



News Release

Tuesday 21st January 2008

CLAXTON TO RENEW RIVALRY WITH O'ROURKE AT ODYSSEY ARENA

British number 2 Hurdler Sarah Claxton will now join the star studded line up against current World Indoors Champion Derval O'Rourke in the Woodie's DIY Irish Indoor Athletic Championships this weekend 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.

28 year old Claxton (who is the British Indoor record holder at 7.96seconds) has been a long standing rival of O'Rourke's. Two years ago at the Odyssey O'Rourke set a new Irish record of 7.90 seconds when defeating both the current World Outdoor bronze medallist Ennis London and Claxton who finished a rather distant third. Claxton will therefore be seeking to avenge this defeat and build on her successes last year which included a silver medal behind Jessica Ennis in the AAAs Championships and a win in the Cork City Sports. At the weekend, Sarah recorded a time of 8.18 seconds at a meet in England. Already announced for this event is former Indoor silver medallist Jenny Kallur. Clearly this race is shaping up are one of the highlights this weekend.

Another major star appearing at the Odyssey will be John Moffitt of the US who is the current Olympic long jump silver medallist from Athens in 2004. Moffitt snatched the silver medal with a spectacular PB jump of 8.47m behind team-mate winner Dwight Phillips. The American is still a major face as shown by his world top 20 leap of 8.19m last summer in Sardinia.

The women's High Jump includes Deidre Ryan who set a new national record of 1.92m when winning the AAA's title in 2006. She faces the former European Junior silver medallist Julia Hartmann of Germany. Ryan will do well to defeat the German who jumped 1.93m last March in Birmingham.

Finally Northern Ireland 1500m record holder James McIlroy is included in the line-up as is Kenyan championship medallist Richard Kiplagat over 800m.

The event will be shown on RTE on Sunday night.

Official website address with final timetable: www.indoorathletics.net

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JOHN MOFFITT

www.indoorathletics.net