

Disney-Based Sprinter LaShawn Merritt Earns Gold in 4×400-meter Relay, Bronze in 400-meter at Rio Games

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — US Olympic Team sprinter LaShawn Merritt, who prepared for the Rio 2016 Games at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex, will return home with two more medals after being a part of the 4×400-meter relay team that reclaimed the gold medal and earning bronze in the 400-meter race.

After being upset by the Bahamas in 2012, Team USA found itself back at the top of the podium in the 4×400-meter relay this year in Rio. Merritt anchored the race, securing the victory for teammates Arman Hall, Tony McQuaid and Gil Roberts. Jamaica took home the silver medal and the Bahamas claimed bronze. Team USA finished with a time of 2:57:30.

The Americans have dominated the 4×400-meter relay in recent history, winning six of the previous eight gold medals.

Earlier in the Rio Games, Merritt earned the bronze medal with a time of 43.85 seconds, crossing the finish line after Grenada's Kirani James (43.76), who had won gold in the event at the London 2012 Games, and South Africa's Wayde van Niekerk, who ran a blistering 43.03-second race to win gold and set a new world record.

Former American sprinter Michael Johnson's previous world record (43.18 seconds) had stood since 1999.

Merritt also competed in the men's 200-meter final but missed out on medaling when he placed sixth with a time of 20.19 seconds.

Merritt, who regularly trains at Disney with other world-class sprinters under former US Olympic track coach Brooks Johnson, qualified for this year's Olympic team after having missed the London Olympic Games in 2012 due to injury. At the 2008 Beijing Games, the veteran sprinter won the gold medal in the 400-meter and 4×400-meter relay.

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