

# Merlene Ottey ~ The Analysis of a Unique Sprint Season

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## Introduction

### Performance Development for Merlene Ottey

Goals for 1989  
Analysis of 1989 Season  
Examples of Workouts

#### 1. Introduction

Already since 1980 Merlene Ottey has belonged to the Jamaican sprinters absolute world of top women sprints. Since her first Olympic Games in Moscow she received her first Olympic medal.

The 1989 season was unique because of the following reasons:

- a very large amount of competitions
- unbeaten during the outdoor season (over 100m)
- very stable performances without deterioration

All of this made her season unique enough to describe or have closely written.

#### Achievement – Development Merlene Ottey

Here development went as follows – In short, a mouth-watering sprint career: 2 world records, 3 Olympic , medals, 3 outdoor World Championship medals, and 3 indoor world championship medals. Next to it as a sign of stability, she was the Grand Prix Winner in 1987 and 1989.

After a couple of disappointments in 1988 with just a fourth place finish in the 200m and a cancellation of the 100m at the Olympic Games in Seoul she decided to make an experimental year of 1989.

#### 2. Goals for 1989

The major changes for 1989 were to change coaches and to run a lot more meets in 1989. Since before the dutiful World Cup in Barcelona not a lot of importance was found for the year 1989. The end of January all of this received a permanent build-up (forms) – a choice was made for the World Indoor Championship to be her first peak, this created a very intense indoor season.

For the indoor season the next performance goals were looking good:

- 60 meter personal record and medal at the World Championships in Budapest
- 200 meter personal record and a gold medal in Budapest

For the outdoor season the next performance goals were set:

- 100 meter under 11.00
- 200 meter under 22.00
- if possible, compete in the World Cup in Barcelona, finishing first in the 100m and 200m

In fact all of the goals were reached except for the 200m under 22.00. To determine the outdoor cycle and to see what kind of improvements were susceptible they used the next possibilities:

- analysis of training/workout log
- analysis of tape of important competitions like world championships and olympics
- results of drug testing by IAAF teams during World Champ, Rome and Olympic Games Seoul analyzed with names of sprint times. [Note: I think this may be incorrectly translated because it doesn't really make sense - it would make more sense if they meant the biomechanical studies]
- Ergojump (Bosco) system to analyze relevant strength properties
- Speedlab system to analyze specific sprint results such as stride length, contact time, and split times
- Velocity meter tests

From the data given the next conclusion has been taken:

the performance goals for indoor had to be realized in the next way:

- improvement of the relevant strength properties for the start and acceleration part, improving start and acceleration technique.
- Change of attitude in the sense of start and acceleration (be the rabbit, kick the habit!!!)
- Improvement maximum speed
- Maintenance of specific conditioning
- to make aware and to be able to adapt and regeneration principles

Because the indoor season ended so successfully, 3 personal records, decisions were made to continue the same line of workouts for the outdoor season. The biggest problem throughout the season was the shortage of competition -- by which the incentives for really fast times actually were not always present. This was a bigger problem in the 200m than the 100m.

### 3. Analysis of the 1989 Season

If we put the season in numbers we get the following picture:

	A	B			C
Amount of competitions Indoor	12				
Amount of starts Indoor	23				
Amount of starts Indoor --60m	11	8	7.0	under 7.15 (5x)	3
Amount of start Indoor -- 200m	8	8	22.35	under 22.80 (4x)	1
Amount of starts Indoor -- 400m	4	4	52.21		8
Amount of competitions outdoor	22				
Amount of starts outdoor	31				
Amount of starts 100m	22	22	10.95	under 11.10 (13x) 2	
Amount of starts 200m	10	9	22.21	under 22.40 (6x)	2

A = Amount of competitions won; B = Best Time, C = World Ranking

Amount of days total	233
Amount of competition days	34
Amount of starts	54
Amount of travelling days	51
Amount of rest days	54
Amount of practice days	95
-- weight training	31
-- start & acceleration	20
-- maximum speed	9
-- supramax speed	5
-- conditioning	66
--adaptive regeneration	7

\*An amount of striking results:

The amount of starts are very high compared to the average sprinter. 34 competition days with 54 starts is an extreme load that can only be survived successfully through optimum training and preparation as well as adequate regenerative measures.

Just once was there a complaint at a competition about the athlete safety point of view which didn't allow (her to compete?). But two days later she ran a 100 meters in 11.12 (wind -0.57) because the complaint was adequately handled.

Every run longer than 80m I took as conditioning. And a lot of the were completed with a number of tempo runs longer than 80m.

### 4. Examples of Workouts

Week 6 1989

#### Monday, February 6: Indoor Houtrust

-Warm-up, stretching

5 x 60m supramax with pulley system

1 x 150m with blocks 17.42 (10 mins rest)

4x 120m with blocks 12.93, 12.99, 13.11, 13.25 (8 mins rest) in diff lanes

#### Tuesday, February 7: Indoor Houtrust

-Warm-up, stretching

-4x30m Block Starts on command, electric timing (4.40, 4.36, 4.37)

-500m - 400m - 300m - 300m standing start (12-15 mins btw)

73.6 - 57.5 - 41.1 - 39.9

**Wednesday, February 8: Indoor Houtrust**

- Warm-up, stretching
- reaction exercises
- 6 x 80m hills
- strength training:       3 x 8x50kg        deep knee bending  
                                  2x10x20kg        pull from stands and push out above head  
                                  3x12x ?? kg        then a lot of stomach exercises

**Thursday, February 9: Indoor Houtrust**

Travel to San Sebastian

**Friday, February 10: Indoor Houtrust**

Competition San Sebastian

200m: 1<sup>st</sup> in 22.79

**Saturday, February 11: Indoor Houtrust**

Competition Stuttgart

60m: 7.26 (2<sup>nd</sup> Place)

200m 22.86 (1<sup>st</sup> Place)

**Week 22, Formia Italie**

**Tuesday, May 30:**

- Warm-up, stretching
- elementary running technique
- 4x80m technique run  
          1x 80m on grass, 2x on soft surface track, 1 x on hard surface track
- 3 x 105m on hard track: 35m 100% - 35m 95% - 35m 100%

**Wednesday, May 31:**

- Warm-up, stretching
- jumping on box 1 x 6 x 1m
- skips w/resistance 3 x 20m
- 4 x 30m standing start, 6 x 30m blocks
- 2 x 150m standing start (20 mins btw) 16.68, 16.74

**Thursday, June 1:**

- Warm-up, stretching
- Bosco Ergojump Test
- 4 x 80m(60m downhill + 20m on track) w/standing start (rest 8 mins)
- 2 x 120m standing start (rest 15 mins) 13.21, 13.32
- then sauana and whirlpool

**Friday, June 2**

rest

**Saturday, June 3**

Morning:

- Warm-up, stretching
- 300m, 250m, 200m, 150m standing start (20-25 mins btw) 36.50, 29.88, 23.05, 16.99

Afternoon:

- 2 x 10 x 40 kg left and right knee bending (1 leg at a time)
- 4 x 15 x 120 kg
- 3 x 3 x 65 kg bench pressing
- 3 x 120/3x150/8x180 legs pulling in
- 3 x 80 crunches
- 2 x 10 left + right side of stomach

**Sunday, June 4**

- Warm-up, stretching
- 3 x 3 x 150m standing start (microrest 30 sec/ macrorest 9 mins)

20.8/24.2/22.4

20.4/21.9/23.8

20.8/22.2/24.6

**Monday, June 5**

--Rest (have to pick up visa in Rome)

Week 23:

**Tuesday, June 6**

-- Warm-up, stretching  
-- speed-lab test, 6 x 50m from blocks on command (electric timing)  
8-10 mins rest btw

**Wednesday, June 7**

-- Warm-up, stretching  
-- 150m, 120m, 100m, 80m standing start (10-15 mins btw)  
16.95, 13.45, 11.33, 8.99

**Thursday, June 8**

Travel: Rome-Madrid

**Friday, June 9**

Competition Madrid:

100m heat, 1 <sup>st</sup>	11.69
100m final 1 <sup>st</sup>	11.49 (wind: -3.0)

**Saturday, June 10**

-- Warm-up, stretching  
-- on grass in sneakers: 3 x 5 x 100m with 100m jogback (macropasue 5 mins)

**Sunday, June 11**

-- Warm-up, stretching  
--2 x 250m standing start (30 mins btw)  
28.85, 28.84

These workouts are precisely put together for the individual (Merlene Ottey in the form of that moment, this is certainly not an example to be copied). It only gives an insight into the load size and intensity of a world class sprinter. It is also one of the rare times that a program for a top sprinter is being published.

One of the biggest origins of miscommunication for trainers/coaches is when it is being said that Ben Johnson, Florence Griffith so and the DDR sprinters again differently, while people don't have the correct information or saw nothing to make wild assumptions while they don't have the slightest idea of the true/real happening (workouts).

The reason for not publishing the workouts of world class sprinters is the fact that the coaches most often don't have the time to put their concepts of workouts on paper.

This article, above all has the aim to start a thinking process to the readers, to stimulate coaches to experiment with their athletes to ultimately come to a similar ??? of a load.