

Tiffany Ofili Porter – Ypsilanti 2005



When the eldest of the Ofili sisters first dabbled in track as an Ypsilanti elementary student, people spotted her speed, but few suspected she would eventually become a 7-time state champion, a 5-time NCAA champion and a 3-time Olympian.

As a middle schooler, Tiffany Ofili met Tom “Mick” Micallef, the Ypsilanti head coach who encouraged her to join his Ypsilanti Area Women’s Track Club. That set her up for future success.

As she has written, “Then 8th grade year my family and I moved to a new house, which meant I had the option to continue our relationship at the local high school, or at Ypsi High. I chose the latter. This decision proved fruitful because I was able to meet Coach Chris Jonik and under his and Mick’s guidance I was introduced to the hurdles.”

Career highlights:

2001 (8th grade): 6th in MITS 60 (8.09).

2002 (9th grade): 3rd in MITS 60 (7.95), 8th in long jump (16-10.5). At the outdoor D2 finals, she hurdled 44.04 to win the 300H, placed 4th in the 100 (12.57) and 2nd in the 100H (14.70).

2003 (10th grade): 3rd in MITS 60H (9.19), 6th in long jump (16-6.25). At the D2 finals, she placed 2nd in the 100 (12.29), 4th in the 100H (14.59) and ran second leg on the Ypsilanti 4x1 that won in 49.59.

2004 (11th grade): 2nd in both the MITS 60H (8.90) and long jump (16-6), At the D2 finals, in leading Ypsilanti to the team championship, she placed 2nd in the long jump (16-8.5), then 2nd in the 100 (12.74) before winning both hurdle finals in 14.34/44.78.

2005 (12th grade): Won the MITS 60H (8.61 PR) and long jump (18-4.25 PR). She also placed 3rd at Nike Indoor Nationals (8.71). Outdoors, she won the D2 long jump (18-9.25 PR), finished 2nd in the 100 (12.50), and captured both hurdles (14.19 PR/42.82 PR), winding up her career with 7 MHSAA titles (along with 5 runner-up honors).

Those high school accolades led to a full ride at the University of Michigan, where she worked with James Henry and Arnett Chisholm. She blossomed, winning 9 Big 10 titles and 5 NCAA crowns, and helped lead the Wolverines to a pair of conference titles.

2006: 2nd in Big 10 Indoor 60H. Big 10 champion in 100H (13.37 PR). Won USATF U20 title (13.15w), then captured World Junior bronze in 13.37 =PR.

2007: Big 10 Indoor champion in 60H (8.10), 4th in 60 (7.50), 2nd in long jump (20-3). Outdoors, won Big 10 (13.14), 3rd in 100 (11.71 PR). NCAA champion in PR 12.80.

2008: Big 10 Indoor—1st in 60H (8.06), 1st in long jump (20-6.5), 2nd in 60 (7.42 PR), 4th in 200 (24.62). NCAA Indoor 60H champ (7.94 PR). Big 10 Outdoor—2nd in 100H (12.92w), 3rd in long jump (20-11.25w), 4th in 100 (11.63w). NCAA champion in 12.84.

2009: Big 10 Indoor—1st in 60H (8.18), 2nd in long jump (20-7.25), 2nd in 60 (7.46), 4th in 200 (24.42). NCAA Indoor champion 60H (8.00). Big 10 Outdoor—1st in 100H (13.05w), 1st in long jump (21-3.25 PR), 2nd in 100 (11.70). NCAA Outdoor 100H champion (12.96). 4th in USATF Champs (12.66w).

2010: A dual citizen since birth, she felt herself drawn to represent her mother's home country, Great Britain. She was granted British eligibility at the end of the 2010 season, her first full season as a pro. It was also the first season she focused completely on the hurdles. Indoors, she had placed 4th at USATF Indoors (7.96), outdoors, she was 5th at the USATF meet (13.04).

2011: She took 2nd in the 60H at the European Indoors in 7.80 PR; outdoors, she placed 4th in the World Championships after running a PR 12.56 in the semis. Another major event happened this year, her marriage to fellow Wolverine Jeff Porter, an NCAA Indoor hurdle champion himself who would become a 2-time Olympian for the United States.

2012: Silver at the World Indoors (7.94) gave her a first medal for Britain. Outdoors, she was 2nd in the British champs and made it to the semis at the Olympics.

2013: British champion (12.68). Bronze at World Championships (12.55 PR).

2014: Bronze in World Indoor (7.86). British champion (12.85), European champion (12.76). Lifetime best 12.51 in Marrakech.

2015: British champion (12.83), 5th in World Champs (12.68).

2016: Bronze in World Indoor (7.90). British champion (12.91), European bronze (12.76), 7th in Olympics (12.76).

2017: Injury troubles, but still managed a 12.75 and ran in the heats of the World Championships.

2018: In a shortened season, finished 6th in the Commonwealth Games.

2020: A best of 12.90 in the pandemic year.

2021: Running as a mother in her final year of competition, coached by husband Jeff Porter, she won Euro Indoor bronze. She was British champion (12.78), and made it to the semis of the Olympics. “That feat was the culmination of countless hours of work, sacrifice, dedication, perseverance, and heart. Attending the Tokyo Olympic Games, this time knowing my child was watching, is a moment that I will never forget.”

As she said in her retirement message, “As I officially close the chapter on our nearly three-decade long relationship, I want to thank you track and field, for all you gave me, and allowed me to experience. I learned so many lifelong lessons, met so many incredible people, visited so many fascinating countries, and earned a decent amount of cash along the way. You will always be my first love, and I will forever be indebted to you.”

Tiffany Porter publishes a blog about being a parent and so many other things, including, of course, track & field. You can find it at <https://tiffofili.com/blog/>.