

Memories bronzed for medallist Harrison



Photo courtesy of Syracuse Athletics

By Jake Courtepatte

She may not have been on the track for the big moment, but Aurora's Shaina Harrison was along for the ride and played her own role in the women's 4x100m relay bronze medal at the Pan Am Games on Saturday.

It was mid-June when she was notified that she made Canada's six-member relay team for the biggest multi-sport event ever in Toronto, and since then she's been enjoying every second.

"It was such an amazing experience," said Harrison. "I've been to international meets but nothing could top this—so many different people from so many different backgrounds. Amazing."

Harrison had hopes of completing either the first or last leg of the race, but when her teammates Crystal Emmanuel, Kimberly Hyacinthe, Jellisa Westney, and Khamica Bingham raced to an easy berth in the final finishing just behind Jamaica in their semi-final heat, the same team took to the track for the next day's gold medal race.

It was there that the Canadians added to their large athletics medal haul for the Games, finishing behind the Jamaicans and Americans to capture the bronze.

Harrison was delighted with the outcome.

"It was such a strong race, and the crowd was really behind it. I think the crowd can give you a boost if they're cheering and everything. Our team wanted to win for them and luckily was able to bring home a medal."

Although she didn't necessarily receive her time in the spotlight this July, Harrison doesn't go without her recognition and accomplishments. She was named the 2015 Female Athlete of the Year at the athletics-heavy Syracuse. In her junior year last year, she proved to be one of the best in acceleration when she set a school record time of 7.31 seconds in the 60m at the Atlantic Coast Conference Championships. She placed second in the 100m this past spring, and her position on the team was cemented with a fifth place finish in the Canadian National Championships in Edmonton just a few weeks prior to Games time.

A graduate of St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic High School in Aurora, having the Games in her own backyard was a boost as well for the 21-year old athlete, who was excited to have her parents Kevin and Sandra join her in the moment.

One of four children, Harrison started running at the age of ten, when her father suggested she was good at it. And eleven years later, she knows it.

?This has probably been my best season, I'm improving a lot?I've got a lot more ahead of me.?