

Inspirational British Female Athletes

Britain's 2019 success in the IAAF World Athletics Championships in Doha built on the many past achievements of British athletes. As we head towards the Olympics in 2020, discover four of Great Britain's most inspirational female athletes, both past and present.

Denise Lewis

Denise Lewis is a British athlete who was born on 27th August 1972 in West Bromwich. During her athletics career, Denise competed in the heptathlon. The heptathlon is a track and field sport with seven events: the 100 metre hurdles; the high jump; the shot put; the 200 metres sprint; the long jump; the javelin throw; the 800 metres.



In 2000, in the Olympics in Sydney, Denise secured her place in the athletics hall of fame by winning a gold medal for Great Britain. Incredibly, during the 800 metres - the final event of the heptathlon - Denise ran with part of her leg bandaged due to an injury.

Did You Know...?

The men's heptathlon has different events than the women's. It is held indoors and it isn't part of the Olympics.

After retiring from athletics in 2005, Denise forged a successful career as a television presenter and has been the commentator for a number of notable athletics events.

Dina Asher-Smith



Dina Asher-Smith was born in London on 4th December 1995. She is a sprinter and a British record holder for the 100 metres and 200 metres. Because of her sprinting success in the IAAF World Athletics Championships in 2019, Dina is now described as being the fastest British woman in history.

Did You Know...?

Between competitions and training, Dina studied for a degree in history, which she completed in 2017.



Dina Asher-Smith

In 2016, Dina won a bronze medal in the Olympics in Rio with her team in the 4 × 100 metres relay. This success continued when, in the 2018 European Athletics Championships, Dina won a total of three gold medals for the 100 metres, 200 metres and the 4 × 100 metre relay. Unfortunately, in February of 2017, Dina broke her foot. However, this didn't slow her down; just six months later, she was able to help her relay team to win silver in the IAAF World Athletics Championships.

Dina is still competing and is aiming to continue her successful athletics career in Tokyo for the Olympics in 2020.

Jessica Ennis-Hill

Jessica Ennis-Hill is a gold medal winning heptathlete who was born on the 28th January 1986 in Sheffield. In London in 2012, she was famously one of the six star Olympic athletes to win gold for Great Britain on the day labelled 'super Saturday'.

Showing talent from a young age, Jessica and her sister would regularly attend athletics camps outside of school hours. It was here, aged 13, that Jessica met the coach who would stay with her throughout her glittering athletic career. Before her success in the Olympics in London, Jessica had already won a number of gold medals, including a gold in the IAAF World Championships in Athletics in 2009.

After winning silver in Rio in the 2016 Olympics, Jessica announced that she was to retire from athletics. Today, she continues to inspire many young athletes and has even co-authored a book for children.



Did You Know...?

The first prize that Jessica ever won at an athletics competition was a pair of trainers when she was 10 years old.



Katarina Johnson-Thompson

Katarina Johnson-Thompson is the current British record holder for the heptathlon. Her record-breaking score earned her first place in October 2019 in the IAAF World Athletics Championships. Amazingly, Katarina finished 304 points ahead of second place.



Did You Know...?

Katarina is accident-prone while training and her new coach has given her the nickname 'Katastrophe'.

Katarina was born on 9th January 1993 and grew up in Liverpool. From a young age, she competed in long jump and high jump competitions before making her Olympic debut in 2012 in London, where she competed in the heptathlon. Since Jessica Ennis-Hill's retirement, many people have looked to Katarina to continue Britain's heptathlon success.

After winning gold in the IAAF World Athletics Championships, Katarina is now training for the Olympics, which will begin on 24th July in Tokyo.

See questions below

Questions

1. Which of these athletes has **not** competed in the heptathlon in the Olympics? Tick one.

- Denise Lewis
- Dina Asher-Smith
- Jessica Ennis-Hill
- Katarina Johnson-Thompson

2. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they occurred.

- Katarina Johnson-Thompson was born.
- Denise Lewis won gold in the Olympics.
- Dina Asher-Smith was born.
- Jessica Ennis-Hill won silver in the Olympics.

3. Who has helped to write a children's book?

4. Look at the section about **Denise Lewis**.

Find and copy one word which means the same as **important**.

5. Draw **four** lines to match each athlete to their achievement.

Denise Lewis...

is the current British record holder for the heptathlon.

Dina Asher-Smith...

ran the 800 metres despite having a bandaged leg.

Jessica Ennis-Hill...

is being described as the fastest woman in British history.

Katarina Johnson-Thompson...

won a gold medal in the IAAF World Athletics Championships in 2019.

6. Since Jessica Ennis-Hill's retirement, many people have looked to Katarina to continue Britain's heptathlon success.

Why do you think this is the case? Explain your answer.

7. Explain why some people would describe these athletes as **inspirational**.

8. Compare **Denise Lewis** and **Dina Asher-Smith**.

How are the two athletes **different** from one another?

9. After reading this text, would you be interested in becoming an athlete? Tick one.

yes

no

Explain your answer fully.
