



Decide You Will Get the Last Laugh

The four world-class sprinters had a dream to compete in the summer Olympics in track and field. When they failed to qualify, rather than having a pity party, they put their heads together to think of another way to make their Olympic Dream a reality. After brainstorming for solutions they decided to become bobsledders and go for the Winter Olympics.

It would be the first time a bobsled team from Jamaica would compete in the Olympics. Jamaican bobsled? "Inconceivable!" said most people. But they were great athletes - extremely fast. They just needed to master their new sport's techniques. The fact they came from Jamaica was completely immaterial. The only fact that mattered was whether they were willing to put themselves through the struggle.

I chatted with them briefly at the 1988, 1992 and 2002 Olympics. At the 88' Calgary Olympics, when they were just getting started, everyone laughed at them – sometimes to their face. They were experiencing what pioneers in every field experience – lots of ridicule. When I asked them how everyone's mockery made them feel, they replied, "Just watch us. We're not quitters. We'll get the last laugh."

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A few days later, during the 88' Olympic competition, they had a horrific crash (you've probably seen it in their movie "Cool Runnings"). When you watch the crash, as the bobsled flips and smashes into the wall, it looks like the driver's neck is snapping. Incredibly, Stokes, the driver, walked away from the crash. Stokes walked away from the crash but not away from bobsledding. The Jamaicans refused to quit. They **were** going to have the last laugh.

Four years later at the Albertville Olympics, a few people were still laughing, but no longer to their face. The Jamaicans were gaining experience. By the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics, their fifth Olympics, the Jamaicans were beating some solid teams. No one was laughing now – except the Jamaicans! By now they had earned the admiration of people from all over the world.

What I learned from the Jamaican Bobsledders is that no matter who you are, whenever you try something new, something different, something daring and bold, people always react in the same way. At first they laugh at you, then, they watch you to see if you quit or not, and finally, if you persist, they admire you. But it's up to you to endure while everyone else is laughing.

That's why it's so important to build a Dream Team of supporters. A group of people who believe in you and encourage you through the tough times.

Next time you are doing something bold and courageous and people are laughing at you, do what the Jamaicans did. **DECIDE** you will get the last laugh.

Put it into action:

Create a Dream Team of believers who will help you persist through other peoples' laughter and disbelief. Decide to get the last laugh. It's your choice.

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