



Issue 1: May 2026

**MANAGING ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE**

Jamaica is at a pivotal moment in sport. The return of the Jamaica Association of Sports Medicine (JASM) Newsletter is timely, as athletic performance increasingly relies on scientific advancement, collaboration, and athlete welfare. Platforms that encourage evidence-based discussion are essential for continued progress.

This issue focuses on “Managing Athletic Performance.” Effective athlete management requires an interdisciplinary team, including physicians, physiotherapists, trainers, psychologists, nutritionists, nurses, strength and conditioning specialists, sports scientists, and administrators. Together, they support injury prevention, rehabilitation, recovery, mental health, load management, and safe return-to-play protocols.

This edition features timely contributions. Dr. Marlene Chin, Physical Therapist, examines injuries from the ISSA/Grace Kennedy Boys and Girls Athletics Championships 2026 and the demands on young athletes. Dr. Kevin Gwyn Jones, Chairman, Therapeutic Use Exemption Committee, JADCO, focuses on salient points on energy drinks and caffeine in sport, a growing global concern. The newsletter also recognises Mr. Nicholas Ford’s longstanding service, highlighting the importance of volunteerism and continuity in sports medicine. Photographs illustrate JASM’s team work in medical coverage, education, outreach, and athlete support.

JASM is one of Jamaica’s leading sporting institutions. Founded in June 1979 by physicians and Olympians, including Dr. Arthur Wint, OD and Professor, Sir John Golding, OJ, the association was established to provide preventive and specialised care for national athletes. Over forty years later, JASM remains at the forefront of sports and exercise medicine, offering event medical coverage, educational seminars, health screenings, athlete advocacy, and multidisciplinary collaboration.

JASM upholds principles championed by organisations such as the Jamaica Athletics Administrative Association and the Jamaica Olympic Association, recognising the close connection between athlete health, safety, and performance. As Jamaica develops world-class athletes, JASM’s role in safeguarding their well-being remains essential, extending beyond competition. Sustainable success depends on robust systems for monitoring, injury surveillance, rehabilitation, performance optimisation, and evidence-based decision-making. JASM must remain steadfast and agile. Our mandate is clear: strengthen athlete longevity, support sporting institutions, and help create high-performance environments to sustain excellence on the world stage.

As members and stakeholders, we must continue to serve with excellence, integrity, and compassion, remaining vigilant in safeguarding athlete health and welfare. The future of Jamaican sport depends on our achievements and the professionals who lead, protect, educate, and advocate for future **generations**.

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# CHAMPS 2026: Beyond the Track

While the ISSA/GraceKennedy Boys and Girls Championships continue to highlight Jamaica's exceptional athletic talent, Champs 2026 also provided a valuable clinical lens into the current state of student athlete health.

Over five days of competition, the Jamaica Association of Sports Medicine (JASM) delivered on-site medical coverage, supporting athletes in real time while gaining valuable insight into injury trends and identifying areas for improvement in athlete preparation and care.

A total of 178 athlete presentations were managed during the championships. Of these, 73 athletes reported a prior injury, reinforcing the observation that many presentations at Champs are not new occurrences, but rather exacerbations of pre-existing conditions. While this figure provides a useful snapshot of the clinical workload, it is relatively low for an event of this scale. This may, in part, reflect inconsistencies in capturing and accurately documenting athletes seen across the various medical stations, highlighting an opportunity to strengthen and streamline data collection processes in future events.

## The most frequently reported injuries included:

- Hamstring-related issues: tightness, cramping, & strains ( 31%)
- Shin splints and lower leg pain ( 7%)
- Lower back discomfort and lumbar tightness ( 7%)
- Calf fatigue and cramping ( 7%)
- Hip and groin-related dysfunction ( 4%)

## Emerging Patterns

### 1. Posterior Chain Vulnerability

The high frequency of hamstring-related complaints indicates ongoing strain within the posterior chain.

### 2. Load Management Concerns

Shin splints, calf fatigue, and recurrent muscle tightness suggest accumulated load and insufficient recovery.

### 3. Incomplete Recovery from Pre-Existing Conditions

Many athletes presented with ongoing or unresolved issues rather than new injuries.

### 4. Hip–Lumbar Relationship

Lower back pain and hip dysfunction indicate recurring movement and stability imbalances.

These patterns raise an important question: Are athletes adequately prepared, physically and structurally, for the demands of Champs? The consistency of these findings suggests that many issues are developing over time rather than occurring suddenly.

## The Bigger Picture

Champs is the start of many athletic careers ; but athlete care cannot begin there.

The patterns observed reinforce the need for:

- Emphasis on preventative care (mobility, monitoring, recovery)
- Improved recovery and load management practices
- Strengthened Return-to-Play protocols
- Greater integration of sports medicine into training environments
- Appropriate nutrition and healthy eating habits
- Education for all stakeholders: athletes, parents, coaches, physical trainers, schools, and meet directors

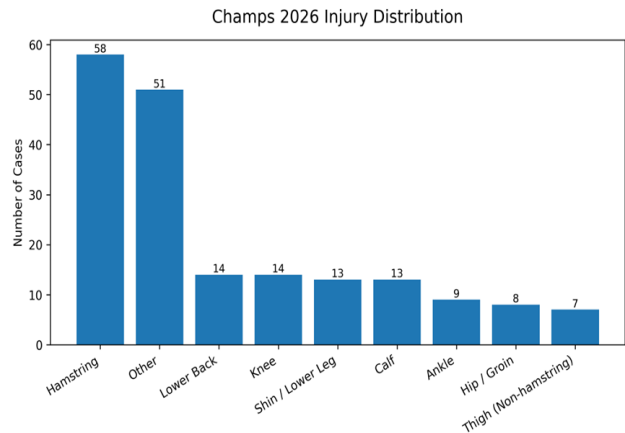
## Closing Reflection

Champs 2026 reinforced an important reality, performance continues to improve, but the demands placed on athletes are increasing just as rapidly.

As performance standards continue to rise, so must our approach to protecting and sustaining our athletes.

JASM remains committed to not only supporting events, but to shaping the future of sports medicine in Jamaica, where performance and longevity go hand in hand.

*Report provided by  
Dr. Marlene Chin, PT, FST,  
Sporting Events Committee Chair, JASM*





## TIPS FROM THE FIELD

Caffeine is a naturally occurring central nervous system (CNS) stimulant found in everyday beverages/foods such as coffee, tea, cocoa, and kola nuts. It is commonly used to increase alertness and reduce fatigue and so help improve athletic performance and one of the reasons why it is the main active ingredient in most energy drinks, with the average amount in each drink ranging between 80 and 300 mg. It works by blocking the brain chemical that causes sleepiness, adenosine, with effects typically felt 5-30 minutes after ingestion.

Recommended daily intake is not to exceed 400 mg, which is roughly equivalent to 3-4 cups of coffee. High doses can cause anxiety, insomnia, tachycardia, elevated blood pressure, cardiac arrhythmias and subsequent heart attacks, especially in individuals predisposed to such conditions. It was previously banned by WADA in high doses (above 12 µg/mL in urine) between 1984 and 2003 but has remained off the prohibited list since 2004. This was due mainly to the difficulties in distinguishing between regular dietary consumption and intentional performance enhancement.

Since 2004 its use has been on the list of stimulants monitored by WADA for use in competition, but its use is not prohibited. In fact, World Athletics (formerly the IAAF), lists caffeine as one of six established performance supplements that have been scientifically studied to show its benefits in improved athletic performance in multiple events.



*Prepared by Dr. K. Gwyn L. Jones, BA, M.B.,B.S., FRCS Ed. DM Ortho  
Therapeutic Use Exemption Committee (TUEC) Chairman, JADCO*

## NICHOLAS KEVIN FORD



The Jamaica Association of Sports Medicine (JASM) proudly congratulates our dedicated and long-standing member, Nicholas Ford on his National Award, Badge of Honour for Meritorious Service for National Service and Volunteerism in the fields of Physiotherapy, Public Health and Sports.

He joined the JASM shortly after completing his Physiotherapy degree in 1984, driven by his love for sports and passion for volunteerism. His career spanning four (4) decades is distinguished by his strong commitment to athlete care and mentorship. He has accompanied national teams to the CAC Games, CARIFTA and the Olympics. Additionally, he has served as the National Coordinator for Physiotherapy in the Ministry of Health and Wellness and improved physiotherapy (PT) services throughout national facilities.

The JASMEC caught up with Mr. Ford to discuss his journey as a member, career highlights and the future of Sports Medicine in Jamaica.

*JASMEC: Mr. Ford, thank you for granting us this interview. What inspired you to join the JASM?*

NKF: I have always liked sports and had seen senior Physiotherapists involved in the JASM. I was inspired by their work and passion. I have served in the capacity of Floor member and Honorary Secretary.

*JASMEC: How has that initial passion evolved over the years? You have been serving for over 40 years!*

NKF: JASM has significantly contributed to my career development, allowing me to treat and participate in the management of hundreds of national athletes! Also, opportunities for mentorship and I am proud to see the achievements of many of my mentees who are thriving in their careers and sporting spheres.

Through the JASM, I have accompanied teams to many different parts of the world. My first international gig was in 1986 when I traveled with the U17 football team. I was also the PT for the senior football team (1988 – 1993). Working with the Special Olympic teams since 2018, I travelled with the team to the Special Olympics World Games in Abu Dhabi in 2019. I really appreciated the inclusivity displayed there. My last gig was the Winter Olympics 2025 when I accompanied the floor ball team and skaters from the Special Olympics team.

*Continued on page 4*

*JASMEC: What has been the most rewarding experience or highlight during your time with JASM?*

NKF: There are so many memorable moments. It was an honour to work alongside the founding members like Dr. Arthur Wint and traveling with the national teams. I prefer multi-sports and one of the highlights for me was being able to work at the 2004 Olympics in Greece - the home of the Olympics

*JASMEC: How has Sports Medicine in Jamaica evolve over the years?*

NKF: It has evolved tremendously over the years. I am really happy to see that we have been able to keep up with the changes and advancements in technology. I remember the Sports Medicine Unit at the Insports building at the National Arena where JASM members would work in the evenings treating athletes. I recall working in the “trenches” sometimes until midnight. There has been a paradigm shift to the Faculty of Sport and the Sports Medicine Clinic on the UWI Mona Campus. This was influenced by the work of JASM members like Dr. Akshai Mansingh who was the inaugural Dean.

Working at development meets offered valuable field experience and helped to prepare practitioners for international travel. The level of organization and the use of technology have elevated our practice and ability to contribute.

*JASMEC: What policy or standard of care change championed by JASM are you most proud to have witnessed?*

NKF: The Periodic Health Evaluation (PHE) which offers world-class assessment of our student athletes with a comprehensive approach that includes medical screening, functional tests and ECG .. all free to the athletes! This is a critical process in safeguarding our athletes and an essential part of their preparations and ongoing monitoring throughout their careers. The PHE is a great initiative especially for the underserved schools who may lack support financially or through an alumnus.

*JASMEC: What advice would you give to new and prospective members?*

NKF: Come with an open mind and willingness to serve. JASM is athlete focused. Don't focus on self and what you can get but offer good service and you will accrue the benefits. I have seen the peaks and troughs of the association with membership waxing and waning. However, JASM has a rich history and even with the changing landscape, our relevance prevails.

*JASMEC: What's a major achievement that you would want to see in the advancement of sports nationally?*

NKF: To see all sporting organizations recognize JASM as the premier organization for Sports Medicine & Exercise Science and that JASM contributes to national policy and research.

*JASMEC: What's a fun fact that persons would be surprised to know?*

NKF: (laughs) I have been a Manchester City fan since age 11 and in 2002 when I went to the Commonwealth Games in Manchester, England, I had to visit the stadium and get some memorabilia.



*Interview conducted by Dr. Marsha James, ENT Surgeon  
JASM Education Committee Chairperson*

# PHOTO GALLERY

## ISSA/GRACE KENNEDY BOYS AND GIRLS CHAMPIONSHIP



Kinesio-taping the knee



Muscle Tension Release to Hamstring



Applying an Ice Compress to the foot



Preparing to host the Periodic Health Evaluation

W B P  
E R H  
S A E  
T N 2  
E C 0  
R H 2  
N 6



Periodic Health Evaluation Testing



# 2026

MAY-AUG

## Member Calendar

**SPORTING EVENT**  
Volunteers needed

**EDUCATIONAL EVENT**  
Participation encouraged

**OUTREACH ACTIVITY**  
Support encouraged

**SOCIAL ACTIVITY**  
Member engagement

**MAY** 🏃 30 - MONA INVITATIONAL MEET

**JUN** 🏃 7- NORMAN MANLEY 5K  
🏃 18- 21 JAAA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS  
🏃 26- 28 PanAm SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

**JUL** 📖 5- ATHLETE'S ECG COURSE FOR PHYSICIANS  
👥 12- JASM BENEFIT PLAY "BRAZEN TO DI BONE"  
🏃 18- SURREY PHE  
🏃 27-1 COMMONWEALTH GAMES

**AUG** 🏃 2-8 CAC GAMES  
🏃 5-9 World U20 CHAMPIONSHIPS  
📖 16- KEEPING PACE WEBINAR

**COMMITTEES:**

- EDUCATION
- FUNDRAISING
- MEDICAL LIAISON
- PR & MARKETING
- SOCIAL, WELFARE & PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT
- SPORTING EVENTS

