



News Release

Monday 14th January 2008

TOP EUROPEAN HURDLERS CHALLENGE O'ROURKE AT THE ODYSSEY ARENA

European Hurdles medallists Jenny Kallur (Sweden) and Christina Vukicevic (Norway) will race against current Irish World Indoors Champion Derval O'Rourke in the **Woodie's DIY Irish Indoor Championships** on 26th and 27th January at the Odyssey Arena Belfast. The event is organised and promoted by Athletics Northern Ireland and the Athletic Association of Ireland and in conjunction with Belfast City Council and Sport NI as funding partners.

24-year old Kallur is the twin sister of Susanna who is the current European hurdles champion and 2007 world ranked number 2. Jenny took the silver medal behind winner Susannah in the 60m hurdles event at the Madrid European Indoor Championships in 2005. A few weeks earlier she recorded a phenomenal 7.28 seconds PB in Gothenburg. Jenny is the model of consistency and was a finalist in the 2005 Helsinki World Championships when she set new personal best figures of 12.85 seconds over 100m hurdles.

The Swede's current indoor time should provide ideal competition for O'Rourke who beat Kallur when taking the European Outdoor silver medal in 2006 in a new Irish record of 12.72 seconds.

Also taking the start line will be Kallur's training partner Christina Vukicevic. The 20 year old Norwegian is the World Outdoor junior silver medallist from Beijing in 2006 where her national record time of 13.34 seconds was a mere one hundredth of a record behind the winner Shtepa of Russia. Christina recorded a commendable 13.07seconds time in the World Championships at Osaka last August.

O'Rourke will be hoping that these two classy athletes will provide her with the necessary impetus to record a good early season time in preparation for the World Indoors in Valencia at the beginning of March. The Cork girl has fond memories of the Odyssey from 2 years ago where she defeated current World Outdoor bronze medallist Delloreen Ennis London of Jamaica to set a new Irish record time of 7.90 seconds.

Also announced is Kenyan 800m runner up Richard Kiplagat who will face local Irish competition such as Limerick's Liam Reale who got the silver medal at the Odyssey last year behind Justus Koech.

The event also incorporates the Phoenix "Olympic Flames' Age Group Championships and also a 'Search for a Star' Primary School Initiative with children from across the province participating in a final. In the build up to the Olympics we are actively targeting the next generation of school children and providing with them as much support as possible.

Official website address: www.indoorathletics.net

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