1003 pts over the three events. This was primarily due to her long jump score which towered over her competitors and proved the difference in the end. Shania Thomas of Cougars’ consistency pushed her to a 2nd place finish despite not winning any of the three events, while Amalya Rampersad of the Barataria EC School claimed bronze after scorching the field in the sprint. In the Boys’ equivalent, Tyrique Vincent completed the double for ZC Athletics with the Long Jump also being decisive as he amassed 1406 points. He was challenged by Makaelan Woods of Cougars, who pipped him in the sprint and Darius Marcus of Tobago Falcons who was his closest rival in the long jump.

The U-12 Category, the Tetrathlon, added a longer run to the first three in the form of an 800m. Gianna Paul of D’Abadie progressive claimed gold with 1511pts after coming finishing first in the 60m sprint and second in the 800m. She was followed by Shaian Hospedales of Morvant Jets and Adriana Quamina also of D’Abadie respectively, in the final standings. Andre Joseph claimed the boys u-12 gold despite not winning any of the events, but amassed significant points in each of the four. Joshua Gonzales of Toco and Tyrell Springer of Cougars claimed silver and bronze.



At the next age group level, the athletes competed in a Pentathlon with High Jump being added to bring the number of events up to five. Janae Murray of Memphis dominated both jumps to win the Girls 11-12 event with 2334 pts. Sarah Mc Knight of D’Abadie Progressive and Shakiah Phillip of Morvant Jets closely followed in 2nd and 3rd positions. LeBron James of Tobago Falcon proved that, like his more famous namesake of basketball fame, he has a strong vertical leap coupled with strength and athletic ability

as he triumphed in the Boys 11-12 Outdoor Pentathlon. He did this through strong performances in the High Jump and the throw to amass 2923 points. Kyrell Thomas of Cougars and Keone John of Memphis came 2nd and 3rd.

The 13-14 age group saw the competitors take part in two additional events, creating the more familiar Heptathlon. The addition of hurdles and shot put, as well as the lengthening of the sprint to 80m and the run to 1000m also increased the challenge for the athletes, in keeping with their age. Shaniqua Bascombe of Cougars triumphed over the field with a total of 3695 points, just pipping Xea Bruce of Toco Titans. Jordan Pope of Memphis Pioneers managed to claim gold in the Boys' equivalent sneaking past his teammate Shakeem Mc Kay 4664 to 4496.

Antonia Sealy dominated the field in the Girls U-18 Heptathlon despite trailing 2nd placed Safiya John at the end of the first day. Strong performances in the long jump and javelin on day two propelled her to the podium with 4309 points in the end. This would have been good enough to see her place second in the U-20 category won by Anya Akili . Both trailed Kechelle Douglas however, who won the Open category convincingly to arguably be the "Greatest Female Athlete" currently in Trinidad and Tobago. Douglas' throws set her apart from the field as she won by wide margins in both the shot put and javelin portions of the event.



At the U-18 age group level, the men reached the pinnacle of sports as were tested across ten events: the decathlon. The event comprised of 4 runs, 3 throws and 3 jumps including pole vault, discus throw and a 400m thrown in for good measure, as a true test of one man's strength, stamina, agility and overall athletic ability. Joel Andrews of D'Abadie Progressive proved to be the most all round athlete amassing 5237 points across each race, nearly 100 points clear second placed Kyle Phillips of Morvant Jets.

While the Men's Open category only had on participant completing all ten events, thus grabbing the gold, the U-20 category showed that there is strength in depth with 5 competitors in the field and each showing competence at different stages. Kerlon Ashby stood tallest though as the sun set on Sunday evening after a gruelling two days of competition. His 6022 points reflected a clear ability to compete in a variety of sports and arguably boast to being "The Greatest Athlete" in Trinidad and Tobago.