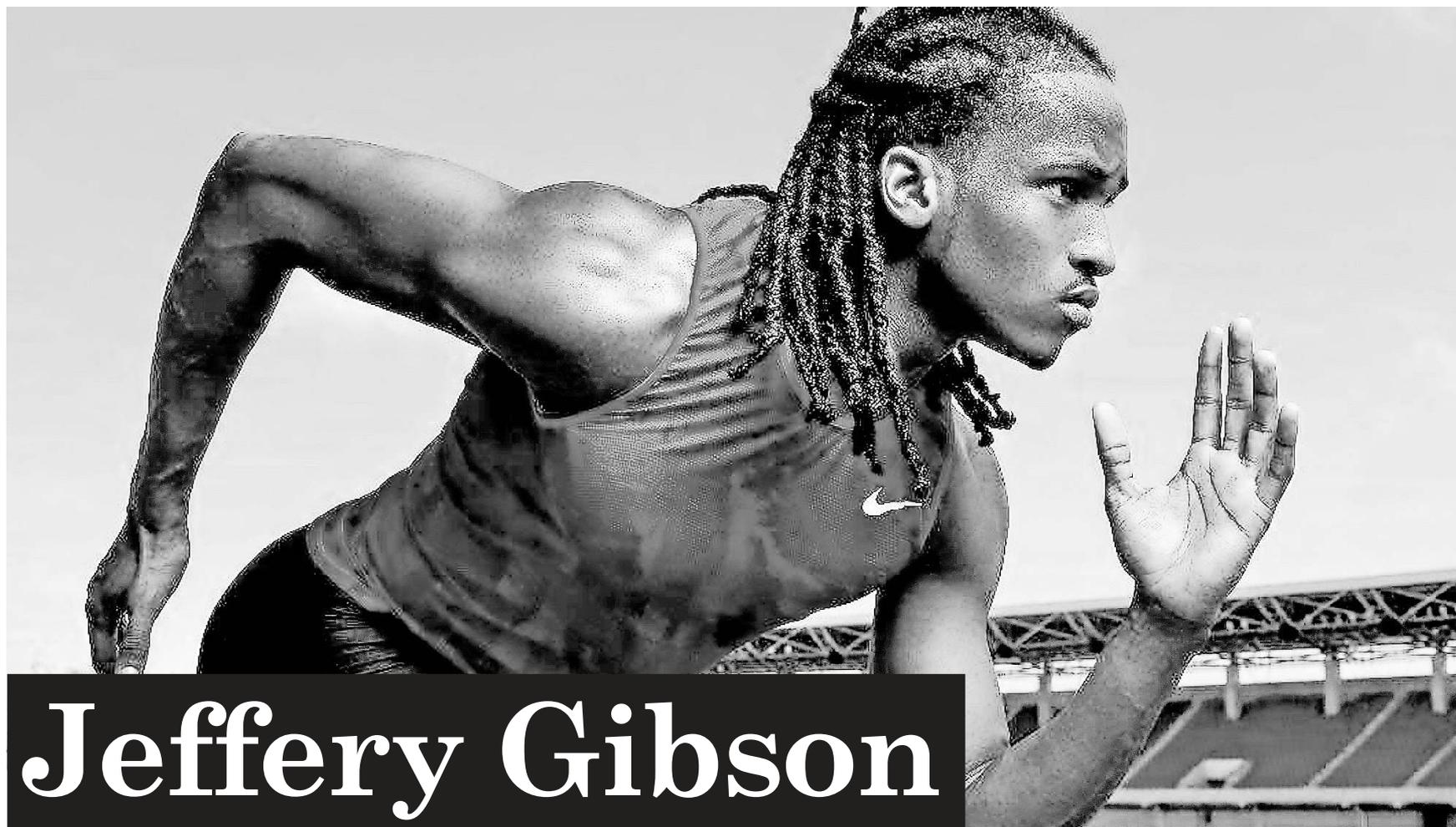


interview

As the 400 metres hurdles national recorder holder, Jeffery Gibson soars through the air for Team Bahamas. This week, the sprint athlete tells *Cara Hunt* about life on and off the track, and how despite his age, he has not given up on the Olympic dream.



Jeffery Gibson

Jeffery Gibson started track and field at the age of 15, and has never looked back.

At the time, he did not know that the sport would introduce him to the thrill of competition and allow him to see the world.

“I made my first CARIFTA team back in 2006 and we travelled to Guadeloupe. It was my first international competition and representing the Bahamas really pushed me to do more. My mother went with me that summer and I remember thinking how much I wanted to do this every this year – travel somewhere new and exciting to compete; how much fun that would be

for my summer vacation. And from then to now I think I have always gone to a meet in the summer,” he said.

“I think a part of it is that I love competition. I just love that athletes from different parts of the world can come together and compete with one another. I mean, think about it, a boy from the Bahamas can race against someone from Barbados or Bangladesh or Beijing. It just amazes me that we have people of all different backgrounds, but we can connect on the track.”

Jeffery, now 26, said he still clearly remembers competing at the Junior World Championships.

“I got beat from a runner from Botswana and it was just a humbling experience for me. But think about it, a runner from the Bahamas can race against an African in Europe. That is what I love about competition.”

And if he loves competition, he is equally passionate about his signature race – the 400 metre hurdles, a race that he originally did not run.

“I started out as a sprinter, especially the quarter mile like so many of our great Bahamian racers. It was a race that I ran in college, but I also occasionally ran the hurdles,” the Oral Roberts University graduate recalled.

In 2008, his chances of making the

national team were better as a hurdler than as a quarter-miler.

“I found that I was just running better as a hurdler than the 400m, and I had to sit down and make the decision with my coaches and my family that this was the race that I was more likely to do well in and that needed to be my focus,” he explained.

It was a decision that especially paid off in 2013 when he broke the national record running a time of 49.39 during the semi-finals of the 2013 NCAA Championships. He later smashed that record when he ran his personal best of 48.17 in 2015 in Beijing at the World Championships to capture a