

Subject: Drake Relays Presented By Hy-Vee Adds More World Class Entries and Announces Hall of Fame Class

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Drake Relays Presented By Hy-Vee Adds More World Class Entries and Announces Hall of Fame Class

DES MOINES, Iowa – The Drake Relays Presented by Hy-Vee has bolstered its already stellar lineup with the addition of even more world-class athletes set to compete at Drake Stadium, Drake Relays director Brian Brown announced Wednesday, March 25.

The additions to the Drake Relays presented by Hy-Vee include 20 elite athletes currently ranked in the top 10 in the world in their respective events and eight that are Olympic medalists. Brown also announced that Chaunte Lowe, Brandon Coutts and legendary Iowa State coach Steve Lynn will be enshrined as members of the Drake Relays Hall of Fame.

Friday evening's Hy-Vee Night at the Drake Relays will continue the Drake Relays and Hy-Vee's rich history of bringing the central Iowa community together to showcase tremendous athletic events. Last season, the women's shuttle hurdle relay was one of the evening's fan favorites and 2015 will be no different as three teams comprised of seven of the best hurdlers in the world duel along the Drake Stadium homestretch.

One of the teams will feature four of the top 10 hurdlers in the world as Dawn Harper-Nelson, Queen Harrison, Brianna Rollins and Kristi Castlin join forces to race against Lolo Jones, Tiffany Porter, Jasmin Stowers and Sharika Nelson. Also joining the fray for the event's lucrative prize purse will be Jackie Coward, Raven Clay Finlay, Tenaya Jones and Christina Manning.

Many of those same standouts, including Des Moines native and Drake Relays great Lolo Jones will step into the blocks on Saturday for the women's 100-meter hurdles. The event is scheduled to feature the Nos. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8 and 9th ranked athletes in the event. In addition to Jones, the star-studded field features world No. 1, reigning USA Champion and two-time Olympic medalist Dawn Harper-Nelson. The 2015 Relays champion, Kristi Castlin, returns to

defend her title while Jasmin Stowers will make her professional Drake Relays debut after winning the USA Indoor Championship in the 60-meter hurdles.

With five of the top 10 men's 110-meter hurdlers in the world already committed to compete at the Relays, Brown added even more firepower to the Relays impressive hurdle lineup with 400-meter hurdle lineups that feature six athletes ranked in the top 10 and three Olympic medalists. The men's 400-meter hurdles is headlined by the world's Nos. 1 and 2 in Javier Culson and reigning Relays champion Michael Tinsley who narrowly edged Culson in last year's matchup. The lineup, that features five Olympians, also includes Johnny Dutch who finished third at the 2014 Relays and Kerron Clement, the 2008 Olympic silver medalist.

The women's 400-meter hurdles is equally impressive with three athletes ranked in the top 10 in the world including defending Relays champion Tiffany Ross Williams and last year's third-place finisher and 2012 Olympic silver medalist Lashinda Demus. Georganne Moline, who is ranked sixth in the world and finished second at the last two USA Championships, posted the second-fastest time by an American in 400-meter hurdles in 2014 while fellow Relays entrant Cassandra Tate recorded the third-fastest time of the season.

Pulling the hurdles off the Blue Oval sets the stage for another highly anticipated race with four of the world's top-10 scheduled to race in the women's 400 meters. World No. 1 Novlene Williams, a three-time Olympian, is joined by Francena McCorory and Sanya Richards-Ross to put the top three-ranked 400-meter athletes on the track. Richards-Ross is the reigning Olympic gold medalist in the event while McCorory teamed with Richards-Ross to earn an Olympic gold medal in the 2014 Olympic games.

Brown has also added athletes for a pair of field events with the world's top two men's triple jumpers and another competitive women's high jump lineup ready to entertain fans inside the oval. World No. 1 Christian Taylor and No. 2 Will Claye will add another chapter in their rivalry that extends back to their time as collegiate teammates. In 2012, Taylor won Olympic gold while Claye earned silver. At the 2014 USA Championships, the the roles were reversed. France's Teddy Tamgho, the current indoor world record holder, will also hit the runway with Taylor and Claye and is aiming to build upon his 2013 World Championship.

The women's high jump competition marks the return of three-time Olympian and World No. 2 Ruth Beitia to the Drake Relays to take on a field that also includes American record holder and Relays Hall of Famer to be Chaunte Lowe. Lowe won the event last year for the fourth time and will attempt to add a fifth title to her resume as she enters the Relays Hall of Fame.

The lineup includes another four-time Relays Champion in Amy Acuff ,who is returning to Drake Stadium this season. Acuff is a five-time Olympian and recently took second at the USA Indoor Championship behind Lowe.

Lowe and her two other Hall of Fame classmates will have the unique opportunity to be enshrined to the Drake Relays Hall of Fame inside Drake Stadium. Previously, the ceremony took place on the Drake campus. However, this season the Hall of Famers will be honored inside the venue that saw them rewrite history in front of many of the fans that will be in attendance.

Lowé earned the prestigious honor by virtue of her Relays titles in 2009, 2010, 2012 and 2014 in addition to her two indoor titles in 2006 and 2008. In 2010, she was named the Relays Most Outstanding Performer after winning the title with a Relays record clearance of 6-5. Two years later she shattered that record by clearing 6-6. She also set the American record at Drake Stadium by jumping 6-8.75 at the 2010 USA Championships. In international competition she is a three-time Olympian and has earned three World Championship medals. She is also a five time USA Outdoor Champion and a three-time indoor title holder.

Baylor's Brandon Coutts recorded some of the most impressive relay performances inside Drake Stadium and was named the Most Outstanding Performer in 1998 as a freshman. That year, he won the invitational 400 meters, anchored the winning 4x200 and 4x400-meter relays while taking the baton last in the Bears' second-place 4x100-meter relay. A year later, he anchored the winning 4x400-meter relay while finishing second in the 400 meters and in 2000 he led Baylor to its ninth-straight 4x400-meter title with a 44.2 split. Coutts was a 13-time All-American, a four-time NCAA Champion and a 15-time Big 12 Champion.

Steve Lynn, Iowa State's head coach from 1993-2007, enters the Hall of Fame posthumously as a legend not only at the Drake Relays, but the state of Iowa as well. Under his tutelage, Cyclone student-athletes captured 18 Drake Relays titles in nine different events. As an assistant, he guided Danny Harris to five Drake Relays titles in the 400-meter hurdles, three NCAA Championships and the 1984 Olympic silver medal. In 1993, he was named the Big Eight Coach of the Year and guided the Cyclones to three Big Eight titles. His student-athletes earned a total of 56 All-America honors under his leadership.

Single-session tickets for the 2015 Drake Relays presented by Hy-Vee go on sale to the general public on March 26 at 9 a.m. Single-session, all-session and multi-session tickets are available at www.DrakeRelays.org or by calling the Drake Athletic Ticket Office at 515-271-3647.

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.

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