

Nikki Holder
Hurdles Are For Clearing



Nikkita “Nikki” Holder, 2015 Pan Am Games bronze medalist, 2012 Olympics semi-finalist is a tough, seasoned veteran at clearing hurdles. She’s returning to show it for the fifth time in the 100m hurdles at the Aileen Meagher International Track Classic on June 22nd at Huskies Stadium in Halifax.

The hurdles on the track are not the only ones this 29-year old single mom has had to contend with the past couple years. She wears a silver bracelet when she races, a birthday gift from her father in May 2015, shortly before his death in early June 2015 just a month prior to the Pan Am Games. Son Kaedance had been born just over a year before. The two events have given her a new perspective.

“Of course these events have affected my attitude to training and competition, actually they have affected my whole life. Being a single mother was not how I intended

motherhood to be. Being a parent is hard enough, then having to do it on your own has a whole set of other challenges that comes with it. However it along with the death of my Father has proven to me that I'm a strong woman. Despite life not going the way you want it to go, it does unfortunately, and life goes on. Having my son around reminds me of that everyday."

Holder's competitive focus this year is on the Olympics in Rio with the Meagher meet one of several to help her prepare. Now a veteran of international athletics she has some straight advice for any young athlete hoping to emulate her success.

"The best advice I can give to an up and coming athlete would be to first believe in yourself, and second, more importantly (in my opinion), latch on to someone who believes in you as much or more then you believe in yourself. I say this because being a track athlete is not an easy task, Contrary to what most people believe its is 10% physical and 90% mental. That person you latch onto for support is for those days when you don't believe in yourself, but you still need that push, plus having support makes everything so much easier in life as well as in sport."

Nikki Holder considers herself fortunate to have found such people. "My coaches. Andrew Stark was my first club coach who introduced me to hurdles when I was 12 years old. He was my hurdles coach all the way through high school. Later in my track career my coach now, Anthony McCleary has greatly impacted/influenced my hurdling career."

As to why Canada has been graced with several great female hurdlers over the past decade Holder doesn't profess any particular insight.

"Hurdles is such a great event to watch, I'd have to say that the track fans did luck out with having such a great field to see compete. I mean there are some coincidences I think to a certain extent, but the rest of it is all by chance."

Whatever the reason for that Canadian hurdling bounty, track fans who come to the Aileen Meagher International Track Classic on June 22nd, will again have an entertaining event to watch, and watch for tough veteran Nikki Holder to again show she's one of our best.