



# Drake RELAYS

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**DRAKE ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS**

PRESENTED BY **HyVee**

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## DRAKE RELAYS PRESENTED BY HY-VEE ANNOUNCES FIRST WAVE OF 2015 ATHLETES AND EVENTS

**DES MOINES, Iowa** – The Drake Relays Presented By Hy-Vee has brought some of the finest athletes in the world to Des Moines for 105 years and 2015 will be no different as Drake Relays director Brian Brown has declared 'The Sky Is The Limit' for this season's competition in Des Moines.

Brown announced the first round of elite athletes and events on Tuesday, Feb. 24, plus schedule and venue changes for events outside of Drake Stadium.

Ryan Grant, Director, Sports Marketing and Events at Hy-Vee, was also on hand to discuss Hy-Vee's continued relationship as the presenting sponsor of the Drake Relays and the Hy-Vee Road Races at the Drake Relays. Hy-Vee's partnership with the Drake Relays is a natural extension of its long-standing commitment to health and wellness in our local communities.

The Hy-Vee Road Races at the Drake Relays will be held on Sunday, April 26th. The Hy-Vee Road Races present an opportunity for people of all skill levels to be actively involved in the Drake Relays. Early bird registration has been extended to March 14th for the 5k run/walk, the 10k run and the half marathon. Information and registration for the Hy-Vee Road Races can be found at [www.Hy-VeeRoadRaces.com](http://www.Hy-VeeRoadRaces.com)

Relays week will kick off a day earlier this spring with the annual Beautiful Bulldog contest on Sunday, April 19, in the Knapp Center. The internationally adored event begins a full week of Relays festivities in Des Moines that continues on Tuesday, April 21, with the Grand Blue Mile on the streets of downtown Des Moines. Registration for the popular 1-mile road race opens to the public on Feb. 26.

The most notable physical change to Relays week comes on Wednesday, April 22, as the pole vault leaves the familiar confines of Jordan Creek Town Centre for the heart of downtown Des Moines. This year's pole vault exhibition will take place on Court Avenue as some of the world's top vaulters take to the streets and airspace of the popular entertainment district.

Scheduled to compete in the men's event is Olympic gold medalist, world record holder and defending Relays stadium champion Renaud Lavillenie of France. The women's field features world record holder and No. 3 in the world Jenn Suhr of the U.S. and the world's No. 2 vaulter and 2013 and 2014 Relays champion Yarisley Silva of Cuba.

Those events early in the week will serve as appetizers for the incredible fields lined up to compete inside Drake Stadium April 23-25. Friday night is again 'Hy-Vee Night at the Relays' with some of the top athletes in the history of track and field set to preview this summer's IAAF World Championships in Beijing, China.

A new event will also be added to the Friday night's schedule with the women's 800 meters. Eight of the top 10 American 800-meter runners are poised to line up at Drake Stadium including world No. 2 Aje Wilson and No. 3 Brenda Martinez.

In its tradition of welcoming the world's finest athletes to the Blue Oval, the Relays will stage a 200-meter paralympic race on Friday, April 24 with T44 classification athletes, including world record holder Richard Browne and former world record holder Jarryd Wallace. The T44 classification is for athletes that run with the use of prosthetics. Browne won silver in the 2012 Paralympic Games in the 100 meters while Wallace took gold in the International Paralympic Committee's 2013 World Championships.

Joining the field will be a T11 competitor in David Brown who is blind and runs with the aid of a guide runner. Brown owns the T11 world records in both the 100 and 200 meters.

Last year's men's 400 meters was one for the ages with American LaShawn Merritt and Kirani James of Grenada writing another chapter in their storied rivalry with Merritt narrowly edging James, the 2012

### WORLD RANKED ATHLETES AT THE 2015 RELAYS

<b>NO. 1</b>	
Renaud Lavillenie	Men's Pole Vault
Pascal Martinot-Lagarde	Men's 110mH
LaShawn Merritt	Men's 400m

<b>NO. 2</b>	
Kirani James	Men's 400m
Yarisley Silva	Women's Pole Vault
Aje Wilson	Women's 800m

<b>NO. 3</b>	
Brenda Martinez	Women's 800m
Hansle Parchment	Men's 110mH
Jenn Suhr	Women's Pole Vault

<b>NO. 4</b>	
Yousef Ahmed-Masrahi	Men's 400m
Derek Drouin	Men's High Jump
Katerina Stefanidi	Women's Pole Vault

<b>NO. 5</b>	
Erik Kynard	Men's High Jump
Andrew Riley	Men's 110mH
Gil Roberts	Men's 400m

<b>NO. 6</b>	
David Oliver	Men's 110mH

<b>NO. 7</b>	
Ronnie Ash	Men's 110mH
Chris Brown	Men's 400m
Mark Hollis	Men's Pole Vault

<b>NO. 8</b>	
Luguelin Santos	Men's 400m
William Sharman	Men's 110mH

<b>NO. 9</b>	
Ryan Wilson	Men's 110mH

<b>NO. 10</b>	
Molly Beckwith Ludlow	Women's 800m
Tony McQuay	Men's 400m

### WORLD RECORD HOLDERS AT THE 2015 RELAYS

Aries Merritt	Men's 110mH
Jenn Suhr	Women's Pole Vault

### OLYMPIC MEDALISTS AT THE 2015 RELAYS

Ashton Eaton	'12 Gold	Decathlon*
Kirani James	'12 Gold	Men's 400m
Renaud Lavillenie	'12 Gold	Men's PV
Aries Merritt	'12 Gold	Men's 110mH
Jenn Suhr	'12 Gold	Women's PV
LaShawn Merritt	'08 Gold	Men's 400m
Erik Kynard	'12 Silver	Men's HJ
Jason Richardson	'12 Silver	Men's 110mH
Yarisley Silva	'12 Silver	Women's PV
Derek Drouin	'12 Bronze	Men's HJ
Robbie Grabarz	'12 Bronze	Men's HJ
Hansle Parchment	'12 Bronze	Men's 110mH

\* Will compete in the shuttle hurdle relay



Olympic gold medalist. The pair will reprise that role this year in a 400-meter field that features seven of the top 10 ranked athletes in the world with Merritt and James being followed by the Nos. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10 400-meter runners.

The men's 110-meter hurdle field is similarly exceptional with seven of the top 10 in the world confirmed to step into the blocks. World No. 1 Pascal Martinot-Lagarde of France will be joined by the world's Nos. 3, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 hurdlers, in addition to world record holder Aries Merritt. World No. 3 Hansle Parchment will try to defend his 2014 Relays title against the star-studded field.

Many of those hurdlers will also participate in the always thrilling shuttle hurdle relay with three teams of four competing in the back-and-forth race along the Blue Oval straightaway. Currently, two teams of Americans – David Oliver, Aries Merritt, Ashton Eaton, Alec Harris and Ronnie Ash, Ryan Wilson, Spencer Adams, Jason Richardson – will line up against a team of Jamaicans in Parchment and Andrew Riley and French brothers Pascal and Thomas Martinot-Lagarde.

The men's high jump also returns to Hy-Vee Night at the Relays in an encore of last year's thrilling competition that saw Derek Drouin set a Drake Relays and Canadian national record by clearing 7-10.5. Challenging Drouin's attempts at repeating as Relays champion is a field that has five of the top 10 Americans slated to jump.

As the elite professional fields continue to come together, Brown has also bolstered the collegiate competition with commitments from Arizona, Arizona State, Oklahoma State and Texas Tech set to join the traditional lineup of collegiate programs inside Drake Stadium. Those teams will join the likes of Arkansas, Baylor, Nebraska, Georgia, Kansas, Illinois, Purdue, Ohio State and Wisconsin in competing for the Hy-Vee Cup, awarded to the top scoring team in the collegiate relay events. Baylor won the women's Hy-Vee Cup last season while Arkansas and Illinois shared the men's title.

All session tickets for the 2015 Drake Relays Presented by Hy-Vee are available at [www.DrakeRelays.org](http://www.DrakeRelays.org) or by calling the Drake Athletic Ticket Office at 515-271-3647. All-American and Gold ticket packages go on sale Feb. 26. Single-session tickets go on sale to the general public on March 26.

The Drake Relays sponsor, Hy-Vee, Inc., is an employee-owned corporation operating 235 retail stores across eight Midwestern states with sales of more than \$8.7 billion annually. Hy-Vee ranks among the top 25 supermarket chains and the top 50 private companies in the United States. Supermarket News, the authoritative voice of the food industry, has honored the company with a Whole Health Enterprise Award for its leadership in providing services and programs that promote a healthy lifestyle. For more information, visit [www.hy-vee.com](http://www.hy-vee.com).

## CONFIRMED FIELDS FOR THE 2015 RELAYS

### MEN'S 110-METER HURDLES

Name	World Ranking
Pascal Martinot-Lagarde (France)	1
Hansle Parchment (Jamaica)	3
Andrew Riley (Jamaica)	5
David Oliver (USA)	6
Ronnie Ash (USA)	7
William Sharman (Great Britain)	8
Ryan Wilson (USA)	9
Aries Merritt (USA)	

### MEN'S SHUTTLE HURDLE RELAY

Name	World Ranking
Pascal Martinot-Lagarde (France)	1
Hansle Parchment (Jamaica)	3
Andrew Riley (Jamaica)	5
Thomas Martinot-Lagarde (France)	

vs.

David Oliver (USA)	6
Aries Merritt (USA)	
Ashton Eaton (USA)	
Alec Harris (USA)	

vs.

Ronnie Ash (USA)	7
Ryan Wilson (USA)	9
Spencer Adams (USA)	
Jason Richardson (USA)	

### MEN'S 400 METERS

Name	World Ranking
LaShawn Merritt (USA)	1
Kirani James (Grenada)	2
Yousef Ahmed-Masrahi (Saudi Arabia)	4
Gil Roberts (USA)	5
Chris Brown (Bahamas)	7
Luguelin Santos (Dominican Rep.)	8
Tony McQuay (USA)	10

### MEN'S HIGH JUMP

Name	World Ranking
Derek Drouin (Canada)	4
Erik Kynard (USA)	5
Dusty Jonas (USA)	
Ricky Robertson (USA)	
Mickael Hanany (France)	
Mike Mason (Canada)	
Robbie Grabarz (Great Britain)	
Nick Ross (USA)	
James Harris (USA)	
Jesse Williams (USA)	
Trevor Barry (Bahamas)	

### MEN'S POLE VAULT

Name	World Ranking
Renaud Lavillenie (France) *	1
Mark Hollis (USA) *	7
Sam Kendricks (USA) *	
Brad Walker (USA) *	
Jack Whitt (USA)	
Valentin Lavillenie (France)	
Karsten Dilla (Germany)	

\* Will compete in the Court Avenue Street Vault

### MEN'S T44 200 METERS

Name	World Ranking
Richard Browne (USA)	WR Holder
Felix Streng (Germany)	
Jarryd Wallace (USA)	Former WR Holder
David Brown - T11 (USA)	T-11 WR Holder
Paul Peterson III (USA)	
Alex Tate (USA)	
Marko Cheseto - T43 (Kenya)	

### WOMEN'S 800 METERS

Name	World Ranking
Ajee Wilson (USA)	2
Brenda Martinez (USA)	3
Molly Beckwith Ludlow (USA)	10
Chanelle Price (USA)	
Maggie Vessey (USA)	
Morgan Uceny (USA)	
Heather Kampf (USA)	
Latavia Thomas (USA)	
Alysia Montano (USA)	
Phoebe Wright (USA)	

### WOMEN'S POLE VAULT

Name	World Ranking
Yarisley Silva (Cuba) *	2
Jenn Suhr (USA) *	3
Katerina Stefanidi (Greece) *	4
Becky Holliday (USA)	
Mary Saxer (USA) *	
Kylie Hutson (USA)	
Marion Fiack (France)	
Marion Lotout (France) *	
April Steiner-Bennett (USA)	

\* Will compete in the Court Avenue Street Vault