



Newham & Essex Beagle Christine Ohuruogu was a British Olympic and World Championship star for a decade.

Picture: PA

Beagles' queen of the track finally hangs up her spikes

Athletics special

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With impeccable timing as ever, Newham & Essex Beagle Christine Ohuruogu announced her retirement from athletics on the day of the British Championships.

The 34-year-old has been one of the shining lights of British athletics for more than a decade with a stunning career, winning Olympic gold and two World Championships over 400 metres, as well as a host of other medals in individual and relays.

And Beagles coach Tim Mundle remembers when it all began, saying: "She was just a young girl who came down to the track and asked for help with her fitness for playing netball.

"We put her with a group of coaches and she never looked



Ohuruogu holds aloft one of her many medals.

Picture: PA

back, you could see she had a huge amount of ability – she just fitted in."

From such small beginnings, Ohuruogu moved on to coach Lloyd Cowan, but the Beagles were always important to her.

"When she was going round the world, obviously we couldn't do much with her, but whenever she was free she would come

down and run a race or come and see us," added Mundle. "We are so proud that she was a Newham & Essex Beagle."

Ohuruogu's style was to come late in races and that proved to be inspirational.

"She was a brilliant tactician and one thing I say to all young athletes is that the race is 405 metres or 105 metres and if you

run like that you will get results," said Mundle, who has no doubt about her place among the best in athletics.

"She has to be up there among the greats of our British women," he said.

"Sally Gunnell was a great athlete, but look at what Christine has done, look at her medal record and she has got to be up there among the best."

Ohuruogu announced her decision in a statement on her own website, saying: "I started athletics in 2001 at Newham and Essex Beagles AC so I could become a better netball player.

"Now my career highlights include an Olympic 400m gold in 2008 and silver in 2012, and two World Championship 400m titles in 2007 & 2013.

"I end my career with four Olympic and five World Championships medals. Athletics has been my passion for so long and I am proud to call myself an athlete."

And what a remarkable career it has been.

sport

London Youth Games

Jon Hughes, chief executive of the London Youth Games, has called on the capital's leaders and businesses to come forward and safeguard its future.

The Games are the largest youth sports event in Europe and has helped launch for the careers of some of the biggest names in sport, with this year's event culminating this weekend at Crystal Palace National Sports Centre.

Now in its 41st year, the Games sees all 33 London boroughs face each other in a friendly yet competitive environment and Hughes said: "There is no other event and organisation better at uniting young people from across all London's 33 boroughs and communities than the London Youth Games.

"Taking part helps young people's personal development, physical and mental health, and helps to ensure they feel a part of their local community and city."

Sport England and the 33 London boroughs have played pivotal roles in supporting and delivering the Games, but Hughes admitted further financial support is required in order for them to continue at its current level.

"We are at a crossroads in terms of what we need in order to secure the future of London Youth Games and to make sure young people from across the city do not miss out on this amazing experience," he added. "We're calling on London's leaders and businesses to come forward and help safeguard its future."

Many current and past stars began their careers competing in the Games as children, including Sir Mo Farah and Christine Ohuruogu.

A total of 1.5million Londoners have taken part in London Youth Games and this year over 130,000 young people will compete across 30 sports and 11 para-sports.

Zoe Smith, a Commonwealth bronze, silver and gold medalist, has been one of many notable alumni to pay tribute to the Games.

The 24-year-old said: "I don't think I would have ever got into weightlifting if it wasn't for London Youth Games, so I have a lot to thank it for. It was the making of me really.

"We should be so proud to have something like this in London. It gives young people the chance to meet new friends and benefit from improving confidence, learning about respect and fair play."

See londonyouthgames.org for more information.