

Olympian Gabby Thomas Is Hitting the Ground Running With Team Toyota

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U.S. Olympian and Team Toyota athlete Gabby Thomas is known for winning two medals at the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020. She also wants to be remembered for her moves off the track.

“When people hear Gabby Thomas, I want them to think, ‘She’s a really good role model,’ or, ‘She works really hard,’” she says. “I want to represent excellence and work ethic, both on and off the track.”

Thomas earned silver medal in the 4x100m relay and an individual bronze medal in the 200m event in Tokyo. She qualified for Team USA in the 200 meters sprint with a trials time of 21.61, breaking the Olympic Trials record with the second-fastest time in history. Having just graduated with her master’s degree in public health from the University of Texas at Austin, Thomas is looking ahead to her next milestone – qualifying for Olympic Games Paris 2024.

As one of the most recent athletes added to Team Toyota’s roster, Thomas is a natural fit in the all-star lineup.

“How I interpret ‘Let’s Go Places’ is when it comes to any challenges in front of you, it’s just saying, ‘Let’s go. Let’s do it,’” Thomas says. “You have to be your best self-start in your impossible journey.”

New Dreams

The 26-year-old athlete is from Northampton, Massachusetts, and graduated from Harvard in 2019. She won multiple medals in the NCAA Indoor and Outdoor Track and Field Championships and even broke the 200m collegiate record in 2018 to win gold. Thomas earned degrees in neurobiology and global health and health policy with the intention to enroll in medical school. But with her athletic success, that initial plan shifted.

“I’ve found new dreams — Olympic dreams,” she says. “So clearly things have changed, and that’s OK. It’s something I tell people all the time now, that your journey is going to evolve and it’s OK to take a detour.”

Instead of medical school, Thomas earned her master’s in public health with a focus on epidemiology. Right after graduating from Harvard, the U.S. Olympian moved to Austin to join a training group while also attending graduate school. Thomas says that while she has obviously fallen in love with track and field, she is also passionate about her education.

“One of the things that I feel most fortunate about is the diversity of my support networks,” she says. “In addition to my team, I have my advisor and my classmates, who have become [my] really close friends. It’s really grounding to have people outside of track who are in my corner and supporting me in the other avenues of my life.”

Leading by Example

The sprinter admits that balancing being a master’s student and an athlete had its challenges, but Thomas credits her many support systems for keeping her going. She’s been involved in athletics her entire life, primarily in team sports, and feels like that experience fundamentally prepared her to work with others. She loves being a part of a team, whether that’s Team Toyota or her running teammates in Austin.

“Very recently with my training group, I’ve taken over this leadership role, and what I typically do is kind of lead by example,” Thomas says. “I’m not the loudest person in a room, but I do like to embody those leadership qualities just through my actions and what I do.”

Despite all her successes, Thomas knows that chasing big dreams means overcoming big challenges. The U.S. Olympian is starting to feel accustomed to the hurdles: being a young African American woman, growing up in the Northeast, and attending Harvard University. It’s all helped her grow into the person she is now.

Thomas believes in looking obstacles — like a devastating hamstring injury that kept her out of the World Championships last year — straight on and staying committed anyway.

“That injury was heartbreaking for me,” she says. “But then to come back for the second half of the season and have the type of results that I did embodies what I’m all about as an athlete, but also everything else that I do in life.”