

My infamous Sports Illustrated article that made me the most vilified person in Jamaica in 2013.

(Note: The original article can be downloaded at <http://www.si.com/more-sports/2013/08/19/lax-drug-testing-jamaican-track-and-field>)

An inside look at Jamaican track's drug-testing woes



Photo: Getty Images

Asafa Powell was one of five Jamaicans to test positive before this year's world championships.

By Renee Anne Shirley,

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The 2013 world track and field championships finished on Sunday, and the might of Jamaican sprinting was—once again—on display for the world to see. During the nine-day event in Moscow, Jamaican men won four of the six medals available in the 100- and 200-meter races, and took gold in the 4x100-meter relay. Jamaica's Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce won the 100 and 200, and the Jamaican women triumphed in the 4x100-meter relay.

There can be no doubt that the tiny island of 2.7 million is the world's preeminent sprint factory. And now the island needs a world-class anti-doping operation to go with its achievements on the track.

In the month before these championships, Jamaica was hit with news that shook the psyche of the entire nation. Five of our elite track and field athletes, including Olympic gold-medalists Asafa Powell and Sherone Simpson, failed doping tests. (Both have attributed the failed tests to a supplement they were unaware contained banned ingredients.) This, coming on the heels of an announcement just weeks earlier that three-time Olympic gold-medalist Veronica Campbell-Brown had tested positive for a banned diuretic, was the equivalent of a category-5 hurricane crossing directly over the island.

And just like a hurricane, this disaster is one that I hoped would not visit Jamaica, even as I feared that it would. In 2003, I was made Senior Advisor to Jamaica's Minister of Sport, charged with coordinating the development of Jamaica's Anti-Doping in Sport Programme. Between 2003 and '07, I spearheaded the process by which Jamaica became one of the first thirty countries to ratify the International Convention Against Doping in Sport. Last summer, before Jamaica's triumph on the track at the London Games, I was appointed Executive Director of the Jamaica Anti-Doping Commission (JADCO). (I left that post earlier this year.) JADCO is Jamaica's equivalent of the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency that brought Lance Armstrong down—charged with administering Jamaica's anti-doping programs in accordance with the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA).

JADCO was formally established only in 2008, and the program has had a difficult childhood. In 2010, after WADA head David Howman pointed out that JADCO had board members who also lead sports associations on the island, the entire 15-member JADCO board of directors was dissolved. One of the dismissed board members, Dr. Herbert Elliott, was Jamaica's team doctor at the Beijing Olympics, and is now chairman of JADCO.

In July, Elliott was vague when asked about the number of out-of-competition tests conducted by JADCO in 2013. "I don't want our athletes to know whether it's 400 or 500 or whatever," he told *The Guardian*. But Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller recently told Parliament that—in total since 2009—there have been 356 out-of-competition tests conducted in Jamaica.

The current program—while improved—makes a mockery of Jamaica's posturing and flames suspicion more than it douses it. Between the time the current board was appointed, in February 2012, and the start of the London Olympics late last July, out-of-date testing kits and limited staffing resources resulted in a total of *one* out-of-competition test. Below are the full 2012 testing numbers by month—with not one out-of-competition test in the three months leading into the Games:

Jamaica's Testing

Month	In-Competition	Out-of-Competition	Total
January	0	0	0
February	0	10	10
March	0	0	0
April	0	1	1
May	15	0	15
June	81	0	81

July	0	0	0
August	0	16	16
September	0	18	18
October-November	7	14	21
December	5	12	17
TOTAL	108	71	179

When I took over, in mid-July, JADCO did not have a large enough staff in place to carry out rigorous anti-doping programs. The Doping Control/Technical Services and the Education/Communications Units had only one junior staff member each, and the director positions were vacant. There was no Whereabouts Information Officer—in charge of keeping track of athletes so that they could be tested out of competition—and only one full-time doping control officer. The committee in charge of reviewing the legitimacy of medical prescriptions for athletes was without a chairman and had never met.

Other aspects of the program were equally troubled—and troubling. I arrived to find no accounting staff in place, and no monthly financial statements had been produced in the five years since inception. JADCO was behind on payments for a number of its bills.

I urged the authorities in Jamaica to get more serious about anti-doping before a scandal hit us. I had long had reason for concern. I quietly tried to point out the presence of Jamaican threads linked to the BALCO case, via the testimony of Angel (Memo) Heredia about his contacts with elite Jamaican athletes. My position is that these threads, no matter how thin, should not be brushed aside as malice, but treated seriously, as they represent a potential threat to the integrity of our athletes and our nation.

During my time with JADCO, I also voiced concern about internet purchases of drugs and supplements by athletes, as there is reason to believe that some Jamaican athletes have been careless in their Internet purchases of dietary supplements, the ingredients labels of which are not tightly regulated in Jamaica. But despite my efforts I could not get any member of the JADCO board or member of Jamaica's Cabinet to take it seriously. They believe that Jamaica does not have a problem.

The more frustrated I became about the lack of staff and attention to issues I raised, the worse the working environment became for me, and in February of this year I met with a group of JADCO board members and we agreed it would be best if I stepped aside. Dr. Elliott has voiced his strong opinion that Jamaican anti-doping efforts are satisfactory. But this is not a time for grandstanding. In the wake of both recent achievements on the track and devastating positive tests off it, we need to believe that our athletes are clean and that our anti-doping program is independent, vigorous, and free from any semblance of conflicts of interest.

This matter should be reviewed by the Cabinet in all urgency, and the necessary changes should be made to provide JADCO with the staff it needs to carry out world-class testing on Jamaica's world-class athletes.