

Jyothi Yarraji: India's rising star who overcame the hurdle of luck

Even after being denied twice for factors outside her control, Jyothi Yarraji has broken the women's 100m hurdles national record multiple times. Only hardcore enthusiasts would have been aware of Jyothi Yarraji a few years back but within a short time, the hurdler has emerged as one of India's brightest athlete. Only in her early 20s, Jyothi Yarraji is currently the fastest women's 100m hurdler in India. Born on August 28, 1999, in Visakhapatnam (Vizag), Andhra Pradesh, Jyothi Yarraji, like many former and contemporary Indian athletes, grew up with limited means. Her father, Suryanarayana, works as a private security guard while her mother, Kumari, is a domestic help who works part-time as a cleaner in a city hospital. Combined, they earned less than Rs 18,000 (US\$220) per month. Jyothi, however, was destined for better things and she was set on that path during her days at Vizag's Port High School Krishna. Her physical education teacher felt she had good height to be a hurdler and there was no looking back.

Taking care of her parents was a big motivation behind her taking up athletics. In 2015, Jyothi Yarraji first came into the spotlight after winning the gold medal at an Andhra Pradesh inter-district meet. The following year, she moved to the SAI Centre in Hyderabad to train under coach N Ramesh, an Olympian and Dronacharya awardee. Though she didn't set the world alight, Jyothi consistently won medals in junior and senior national meets. After two years at the Hyderabad SAI Centre, she got the opportunity to join the Centre of Excellence at Guntur, but the facility was closed abruptly.

In 2019, Jyothi moved bases to the Odisha Athletics High-Performance Centre in Bhubaneswar, where she came under the influence of British coach James Hillier. Jyothi Yarraji's progress under James Hillier took little time to show as in January 2020, she clocked 13.03 seconds to win gold at the All India Inter-University athletics meet in Moodabidri, Karnataka.

The mark was enough to hand her the Indian women's 100m hurdles national record, but it couldn't be ratified into the official record books. This was because the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) did not test her before the championship and neither was there any technical delegate from the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) at the event - both prerequisites to log an official timing.

She then went on to win another gold at the Khelo India University Games in February 2020. Later in the year, Jyothi Yarraji was set to make her international debut at the South Asian Youth Games but the COVID-19 pandemic played spoil-



sport. With other events like the Indoor Asiad and World University Games also called off in 2020, Jyothi Yarraji had to wait for her international bow.

Things took a further downward turn after she was sidelined for months with a back injury. And by the time Jyothi returned to training, things had become complicated. "She had no confidence because she had injury problems," James Hillier told the Indian Express. "She was scared of hurdling at that time. In our first session, the single hurdle was at the lowest setting. She didn't even want to go over that."

It took a lot of patience and effort from James Hillier and his team to restore Jyothi Yarraji's confidence and physical strength. However, when she returned to action, she was better than ever. After missing almost the entire 2021 season, Jyothi Yarraji gradually built up momentum in 2022. Starting in the 13.7-second range at the

Jyothi Yarraji records

Jyothi Yarraji clocked another national-record setting time of 13.09 seconds at the Federation Cup in Kozhikode but was yet again denied the official mark because it was a wind-assisted run. The wind speed during her race read +2.1m/s - a hair over the acceptable limit of +2m/s required for a national record.

"I tried to explain to her that on both occasions she had only been denied by bad luck. And that was a good thing because luck tends to average out over a career," Hillier later recounted to The Hindu. As it turned out, Hillier was spot on and Jyothi would go on to finally make the official record her own in the very next event, that too at a special meet. Marking her international debut at the Cyprus International athletics meet in Limassol on May 10, 2022, Jyothi Yarraji finally pocketed the women's 100m hurdles national record with a timing of 13.23 seconds, shattering the previous mark of 13.38 set by Anuradha Biswal way back in 2002.

It was a fantastic race by the Indian, who recovered from a poor start to win gold at the meet. "In India, they use a manual gun to start the race but in Europe, they use an electronic starter. I was not familiar with the sound it makes so I didn't realise when the race had started. I only started running when I saw the other athletes start," Jyothi Yarraji explained to The Hindu.

With a reaction time of 0.243 seconds, Jyothi was the slowest runner off the blocks at the meet by a big margin. Over the next month, Jyothi Yarraji, a big fan of sprint legend Usain Bolt and India's Tokyo 2020 Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra, bettered her own mark twice.

After a 13.11s gold medal-winning run at the Loughborough International in the UK in May, she cut it down to 13.04s at the Harry Schulting Games in the Netherlands only four days later. Having already qualified for the Commonwealth Games 2022 in Birmingham, UK, the star Indian hurdler is eyeing a successful run in what will be her first major championship race but the long-term goal for Jyothi is the Olympics. "I am not tense but definitely excited. I look at it as the biggest, immediate challenge and one step forward to realising my ultimate goal of winning an Olympic medal," Jyothi said.

Jyothi Yarraji achievements

National record in women's 100m hurdles - 13.04s Broke the women's 100m hurdles national record after 20 years*

THE FACT CORNER



There's a plant in Australia that will make you vomit in pure agony just by touching it



Sand from the Sahara is blown by the wind all the way to the Amazon, recharging its minerals. The desert literally fertilizes the rainforest



Looking at an aquarium for 10 minutes delivers 'significant health benefits' such as improving people's mood, reduced heart rates and blood pressure



It snowed in the Sahara desert for 30 minutes on the 18th February 1979

BRAIN TEASERS

- Q. There are several books on a bookshelf. If one book is the 4th from the left and 6th from the right, how many books are on the shelf?
- Q. What do you get when you divide 30 by 1/2 and add 10?
- Q. I am a three digit number. My tens digit is five more than my ones digit. My hundreds digit is eight less than my tens digit. What number am I?
- Q. If it were two hours later, it would be half as long until midnight as it would be if it

were an hour later. What time is it now?

- Q. There are two ducks in front of two other ducks. There are two ducks behind two other ducks. There are two ducks beside two other ducks. How many ducks are there?
- Q. Can you arrange four nines to make it equal to 100.
- Q. Sam is 54 years old, and his father Joe is 80. How many years ago was Joe three times the age of his son Peter?

SOLUTION:
1. 9 books.
2. 70.
3. 194.
4. 9pm.
5. Four ducks (in a square).
6. $99 + 99 = 100$.
7. 41 years ago.

English Proverbs and Meanings

* **A bad penny always turns up.**
An unwanted or disreputable person constantly comes back.

* **A bad tree does not yield good apples.**
A bad parent does not raise good children.

* **A bad workman blames his tools.**
Blaming the tools for bad workmanship is an excuse for lack of skill.

* **A black plum is as sweet as a white.**
People should not be judged by their appearance.

* **A broken friendship may be soldered but will never be sound.**
Friendships can be rebuilt after a dispute but will never be as strong as before.

* **A burden of one's own choice is not felt.**
Something difficult seems easier when it is done voluntarily.

* **A constant guest is never welcome.**
If you come to visit too often, your host will be less pleased to see you.

Whole Wheat Jaggery Crepe



Ingredients:
Whole wheat flour – 1 ½ cups
Jaggery – 1 cup
Water – 2 ½ cups

Cardamom powder -1 tsp
Clarified butter – for cooking and serving
Almonds – 10,
Method
In a deep pan, melt jaggery in 1½ cups water on medium heat. Filter to discard impurities.
In a large mixing bowl, place whole wheat flour. Add the melted jaggery to water.
With a wire whisk, mix the ingredients thoroughly to form dosa batter without any lumps.
Add more water, if required to get the batter consistency. Preheat a non-stick tawa on medium heat.
Brush it with a little oil.
Pour 1/8 cup of the batter onto the tawa on medium flame.
Too much of heat will disallow the batter to be spread out into concentric circles.
Spread out like dosa. Drizzle clarified butter and cook for 3 to 4 minutes on medium flame or until the bottom side turns golden brown.
Flip the dosa, lower the flame and cook for 2 to 3 minutes more. Serve hot with ghee or butter, toasted almonds, and freshly sliced fruits.

JUNIOR CHALLENGE

Strawberry Jam Shortbread Biscuit



Ingredients:
1/2 Cup Sugar
1 Cup Butter
2 Cup Flour
1 Egg
Heart shape moulds
200 Gram Strawberries
50 Gram Sugar
5 Gram Gelatine
How to Proceed:
First make short bread by slowly mixing together sugar, butter and flour. Also add an egg once it all come together to make a dough, dust some more flour and roll it flat like a chapatti. Cut it with a heart shape ring mould then take another bigger cutter to make a layer of shortbread to form boundaries. Bake it for 180 degree for about 9 minutes .
To prepare strawberry jam:
Blend strawberries and sugar together and add gelatine. Boil it until thick. Chill the jam down and fill between heart moulds along with some generous icing of sugar on it before serving.