

5<sup>th</sup> June, 2017

## NGC NAAA JUVENILE CHAMPIONSHIPS 2017

Despite the heavy rain and dark clouds blanketing the sky this weekend, the Haseley Crawford Stadium still proved to be the place to be if you wanted to see flashes of brilliant lightning. Youngsters from all over the country gathered to represent their various clubs at the NGC/NAAATT Juvenile Championships.



The annual championship is a highlight on these children's athletic calendar as it caters for the youngest crop of athletes in the country competing in the U-10 to U-14 categories. With this week also playing host to the National Primary School Games, coaches would have been well advised to center the entire training season around ensuring the kids peak this week. The coaches at the Cougars Track Club seemed to have done just that as the club walked away with the spoils, copping 27 medals, including 13 gold on the way to amassing the most team points at the meet. To put it in perspective, no other club were able to amass more than 3 gold.



One of these clubs, Eastonians, was able to thank arguably the meet's stand-out performer, hurdler Darius Joseph, who brought home two of their three gold in record times. Joseph broke his first record while claiming gold in the boys U-14 80 Meter Hurdles on Saturday in a time of 12.74, breaking a one year old record of 12.99. He then returned on

Saturday to break the record in the Boys U14 300 Meter Hurdles, finishing in a time of 43.90. His performance marks him as one of the athletes to keep an eye on when considering the TTOc's vision of "Ten Golds by 2024" #10Gold24.

Over a high octane two days where many a parent lost their voices screaming in pride and support of their youngsters, several other meet records fell.

In the Girls U12 long jump Janae De Gannes of Zenith Athletics bounded past the previous meet record of 3.90 with a leap of 4.57m. She was one of four finalists who also beat the previous mark in a fierce contest. Janika Jordan of Cougars (Girls U12 80 Meter Dash) and Ben Bannister of Mason Hall (Boys U12 800 Meter Run) also marked themselves as ones for the future with record breaking runs in their respective events. Tyrique Vincent was able to claim the Boys U10 Long Jump. His sister Tynique could not duplicate his efforts, placing second to Tehillah Francois of Mason Hall in the girls' equivalent. Cougars exemplified their dominance of the proceedings and upcoming strength in depth with record breaking runs in the U10 50m and U12 100m Mixed relays

However, the true winner on the day was Trinidad and Tobago Athletics as the hundreds of young athletes on display, supported by the manic parents and friends in the stands produced a truly electric atmosphere in the stadium. The Juvenile Championships is just the start of what the NAATT has dubbed "Championship Month". Next week sees the teenagers take centre stage in the Junior Champs before the NACAC age group Champs the following weekend and ending with the Senior Open Championships in the final weekend of June.

Based on the flying first leg delivered by the Juveniles this past weekend in terms of excitement, this month promises to be one for track and field sport fans to savour and all sport fans will be in for a treat as we pay witness to the next generation of Trinidad and Tobago athletics.

