

Jamaican bobsleigh team are back in the running for Winter Olympics glory

It's the impossible dream that just won't fade away. Four men, who had never seen snow until they reached their 20s, are plotting a happy ending to one of sports most endearing stories at next month's Winter Olympics.

Some 26 years after the first ever Jamaican bobsleigh team captured the imaginations of fans by going for gold at the Calgary Games in Canada, a new generation of hopefuls is dreaming of a podium finish in Sochi, Russia. The original team – Devon Harris, Dudley Stokes, Michael White and Nelson Stokes – were the ultimate underdogs; a team of sprinters from the Caribbean island, who tried their luck on the ice and failed miserably by crashing off the course on one of their four runs. Their hard luck story at the 1988 Winter Games was later immortalised in the 1993 film *Cool Runnings*, starring John Candy. But, after failing to qualify in 2006 and 2010, the Jamaicans hope to try their luck once again. The new hopefuls – Marvin Dixon, Hanukkah Wallace, both 31, Wayne Blackwood, 42, and Winston Watts, 46 – aim to finish inside the qualifying zone by the January 20 deadline. Driver Watts admits he was terrified the first time he climbed into a bobsleigh in 1993. 'It was horrible. I said to myself, "Why am I doing this?" Then I said, "I must be the chosen one."' He added: 'Jamaica has the best athletes in the world. We have the fastest man in the world in Usain Bolt, so the skill is there. 'This time could be it.' But he faces an uphill task to get the Jamaican team to the bobsleigh run at Sochi – they're currently ranked 55th and only the top 30 teams qualify.