

Subject: Drake Relays Presented By Hy-Vee Men's 400 Meters To Feature Six Of The Top 10 In The World
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Drake Relays Presented By Hy-Vee Men's 400 Meters To Feature Six Of The Top 10 In The World

DES MOINES, Iowa – Six of the top-10 400 meter runners in the world are set to grace the Blue Oval at the 107th Drake Relays presented by Hy-Vee, Relays director Brian Brown has announced.

The Rio Olympic Games Preview 400-meter field includes the Nos. 2, 3, 4, 8, 9 and 10 competitors in the world according to the 2015 *Track & Field News* rankings. Additionally, the lineup includes six Olympians, two Olympic gold medalists and a silver medalist.

Returning to Drake Stadium in 2016 in the 2008 Olympic gold medalist and 2015 World Championships silver medalist, LaShawn Merritt. Merritt finished the 2015 season ranked No. 2 in the world. His personal best of 43.65 ranks his sixth fastest in the history of the event.

2012 Olympic gold medalist Kirani James is also coming back to Des Moines to defend his 2015 Relays title that he earned with a Relays record time of 44.22. James finished 2015 ranked third in the world after claiming the World Championships bronze medal just behind Merritt. The Grenadian owns a personal best of 43.74 that ranks him eighth all-time in the event.

Finishing just behind Merritt and James at last summer's World Championships was Luguelin Santos in fourth. The native of the Dominican Republic will challenge those two again at the Relays after earning a No. 4 world ranking last season. Santos also finished just behind James at the 2012 Olympics to earn a silver medal.

Chris Brown, a three-time Olympian, has also earned a lane in the 2016 Drake Relays. Brown has finished one spot off the podium in each of the last two Olympics, but earned a gold medal in 2012 as part of the Bahamas' 4x400-meter relay team. He recently finished the 2015 season ranked eighth in the world.

Rabah Yousif was a 2012 Olympian for his native Sudan but has recently become a citizen of Great Britain, winning a bronze medal in the 4x400-meter relay at the 2015 World Championships for his new country. He was also a finalist in the 400 meters at the same World Championships and finished sixth to earn a final No. 9 world ranking.

Yousef Masrahi enters the outdoor season ranked No. 10 in the world with a personal best of 43.97. He was a 2012 Olympian representing Saudi Arabia.

Completing the initial field for the men's 400 meter Rio Olympic Games preview is American David Verburg. He has a pair of World Championship gold medals to his name as a member of the U.S.A's 4x400-meter relay team at the 2013 and 2015 World Championships.

Single-session tickets for the 2016 Drake Relays presented by Hy-Vee go on sale to the general public on March 24 at 9 a.m. All-session and multi-session tickets for the 2016 Drake Relays presented by Hy-Vee are currently available at www.DrakeRelays.org, www.DrakeTix.com or by calling the Drake Athletic Ticket Office at 515-271-3647.

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