

Jamaica Bolts to Birmingham

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When it comes to defending his Olympic titles in 2012, the world's fastest man Usain Bolt will be doing his last few weeks of preparation in Birmingham.

The Jamaican Track and Field team have decided to base themselves in Birmingham for their pre-Olympic training camp following negotiations led by Birmingham City Council in partnership with the University of Birmingham.

The team will be using the track and free weights facilities at the University of Birmingham in the lead into the London 2012 games. As well as Bolt, Jamaica's team includes women's world 100 metre gold and silver medallists Shelly-Ann Fraser and Kerron Stewart, and men's 100 metre bronze medallist Asafa Powell.

The University's Director of Sport Zena Wooldridge comments: "It's tremendously exciting news that the world's fastest man will prepare for the Olympics in Birmingham. It confirms Birmingham's status as a great sporting city, and the University's desire to support that.

As a University we are delighted to make our campus and facilities including our track and other training facilities available to the Jamaican team. Whilst the University has produced several home-grown Olympic athletes in recent years it's a thrill to have a team with the global pedigree of Jamaica on campus."

The Jamaican High Commissioner and leading members of Jamaican AAA visited the city and University facilities in April and July, and City Council representatives presented their case in Jamaica, all of which have influenced the decision to choose Birmingham.

Leader of Birmingham City Council, Cllr Mike Whitby said: "Throughout our talks with Jamaica and USA Track and Field teams, I have been keen to promote sports facilities right across the city and Birmingham University in particular has had a key role to play in ensuring that Birmingham's sporting offer is of a world-class standard.

"The Jamaicans know they can be sure of a warm welcome and top class facilities as the university plays its part in a successful 2012 Olympic Games for the whole of Birmingham."

Jamaica has been a track and field powerhouse for many years, with their athletes picking up 53 medals in athletics since 1948.

They won't be the first Olympians to have spent time at the Edgbaston based campus as the University of Birmingham has an impressive record when it comes to alumni Olympians. Eight former students have gone on to compete in the Games including three times Olympic cycling medallist, Paul Manning, sprinter Alison Curbishley and Leamington Spa based archer Naomi Folkard are also amongst the elite athlete graduates.

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Notes to Editors:

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University of Birmingham Sport

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Top 4 sporting university in the UK (measured by BUCS rankings – British Universities and Colleges Sport)

UBSport alumni include a range of current and former internationals including Paul Manning MBE (Olympic cyclist), Naomi Folkard (Olympic archer), Adam Pengilly (Olympic skeleton bob), Allison Curbishley (Olympic 400m), Simon Mantell (Olympic hockey player), Victor Ubogu (England rugby union), Chrissie Wellington (Ironman World Champion).

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