

# Olympics Hopefuls Around the World Prepare for Rio Olympics at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex at Walt Disney World Resort

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. (May 25, 2016) — Talk about keeping your friends close and your enemies even closer. Several world-class sprinters from the United States, Belgium, Great Britain, Ireland and South Korea are doing just that, training at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex at Walt Disney World Resort alongside the very competitors they might face at the upcoming Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro this summer.

A contingent of American track and field athletes regularly train at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex under world-renowned former Team USA head coach and 2010 USA Coach of the Year, Brooks Johnson. That group includes 2008 two-time gold medalist LaShawn Merritt, 2012 silver medalist Jason Richardson, plus a handful of first-time Olympic hopefuls.

But this summer, several sprinters from various competing nations are expected to spend time at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex training alongside the Americans. Christine Ohurogu (400m gold medal in Beijing 2008 and the 400M silver medal in London 2012) is among the British athletes expected to be here along with their coach, Linford Christie, the former British Olympic gold medal sprinter.

For Belgium, the 4x400m relay team, which won gold at the 2015 European Athletics Indoor Championships, is stacked with medal contenders coming to ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex. The Belgian sprinters tout four of the Borlée siblings in their company: twins Kevin and Jonathan, their brother Dylan, and their sister Olivia. Among them they have 17 medals across the World Indoor Championships, the World Relay Championships, the European Championships and the European Indoor Championships.

## **Quick Hits on USA and International Athletes Training at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex:**

**LaShawn Merritt (200 and 400 meters)** - Merritt took home gold in the 2008 Beijing Olympics when he won the 400-meter dash and was on the team that won the 4x400-meter relay. Merritt also has 11 World Championships medals, 8 of which are gold.

**Jason Richardson (110m hurdles, 400m hurdles)** -Richardson took home silver in the 2012 London Olympics when he finished second in the 110-meter hurdles. Prior to that, he took home the gold in the 2011 World Championships (110m hurdles), as well as in the 2003 World Youth Championships (110m hurdles, 400m hurdles).

**April Holmes (100, 200 and 400 meters)**- Holmes is the reigning Paralympics world record holder in the 100, 200 and 400 meter sprints. She is also the Paralympic 100-meter gold medalist (2008) and the first female athlete to be signed by the Michael Jordan apparel brand.

**Andrew Riley (100m, 110m hurdles)**– Riley is a Jamaican sprinter who attended the University of Illinois. He made NCAA history in 2012 when he became the first male athlete to win national titles in the 100m and 110m hurdles in the same year. A four-time NCAA champion and 12-time Big 10 champion, Riley also qualified for the 2012 London Olympics in the 110m hurdles for Team Jamaica.

**Ebony Eutsey (400m):** Eutsey is a four-time NCAA All-American who attended the University of Florida and was a member of the 2013 4x400m relay team that set a new school record time of 3:27/43, eclipsing the previous record that stood for 21 years.

**Mike Berry (400m):** Berry is a 10-time All-American and two-time NCAA Champion in the 400m who attended the University of Oregon. He also holds four school records at Oregon, including his winning 400m time of 44.91 in the 2011 Pac-10 Championship, which broke the previous record (45.07) set by two-time Olympic gold medalist Otis Davis in 1960.

**Coach Brooks Johnson** – Arguably the foremost track coach in the world, former U.S. Olympic track head coach Brooks Johnson has trained an athlete at every Olympic Games since 1968, including Evelyn Ashford, Chandra Cheeseborough, David Oliver, and Justin Gatlin. The 2010 Nike Coach of the Year once coached vice president Al Gore and senator Ted Kennedy in high school. Johnson also holds a law degree (Univ. of Chicago Law School) and once taught cultural anthropology.