

Panel clears Campbell-Brown for competition

A Jamaican disciplinary panel gave sprinting star Veronica Campbell-Brown a public warning Wednesday and cleared her to return to competition some five months after she returned a positive doping test on the Caribbean island.

The three-time Olympic gold medalist, one of the cornerstones of Jamaica's wide-ranging sprinting success, returned a positive test for a banned diuretic at the Jamaica International Invitational meet in May. She was suspended from competition while the disciplinary committee reviewed the case and missed the island's national championships to try and qualify for this summer's worlds in Moscow. In a statement, the Jamaica Athletics Administrative Association said its disciplinary committee "recommended that a reprimand without any period of ineligibility would be appropriate." It ruled Campbell-Brown "committed an anti-doping violation" but did not use the banned substance for performance enhancement. The full text of the ruling by a former judge, an attorney and the head of the island's medical association was not publicly released. In June, a spokesman for the International Association of Athletics Federations, the sport's world governing body, said the case involving Campbell-Brown appeared to involve a "lesser" offense of unintentional use of a banned substance. The sanction for a lesser offense can be a reduced penalty — a suspension of a few months to a year or a public warning — rather than a standard two-year ban. Under the World Anti-Doping Code, some diuretics are classified as a "specified substance," a designation for drugs that might have been consumed without intent to enhance performance. Athletes can receive a reduced sanction if they can prove how a substance was ingested. The 31-year-old champion sprinter could not immediately be reached for comment. Phone calls and an email to Campbell-Brown's manager, Claude Bryan, went unanswered. In June, Bryan issued a statement saying the accusation came as a shock to Campbell-Brown and she was determined to clear her name. He said she was apologizing to her fans, sponsors and others for any embarrassment or hurt the "devastating news has caused." Since then, she has remained mum. Campbell-Brown has won seven Olympic medals in all, including the 2004 and 2008 Olympic gold medals in the 200 meters. In addition to her individual Olympic titles, she also won gold in the 400 relay at the 2004 Athens Games. In London, she won bronze in the 100 and silver as part of the 400 relay team. The disciplinary hearing into her case was held under tight security, with the JAAA declining to provide the whereabouts of where it was being held. She was represented by P.J. Patterson, a former prime minister who led Jamaica from 1992 to 2006 and whose People's National Party is currently in power. A few weeks after Campbell-Brown's "adverse analytical finding" came to light, Jamaican sprinting stars Asafa Powell and Sherone Simpson also tested positive for a banned substance and didn't attend the world championships in Moscow. The doping positives of three of the island's sprinting stars staggered many in Jamaica, where global domination in sprinting is a huge source of national pride. Powell, the former world 100 record holder, and Simpson, an Olympic 400 relay silver medalist, are scheduled to appear before a Jamaican disciplinary panel in January. In 2009, Jamaican sprinter Yohan Blake and three other islanders received reduced suspensions of three months after testing positive for a banned stimulant.