

Brittney Reese

Committed to Service

Brittney Reese has given to the sport of track and field by way of becoming the first and only male or female to win five straight world championship titles. But she spends just as much time giving back to her community and the youth of her sport.

Brittney first attended Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, then went on to the University of Mississippi, where she was the NCAA Outdoor Champion in the long jump in 2007 and 2008. She qualified for the 2008 Olympics by setting a new personal best of 22-9 $\frac{3}{4}$ at the Trials, but only managed to place fifth in the finals in Beijing.

Off the track, the Ole Miss alumna is committed to giving back to youth and the community that has supported her throughout her athletic career. In 2011, she donated 100 turkeys for Thanksgiving and her time to various homeless and religious organizations in her community of Gulfport, Mississippi as her way of giving back to an area where there are few resources for those in need. Established in 2012, each year, Brittney gives a college scholarship to one male and one female high school senior in her hometown. She uses her platform to speak to youth and women's organizations about a healthy diet and exercise, hoping to help end childhood obesity. She is also an advocate against animal cruelty and volunteers with the ASPCA. It was for these endeavors that she was honored at the Shadow League Leadership Awards.

After winning her first Olympic gold medal in London in 2012, Brittney set out to do something no other woman had ever done—win two consecutive gold medals in the long jump.

The highest high was followed by a low point in her career in 2013, when a torn hip labrum forced the three-time Olympian to undergo surgery. She rushed back from surgery but continued to struggle and contemplated retirement. Instead, she reached out to a sports psychologist who could help her work out the kinks off the track as she regained her physical form.

At age 29, Brittney was one of the oldest athletes in the Olympic long jump competition, along with American teammate Tianna Bartoletta, age 30. While separated by a year in age, just two-hundredths of a meter separated them in competition. Known as the “Long Jump Beast,” Brittney was attempting to defend her Olympic title, but had trouble finding her groove in the finals. She fouled three of her first four attempts before finally turning in 23-3 and 23-5 $\frac{1}{2}$ jumps. Brittney clapped her hands in frustration after the final jump, knowing it wasn't good enough to beat Bartoletta's jump. With that, Brittney Reese became just the second woman in American history to win multiple Olympic medals in the event behind Jackie Joyner-Kersey.

Questions For Thought:

1. Britney has often come down to her final jump with the pressure on and delivered. What does it take to deliver with the pressure on?
2. Britney gives backs to society. In what ways might you help better society?
3. Brittney practices the mental component of performances. How is your mental skill development program? How could you improve it?