



2012

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Irish Indoor Athletics Championships

Featuring Phoenix "Olympic Flames"
Age Group Championships
17th - 18th February

News Release

12th December 2006

IRISH INDOOR ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIP 2007

In Conjunction with Sports Council NI & Belfast City Council

WORLD CHAMPION O'ROURKE TO COMPETE IN ODYSSEY ARENA BELFAST

The Northern Ireland Athletic Federation (NIAF) and the Athletic Association of Ireland (AAI) are pleased to announce that World Indoors Hurdles Champion and European Silver medallist **DERVAL O'ROURKE** from Cork will be defending her Irish title at the Odyssey Arena next February.

This is the fourth Indoor meeting in the North which has made possible by the generous assistance of the Sports Council for NI, Belfast City Council and Phoenix Gas.

In the world Indoor Championships in Moscow last March, **O'ROURKE** created a major upset to become the first Irish female ever to win an Indoors title- something which fellow Cork woman and multi Irish record holder Sonia O'Sullivan never managed to achieve. During a memorable weekend she broke the Irish 60 metre hurdles record twice to defeat Spain's Olympic silver medallist **GLORY ALOZIE** in a world class time of 7.84 seconds.



www.indoorathletics2007.co.uk

O'ROURKE used her ferocious speed and attacking power to overcome taller and better known opponents including World number one Susanna **KALLUR** of Sweden who finished third.

DERVAL, who works as a sports administrator at Dublin City University attributed her success to long standing coach Jim Kilty, who along with Sean Cahill managed to get her to Moscow in top physical condition. They were convinced that her winter indoor form, with a string of wins throughout Europe had shown that victory at World level was a distinct possibility. One notable performance prior to Moscow was at the Odyssey Arena a month earlier where she defeated World Outdoor Silver medallist **DELLOREEN ENNIS LONDON** of Jamaica in a time of 7.90 seconds which smashed the Irish Record.

Following the fame which incidentally follows from winning a World title, **O'ROURKE** was abruptly brought down to earth when she picked up a potentially serious groin injury in preparation for the European Championships in Gothenburg in August. However her fierce self determination to overcome the loss of some 7 weeks training was helped by physiotherapy guru Gerard Hartman. The end result was an inspired performance against all odds which produced a silver medal in yet another Irish record of 11.72 seconds behind arch rival **KALLUR** of Sweden- the girl she defeated in Moscow.

O'ROURKE'S plans for the future include the EAA Indoors in Birmingham in March and next Augusts' World championships in Osaka Japan.

Also competing at the Odyssey will be Irish International **GARETH TURNBULL** who will be competing over 1500 metres, possibly against reigning champion **JAMES NOLAN**. **TURNBULL** was of course recently cleared of a doping charge.

Other top local names include Irish 400 metres record holder and World Indoors finalist **PAUL MC KEE** plus European Youth 100 metres Silver medallist **AMY FOSTER** of North Down.



The event also incorporates the

Championships and also a 'See' www.indoorathletics2007.co.uk

children from across the province participating in a number of events. In the build up to the Olympics we are actively targeting the next generation of school children and providing with them as much support as possible.

Northern Ireland Sports Council Vice-Chairman **Gerry Carson** stated:

"We are delighted to be a sponsor in this International event as it overlaps with our key objectives. Firstly it enhances the image of sport in Northern Ireland. It helps raise the international profile of Northern Ireland and attract world-class athletes, benefiting our local athletes, our local sports systems and the social, economic and political infrastructure. Secondly it is an aid of promoting excellence amongst athletes in a variety of sports."

Funding partners includes the Belfast City Council. Former Lord Mayor, Cllr Jim Rodgers:

"Belfast City Council is committed to attracting and staging top international and world class events. The International Indoor Athletics has met the criteria of the Support for Sport Fund in that it will provide local athletes the opportunity to compete on an international level as well as showcase Belfast as a 'City of Sport' "

Commenting, Richard Rodgers, Business Development Director for Phoenix said:

'Phoenix has now been operating for ten years in Northern Ireland and has grown from zero to over 100,000 natural gas consumers. Many of the competitors in the weekend's under-age athletics competitions have grown up from infancy during the same period and Phoenix is delighted to play its part in supporting this competition for talented local athletes, many of whom are aspiring to compete in the Olympic Games in London in 2012.



Also launched today is a dedicated Indoors 2007 website, which will provide all competitors and spectators information on the event, including the schedule, entry forms, athlete profiles, photo gallery and a chance to enter a competition. Visit www.indoorathletics2007.co.uk

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. The Odyssey Arena will once again be transformed into a showcase for top class athletics for the biggest event in the Irish Indoor Athletics calendar, with competition for places on the Irish Team for the European Indoor Championships, Birmingham.
2. Tickets are on sale now and are available from Ticketmaster or the Odyssey website.
Odyssey Box Office Tel: 028 9073 9074;
Book online: www.odysseyarena.com
Information Tel: NIAF: 028 9060 2707 **or visit new dedicated website which will go live on Wednesday 13th: www.indoorathletics2007.co.uk**
3. **Tickets: From** Adults £8.50, Concession £5.50;
Special Offers - Family Tickets & Groups

www.indoorathletics2007.co.uk

