

**MEDIA RELEASE**
DRAKE ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS

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CONTACT: Ty Patton, Drake Athletic Communications
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E-MAIL: ty.patton@drake.edu**HY-VEE TO BECOME THE PRESENTING SPONSOR OF THE DRAKE RELAYS***Drake Relays increases purses, adds Olympians, and expands road races with new sponsorship from Hy-Vee, Inc.***DES MOINES, Iowa** – Drake University announced today that Hy-Vee, Inc., will serve as the presenting sponsor of the Drake Relays in a partnership that promises to enhance and elevate the already sterling reputation of the Drake Relays.

“The Drake Relays is one of the crown jewels of track and field – an event that has transcended athletic competition to become a true community celebration,” says Randy Edeker, chairman, CEO and president of Hy-Vee, Inc. “Hy-Vee is thrilled to partner with Drake as the university builds on a proud tradition and ushers in an exciting new era for the Relays.”

Part of that exciting new era is more than half a million dollars in purse money for a field that currently features 16 medalists from the 2012 London Olympic Games and a world record holder already confirmed to compete at the Relays with more to potentially join the star-studded field at a later date. Those Olympians and professional athletes will compete in ‘London Rematches’ for a \$50,000 purse in the running events and a \$25,000 purse in the field events. The purses are the largest for an event in the United States and \$20,000 more than is offered by the Diamond League, the sport’s top professional circuit.

“Our relationship with Hy-Vee will further the legacy of the Drake Relays as never imagined before,” says Brian Brown, the Franklin P. Johnson Director of the Drake Relays. “The athletes and fans will be truly inspired by the level of competition at the Blue Oval for the 104th running of America’s Athletic Classic. I have never been this excited about the athletes that you will see compete at the Drake Relays this year.”

The Relays and those athletes, including 2012 Olympic gold medalists Aries Merritt, Felix Sanchez, Renaud Lavillenie, Jenn Suhr, and Brittney Reese, will be featured on ESPN2 with 90 minutes of action being broadcast to nearly 100 million homes in prime time.

In addition to the enhanced level of professional competition inside Drake Stadium, the partnership with Hy-Vee will also invigorate the Relays’ road races with \$120,000 in prize money awarded to the top finishers in the Wellmark Grand Blue Mile, 10-kilometer race, half marathon, and a new 6-kilometer race staged in conjunction with Character Counts in Iowa. The 6-kilometer distance is representative of Character Counts in Iowa’s Six Pillars of Character – Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring and Citizenship. Character Counts in Iowa will receive a portion of the proceeds from the 6-kilometer race.

“The new Hy-Vee road races will take new prominence with a finish in the stadium on Sunday and prizes like we’ve never seen before,” Brown said. “This will be a Drake Relays that you do not want to miss.”

Those road races will continue the Drake Relays and Hy-Vee’s long-time support and commitment to health and athletics and ensure that the Relays remain an integral part of the Des Moines community.

“There’s no better partner than Hy-Vee to help take the Drake Relays to a place of extraordinary greatness and success,” says Drake Director of Athletic Sandy Hatfield Clubb. “Our shared commitment to excellence and the health and vitality of our community makes this a perfect partnership.”

Hy-Vee’s sponsorship of the Drake Relays is one of many examples of the company’s long-standing relationship with Drake University, which includes a \$300,000 gift this past July to create the Hy-Vee Student Learning Commons in the Morgan E. Cline Atrium for Pharmacy and Science.

“We are extremely grateful to Hy-Vee for their generosity and commitment in helping to take the Drake Relays to the next level,” says Drake University President David Maxwell. “The Relays have enjoyed the support and engagement of the Des Moines community; Hy-Vee has taken a giant step in making it a truly collaborative undertaking. We look forward to our strengthened partnership, which will ensure that the Relays continue to be one of the world’s premier track and field events.”

The 104th installment of what promises to be one of the greatest Drake Relays in its storied history is scheduled for April 24-27 at Drake Stadium.

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2012 OLYMPIANS CONFIRMED TO COMPETE AT THE 2013 DRAKE RELAYS

18 Olympians and 16 medalists are already lined up to compete in April.

MEN'S 400 METERS

The men's 400-meter field currently features the 2012 Olympic silver and bronze medalists, as well as the inspiring Oscar Pistorious.

Luguelin Santos – Silver Medalist

A native of the Dominican Republic, Santos earned a silver medal in the 400 meters at the London Olympics at the age of 18 with a time of 44.46 for a near personal best. He was also a World Junior Champion in 2012, the first ever for his country, and has the potential to become just the second non-American to break the 44-second mark in the event.

Lalonde Gordon – Bronze Medalist

Gordon took home a bronze medal in the event for his native Trinidad & Tobago at the London games with a personal best of 44.52 and also earned a bronze medal as a member of Trinidad & Tobago's 4x400-meter relay team.

Oscar Pistorious – Finalist

While he did not medal at the London Olympics, Pistorious was one of the Olympiad's biggest stories as the South African double-amputee made the finals of the 400 meters on his prosthetic legs as the first amputee runner to even compete in the Olympics.

MEN'S 110-METER HURDLES

The men's 110-meter hurdles will be a complete rematch of the London Olympics with the gold, silver and bronze medalists all confirmed to compete at the Drake Relays.

Aries Merritt – Gold Medalist

The American won his first Olympic gold medal in the event at the London Games and followed that performance by setting the world record at 12.80 a month later in Brussels. His world record effort saw the biggest drop in the event's record in more than 30 years.

Jason Richardson – Silver Medalist

Richardson finished just 0.12 behind his fellow American to win a silver medal at the 2012 Olympics after winning the 2011 World Championship in the event.

Hansle Parchment – Bronze Medalist

The Jamaican national record holder in the event, Parchment earned a bronze medal with his record-setting time of 13.12 in the event.

Men's 400-Meter Hurdles

Another complete London re-match with the London Games' gold, silver and bronze winner all confirmed to race on the Blue Oval.

Felix Sanchez – Gold Medalist

A two-time gold medalist, Sanchez recently won the gold in London after accomplishing the same feat at the 2004 Olympics. The native of the Dominican Republic is also a two-time world champion in the event and has consistently been one of the most dominant hurdlers in the world for nearly a decade.

Michael Tinsley – Silver Medalist

Tinsley set personal bests at every step along the way to his silver medal in 2012. The American set a personal best at the Olympic trials, the semifinals and finally in his silver medal run. He is no stranger to Drake Stadium having finished third at the 2010 USATF Championships in Des Moines.

Javier Culson – Bronze Medalist

Culson earned a bronze medal at the 2012 Olympics after earning a silver medal in the previous two World Championships. His Olympic bronze medal was the first track and field medal ever for Puerto Rico.

MEN'S POLE VAULT

The men's pole vault field includes both the gold and silver medalists from the 2012 Olympics. Both of them have cleared 19-8 and will compete at both the Pole Vault at the Mall and at Drake Stadium.

Renaud Lavillenie – Gold Medalist

Lavillenie set a new Olympic record with his vault of 19-7 to take home the gold medal at the 2012 Olympics. A four-time European Champion, the native of France also has an indoor World Championship gold medal and a pair of outdoor World Championship bronze medals to his credit.

Bjorn Otto – Silver Medalist

Otto finished just behind Lavillenie for his first silver medal in the event just months after winning silver at the indoor World Championships. He capped his outdoor season by jumping a personal best of 19-8.5.

MEN'S TRIPLE JUMP

The triple jump will feature a familiar face at Drake Stadium who recently earned a silver medal in the event.

Will Claye – Silver Medalist

Claye earned a silver medal in the triple jump and a bronze in the long jump at his first Olympics in 2012 after winning a bronze in the triple jump at the 2011 World Championships. The former collegiate star at the University of Florida also posted a second-place finish in the triple jump at the 2011 NCAA Championships at Drake Stadium.

WOMEN'S 100-METER HURDLES

The women's 100-meter hurdles features two Americans that won silver and bronze at the 2012 Olympics.

Dawn Harper – Silver Medalist

Harper is a two-time American Olympic medalist with a silver medal in the 100-meter hurdles in 2012 with a personal best of 12.37 after winning gold at the 2008 Beijing games. In 2011 she was the bronze medalist in the event at the World Championships.

Kelly Wells – Bronze Medalist

Wells finished just behind Harper to earn the 100-meter bronze medal at the 2012 Olympics with a personal best of 12.48 after winning the 2011 USATF outdoor championships in the event. In 2010 she was the runner-up in the 100-meter hurdles at the USATF Championships at Drake Stadium.

WOMEN'S POLE VAULT

Reigning Olympic gold medalist and 2012 Drake Relays champion Jenn Suhr reprises her appearance in Des Moines.

Jenn Suhr – Gold Medalist

Suhr is a two-time Olympic medalist having won gold last summer after taking home bronze in 2008 and is the current American indoor and outdoor record holder in the event. She is also an 11-time national champion and last season set the Drake Relays record in the event at 15-7 in the Pole Vault and Mall to just narrowly miss the setting her own American indoor record in the event.

Becky Holliday – Olympic Finalist

Holliday advanced to the Olympic finals in London where she finished ninth in the field with the second-best American finish. A seven-time USATF Championships medalist, she won silver in the 2012 and the 2010 event at Drake Stadium where she set her personal best of 15-1.



WOMEN'S LONG JUMP

The women's long jump field is scheduled to feature a pair of Americans that medaled at the 2012 Olympics.

Brittney Reese – Gold Medalist

In addition to winning a gold medal in the long jump at the 2012 Olympics, Reese is a four-time world champion in the event and the American indoor record holder and the first woman to win back-to-back indoor world championships and continued her string of winning every major championship in the event since 2009.

Janay DeLoach – Bronze Medalist

DeLoach is currently ranked second in the world after winning a bronze medal at the 2012 Olympics after winning a silver medal at the 2012 indoor world championships. She is also a two-time USA indoor champion and was the 2011 outdoor runner-up.

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