

New Jersey Olympians

# From Bridgeton to Athens games



AP file photo  
Nadia Davy, second from left, celebrates with her Jamaican teammates after winning the bronze medal in the 1,600 meter relay at the 2004 Summer Olympic Games.

By COURTNEY McCANN  
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New Jersey has a long history of producing talented athletes in the world of track and field. Think nine-time gold medalist Carl Lewis of Willingboro, Burlington County, and, more recently, distance runner Erin Donohue, of Haddonfield, Camden County.

But not all of these Garden State standouts represented the United States.

Nadia Davy wore green and gold on the medal stand when she won a bronze medal in the 1,600 meter relay at the 2004 Summer Olympic Games in Athens. The 1999 Bridgeton High School graduate represented her home country of Jamaica.

Davy grew up in Jamaica but came to southern New Jersey in 1997. During her junior and senior years at Bridgeton, Davy won six state titles and took top honors in the 400-meter dash at the state Meet of Champions in 1999.

Davy began training for the Olympics at Louisiana State University, where she was a seven-time NCAA Division I All-American. In July of 2004, Davy's dream was realized when she qualified to represent Jamaica in the 400-meter dash and the 1,600 meter relay team.

In Athens Davy failed to qualify for the 400 meter finals but redeemed herself with the third place finish in the relay.

In a 2004 interview with The Press of Atlantic City, Davy talked about being on the medal stand and focusing on drinking in the experience before it was over. A close second to the medal podium was getting a chance to interact with some of her idols in the Olympic Village.

"It was very relaxed. We'd all just be in the cafeteria eating," Davy told The Press. "We were all just there to compete at the same level so I could actually say 'hi' to them and it wasn't a big deal."

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Press file photo,  
Nadia Davy won six state titles when she ran for Bridgeton High School in her junior and senior years. She graduated in 1999.

About Explorer

This summer our Explorer pages, which appear each Monday, look at the lives and achievements of famous New Jersey residents. The Education page will return in the fall.

Going to the games in other sports

Megan Compain

Sport: Basketball (New Zealand)

Olympic Accomplishments:

Compain played point guard for the New Zealand women's basketball team at the 2000 and 2004 Summer Games. The team never won a medal, but Compain gained recognition for scoring the game-winning point in her



team's opening round victory over China at the 2004 games.

**New Jersey Ties:** Compain attended Middle Township High School as an exchange student through 1993 and played for the girls' basketball team during her junior and senior years. She later attended St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia.

Carli Lloyd



Sport: Women's soccer

Olympic Accomplishments:

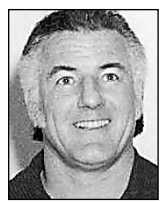
Lloyd competed on the United States women's national team at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. She scored two goals, including the game-winner in the team's gold medal-victory over Brazil.

**New Jersey Ties:** Lloyd, a Delran Township, Burlington County native, was a standout player at Delran High School from 1997 to 2000. She played for four years at Rutgers University and received first team All Big East Conference honors each year. Lloyd runs an annual camp in southern New Jersey and does appearances between engagements with the national team and the Chicago Red Stars.

## Other New Jersey track and field Olympians

Don 'Tarzan' Bragg

Event: Pole vault



**Olympic Accomplishments:** Bragg won the gold medal in the pole vault at the 1960 Summer Games in Rome. He defeated teammate Ronald Morris by clearing a winning height of 15 feet, five inches.

**New Jersey Ties:** Bragg grew up in Penns Grove, Salem County and vaulted for the high school track team, eventually earning a scholarship to Villanova University. After the Olympics Bragg moved to southern Ocean County and ran Camp Olympic in Bass River Township from 1967 to 1979. He served as athletic director at Stockton College from 1971 to 1980.

Shana Williams

Event: Long jump

**Olympic Accomplishments:** Williams competed in the long jump at the 1996 Summer Games in Atlanta, but fouled in all three of her qualifying round jumps and failed to make the final round. Williams returned to the Sydney Olympics in 2000 but missed the finals once again.

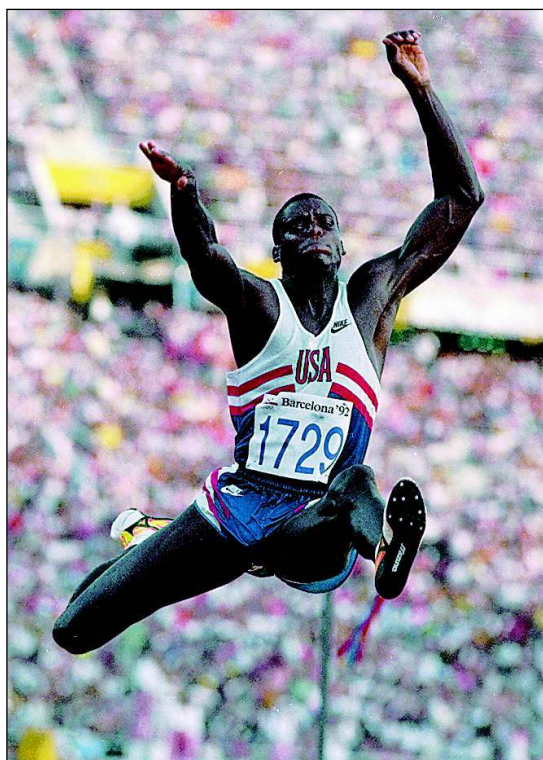
**New Jersey Ties:** Williams competed in track and field for Bridgeton High School in the late 1980s and excelled in the jumping, sprinting and throwing events. She went on to have a successful career at Seton Hall University, where she was a seven-time all-American in the long jump, heptathlon and 1,600-meter relay.

Erin Donohue

Event: Distance

**Olympic Accomplishments:** Donohue was intern-ing for Nike in Eugene Oregon and training on her own when she was discovered by coaches and offered a small training contract in 2005. She qualified for the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing in the 1,500 meter run, but failed to make it to the event finals.

**New Jersey Ties:** Donohue ran for Haddonfield High School in Camden County from 1997 to 2001 and dominated the state's distance events. She was a state champion in the 1,600 and 3,200-meter runs and the javelin.



AP file photo  
Olympic long jumper Carl Lewis makes his third jump in the Olympic long jump finals in Barcelona August 7, 1992.

Carl Lewis

Event: Sprints, long jump

**Olympic Accomplishments:** Lewis competed in four Olympic Games from 1984 to 1996 and won 10 medals, including nine golds. He competed in the long jump, the 400-meter relay and the 100- and 200-meter dashes.

**New Jersey Ties:** Lewis was born in Alabama but moved to southern New Jersey and competed in track and field at Willingboro High School in Burlington County in the late 1970s. He was named one of the top long jumpers in the state.

H. Browning Ross

Event: Distance

**Olympic Accomplishments:** Ross was the only American to make the steeplechase finals at the 1948 Summer Olympics in London, where he finished seventh overall. Ross also qualified for the 1952 games in Helsinki, Finland

**New Jersey Ties:** Ross was a lifelong resident of Woodbury, Gloucester County. He competed for Woodbury High School in the early 1940s and was named the state mile champion and the National Interscholastic Indoor Mile Champion. He later started the Road Runners Club of America and the Long Distance Log running magazine.

Derick 'Ringo' Adamson

Event: Distance, marathon

**Olympic Accomplishments:** Though he lived in the United States, Adamson competed for Jamaica. Adamson first qualified for the Olympics in the steeplechase in 1980 but was not added to Jamaica's roster. He went on to represent Jamaica in the marathon at the 1984 and 1988 Summer Olympics.

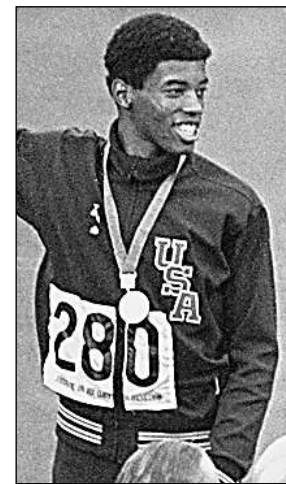
**New Jersey Ties:** Adamson was a four-time All New Jersey Athletic Conference runner at Rowan University from 1978 to 1982, and won the steeplechase at the NCAA Division III National Championships in 1980. Adamson served as the head coach for girls cross country and track and field at Woodrow Wilson High School in Camden County from 1995 to 2006 and is currently the head coach of women's track and field and cross country at Rowan.

G. Larry James

Events: Sprints

**Olympic Accomplishments:** James, known as "The Mighty Burner," won a silver medal in the 400-meter dash and a gold medal as a member of the men's 1,600-meter relay team at the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City.

**New Jersey Ties:** Following his Olympic career James relocated to Atlantic County and served as the athletic director at the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey in Galloway Township from 1980 to 2008. James passed away due to complications from cancer in November, 2008.



AP photo, 1968

John Pescatore



Sport: Rowing

Olympic Accomplishments:

Pescatore made the 1988 Olympic team as the stroke in the heavyweight eight event and helped lead the team to a bronze medal finish in Seoul. He qualified for the 1992 Olympics in the pairs rowing competition and finished in sixth place. In 2000 Pescatore served as assistant coach of the U.S. Olympic rowing team and coached the men's pair team to a silver medal in Sydney.

**New Jersey Ties:** Pescatore grew up in Ocean City and rowed for Holy Spirit High School in Absecon. He coaches crew for Yale University.



AP photo, 2008

Sarah Mergenthaler

Sport: Sailing

**Olympic Accomplishments:** Mergenthaler and teammate Amanda Clark won the women's division of the 470 class at the U.S. Olympic sailing trials and advanced to the 2008 Summer Games in Beijing. The pair failed to qualify for the medal race, finishing 12th overall out of 19 boats in the preliminary races.

**New Jersey Ties:** Mergenthaler spent her summers in Harvey Cedars and worked as an instructor at the Barnegat Light Yacht Club.

Coming next week: Judy Blume and other New Jersey writers of young adult fiction.

Past Explorers: Download this page and earlier Explorer pages by searching explorenow at PressofAtlanticCity.com

**Questions: Week 9**

1. Lots of games are not part of the Olympics. What game do you play that you think should be an Olympic sport? Tell us why.
2. What country did Nadia Davy represent in the 2004 Summer Olympic Games?
3. Name the former Middle Township High School student who played basketball for New Zealand in the Summer Olympics.

**WEEK 8 WINNER: Bryson - William Davies Middle School**

## Boys & Girls!

# YOU CAN WIN

- VIP Courtesy Ticket Book from Gillian's Wonderland Pier
- 4-Pack of tickets from the Atlantic City Aquarium
- The Press of Atlantic City NIE Gift Bag

Read this week's EXPLORER page and answer the questions that follow. Send your answers on a separate piece of paper along with your name, address, school and grade to: **Sandy Reed - NIE, The Press of Atlantic City, 1000 W. Washington Ave., Pleasantville, NJ 08232.**

Each week, we'll draw the name of the lucky winner. It could be you! All entries must be received by noon Friday.