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Photo: Calabar 400m sensation Christopher Taylor is expected to score heavily for the defending champions at Champs 2016.

The pomp and pageantry surrounding the opening of the first all-weather synthetic running track at a high school in Jamaica said it all. The occasion to hand over the new laid running track at Calabar High school, the first such happening at any high school in the Caribbean was a landmark moment in the history of Jamaica's track and field. The dignitaries present for the event, including the then Prime Minister, The Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller and former Prime Minister, The Most Honourable PJ Patterson, himself a past student of Calabar, spoke to the significance of the event.

The instillation of the new track has now raised the bar at the school in terms of expectations at the annual Boys and Girls Track and Field Championships. Calabar has won on the boys' side at the last four stagings of the event and they are expected to continue to beat back the efforts of rivals such as Kingston College and Jamaica College for some time to come.

The track will allow the school to prepare their athletes better than most, in addition to being able to host their own track and field events and earn revenue (that can go straight back into their program) from rental of the facility.

But the pressure will be on Michael Clarke and his charges to deliver a comprehensive victory this year to mark this historic moment in the life of the school.

Speaking at the launch of the first McKinley/Wint Track and Field Meet that was held at the school in January, principal Albert Corcho boasted that it wasn't a matter of who would win Champs but who would come second, third and fourth and gave the assurance that Calabar would continue to dominate for at least the next five years.

Those sorts of expectations are a lot to thrust onto the young shoulders of schoolboys who are also expected to maintain good grades in school. But the recent success of Jamaica on the international scene in the sport of track and field has raised the bar of expectation at all levels of the sport and with Champs being the most celebrated high school track and field championships globally, for that age group, the weight of expectations could not be any less.

The likes of Christopher Taylor, Dejour Russell, Tyreke Wilson and Warren Barrett Jr. are all expected to rack up serious points for the Red Hills Road based institution as they hunt their fifth straight title and 24th overall. Calabar's main rival Kingston College, with 31 wins, is the only school to have won the event more than the defending champions.

With just a week to go before the start of the 106th staging of the ISSA/Grace Kennedy Boys and Girls Track and Field Championships, the anticipation among the fans has hit its peak and most people wait with bated breath for the five day competition to get going on Tuesday, March 15th. Kingston College, Jamaica College and St. Jago High school are all expected to push the defending champions all the way to the final day on Saturday March 19th when the 4x400 relays bring an end to yet another staging of one of Jamaica's best sporting products.

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