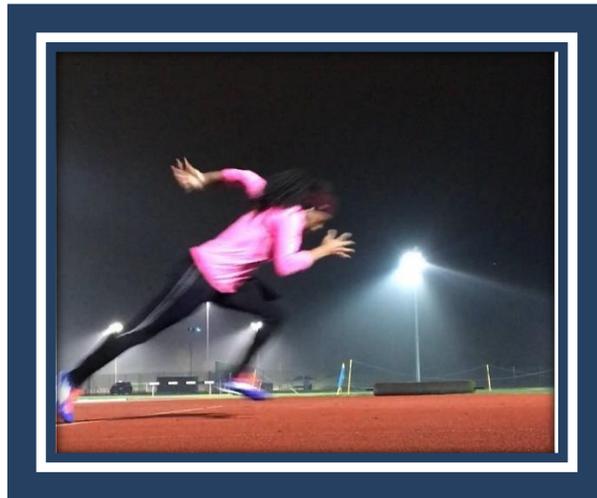


Dionne Samuels' first goal of the year is IN THE BAG! #GoDionne



“Onwards and upwards. This year is looking good :)”

As New Year's Resolutions become a distant memory for many of us as we race through February, Dionne already has her first goal in the bag, winning 1st place in the Midland Championships Women's Indoor 60m held at Birmingham's Barclay Arena this month – and not only that, she beat her own personal best too!

With her sights set on becoming a member of Team GB at the Olympics, we'll be sharing Dionne's story, so be sure to check back here or sign up for our updates and join us in supporting her on her inspiring journey.

Dionne demonstrates to all of us what real focus, discipline and high performance is all about.



While we're dashing home after a hard day's work, Dionne will be out on the training field, in the dark, whatever the weather.

We were so impressed and inspired by her dedication, we were really excited when she accepted our offer of sponsorship. And I'm personally very honoured to be working as a coach with someone as down to earth yet utterly inspiring as Dionne.

Her energy, drive and passion for her sport shines through every time we meet. And I was keen to explore what drives her and enables her to achieve success, not only as a high performing athlete, but in her professional life too as a Manufacturing Engineer.

Here's what she shared with us ...

“I started running from when I was a little. My mom told me I ran everywhere. It was hard for her to keep up! I started competing in high school breaking the 100/200m records from 11. I competed at Regional and County Championships, where I usually won Gold or Silver but that's when it really hit me that I needed to train. It was tough!!!

My mom took me to Birchfield Harriers in Birmingham at the age of 15 on the day Usain Bolt won his gold Olympic medal in the 2008 Olympic Games. I remember I wore my gold trainers that day. I

was so inspired! I trained at Birchfield up until the age of 19 and then went to Loughborough for 4 years. I changed discipline from 100m to 100m hurdles and was coached by George, a polish hurdle guru formally William Sharman's coach.

It was then I realised my passion for hurdles wasn't there and I went back to my original event of 100m. I've seen a vast improvement over the past year and halved my times! Due to also being an engineer, my running always takes a part time role, but it's a good way of releasing work stresses and relaxing my mind!

My goal is to at least make a senior major championship to England level or GB level of course. It's my ultimate dream. It's important to me because I've been doing this for so long. I started really late so I'm forever playing catch up but I'm so close now I can't imagine giving up".

Dionne cited her faith as a practicing Christian as a major influence in all aspects of her life, giving her a solid foundation, support and positive thinking. She explained that it's important for her to go after her own goals so that she might inspire others to go after theirs too and show people what's possible,

"My love for Christ drives me. Honestly, I've prayed about it so many times he must be fed up of me saying it. But all I do is for God. The medals are nice but to know my identity is rooted in Christ and I'm running for him is all that really matters.

My failures also drive me. Every time I get a knock back I push harder. Sometimes I don't even know where I get my strength from! But I'm determined to make it.

What's great about my journey is that it's teaching me so many life skills. I've learned how to manage and organise my life efficiently so nothing is 50%. I'm very disciplined and diligent in all I do I give it 100% and because of that I always see results in work and training.

I've known and worked with Shona since 2015, Her training courses always helped me in my working and personal life. I think that's why we clicked! I had to tell her how much she was helping me.

I wanted to work with Shona as a coach because she believes in me and my ability and it shows in her support. I don't stress about what we're going to talk about and I can be very open. The coaching sessions myself and Shona do are so effective. I have been able to see a difference in myself and my attitude. It's given me re-motivation to want it even more.

Help from Shona and the team has given me my light back as I was in a difficult place last year. I'm blessed. The kit is always a struggle to have because it costs a lot and I'm training 6 days a week - so the more I have the more I'm able to train comfortably (rather than continually washing one pair of leggings!)"

Some fun facts about Dionne ...

- Lolo Jones is my favourite athlete
- I LOVE trainers - any colour or design
- I mix Nike and Adidas kit lol this is a crime in the sporting world!!
- I hate training in the winter, primarily because of my hair, but I always braid it up just in case.
- I LOVE chocolate - it's not something I give up during my season sssshhhh!

(...well that might be something at least one member of Team Neish has in common with this aspiring future Olympian!)

Click here to stay updated on Dionne's inspiring journey <http://ow.ly/sRfb309w2WL>