

# Brooks Johnson, Track and Field Athletes Who Train at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex Compete in U.S. Olympic Track and Field Trials

*The U.S. Olympic Track and Field Trials recently took place in Eugene, Oregon and several Olympic hopefuls participated who regularly train at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex at Walt Disney World Resort. These athletes train at Disney under the watchful eye of former U.S. Olympic Track & Field head coach Brooks Johnson, who has coached at least one athlete in every Olympics since 1968. We checked in with Johnson to get his thoughts on the trials, his coaching philosophy and the prospect of his athletes earning a spot on the U.S. team that will compete in the Summer Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Aug. 5-Aug. 21.*

Q: What events are your athletes involved in?

A: LaShawn Merritt has qualified for the 400-meter dash and the 200-meter dash, Michael Berry for the 400-meter dash, Jason Richardson the 110-meter high hurdles and Ebony Eutsey, the 100-meter dash. In late June, Andrew Riley qualified for the Jamaican National team in the 110-meter high hurdles.

Q: At the Olympic Trials, is there anything you can do at this point to impact your athletes' performances?

A: Coaching is more intense at the trials because there is more at stake. Leading up to them, you're getting the athletes prepared in a timely way so they can really peak at the trials. You're with them for warm ups, pre-race and post-race at the trials, making sure they can peak.

Q: What does it take to really compete at the trials? What do the athletes need to do to make the Olympic team?

A: They need to be ready mentally, physiologically and psychologically. Mentally, they need to be completely focused and at their peak. Physiologically, you want to make sure their running mechanics are most efficient. Psychologically, you want to make sure that you've tapped into whatever turns their adrenaline on and that it's in place.

Q: What can go wrong for athletes during the trials that can hinder them from having a peak performance?

A: The Olympic Trials are a very competitive environment. Favorites get knocked out; dark horses make it through to the Olympic team. You just never know. Things can go wrong if an athlete is overly attentive to a second or third party [e.g. friends, family, etc.], instead of being focused. Sometimes, they don't get enough rest. And then there's panic. You can't predict those things.

- See more at: <http://disneysportsnews.com/releases/2016/07/06/brooks-johnson-track-and-field-athletes-who-train-at-espn-wide-world-of-sports-complex-set-eyes-on-u-s-olympic-track-and-field-trials/#sthash.4G7Oluiy.dpuf>