

Jamaica Swimming: Alia Atkinson comes of age



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Jamaica's Alia Atkinson's breakout year was evidenced by her featuring prominently in the year-end rankings over short course metres for 2014.

Bolstered by a historic Gold medal at the World Short Course Swimming Championships, Atkinson had five entries in the World's top swimming performances, all of which were in the top 10.

The only other CARIFTA region swimmer joining her among the World's elite was Bahamas' Arianna Vanderpool-Wallace.

In a swim that has brought Atkinson much fame even beyond the swimming pool, she equalled the 100-metre World record of 1:02.36 at the World Short Course Swimming Championships in Doha on December 6.

Her performance won her the gold medal and raised the profile of Caribbean swimming.

In a silver medal-winning performance in the 50-metre breaststroke at the Doha championships, she stroked her way to the second fastest time in the world of 28.91.

When she dominated the field in the 200-metre breaststroke event at a World Cup meet in Singapore on November 1 she registered 2:17.84 which ended the year as the fourth best time internationally.

In all instances, Atkinson is the fastest Jamaican of all time.

She registered a Jamaica best for a woman in the 100 individual medley on September 1 at the Dubai World Cup meet when she stopped the clock in 58.26 which was, again, the fourth fastest time in the world.

Singapore would prove another good venue for the World champion as she recorded the 10th fastest time in the world when she swam 2:08.17.

That swim is the best ever for a Jamaican woman.

Arianna Vanderpool-Wallace, who is the region's best sprint freestyler, had her lone top-10 performance for 2014 in the 50-metre event.

Her fifth-placed performance in the final of 23.93 had her ninth at the year end.

In another championship final, this time in the 100-metre freestyle, she placed sixth in 52.43.

That performance put her 12th globally.

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