



NEWS RELEASE

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ISTAF INDOOR: World's biggest indoor Athletics Spectacle with Stars and Innovations in Berlin

BERLIN. The spectacular ISTAF INDOOR meeting on Friday evening in Berlin sets the international indoor athletics season in motion. Close to 12,000 tickets have been sold for the ISTAF INDOOR, by far the biggest indoor meeting in the world. Spectators in the Mercedes-Benz Arena will see Olympic champions, World and European gold medallists in action framed by thrilling contests and innovative features. The men's pole vault is likely to be a thriller once again with the Olympic champion Thiago Braz da Silva from Brazil, world champion Sam Kendricks from the USA and last year's winner Piotr Lisek from Poland in the line-up. As for the sprints, Britain's European 100m silver medallist Reece Prescod runs the men's 60m and local favourite Gina Lückenkemper competes in the women's event. Regarding innovation, men and women will compete against each other in discus throwing for the first time. Olympic champion Christoph Harting will be on the men's team.

"The ISTAF INDOOR will once again offer an evening of spectacular sport. Spectators can look forward to seven events packed with star talents while the athletes relish the unique atmosphere which Berlin provides," said the meeting director Martin Seeber. Another innovation of the sixth edition of the ISTAF INDOOR will be a Fan Zone in the Arena where spectators can meet athletes throughout the evening. "ISTAF INDOOR is all about getting right up close to top-class sport. We want to break down the distance between athletes and fans, making stars and role models in track and field accessible," explained Martin Seeber.

In the discus a team of four men will directly compete against a women's quartet. Whoever throws further scores double points (2 for the winner, 1 for the loser) – and the winning team is the one with most points at the end. Three members of the men's team have already triumphed at the ISTAF INDOOR: the German duo of Christoph Harting, who won in 2017, and Martin Wierig, the meeting record holder, who won with 64.82m in 2014 and last year's winner Lukas Weißhaidinger from Austria.

Three of the top four in the 2018 European Championships will compete for the women's team: Nadine Müller, silver medallist, Shanice Craft, bronze medallist, and Claudine Vita, fourth place, all from Germany.

Four world-class sprinters who have run under 10 seconds will compete at the ISTAF INDOOR, including the Italian 100m record holder Filippo Tortu (9.99). The absolute favourite should be Britain's European silver medallist Reece Prescod (9.96).





Whatever the outcome, the 60m races should prove an emotional moment for two German competitors: after falling badly in the 4x100m final in front of their home crowd at the 2018 European Championships, Julian Reus and Lucas Jakubczyk will be making their Berlin comeback on the big stage at the ISTAF INDOOR.

Germany's sprint star Gina Lückenkemper starts the New Year with a fresh boost of energy - and with a new club since this will be her debut for SCC Berlin. Her big targets this year are the World Relays in Yokohama in May and the World Championships in Qatar in autumn. She isn't planning a full indoor season but she would never miss her favourite meeting. "ISTAF INDOOR is a unique experience. The fans are exceptional so I was always going to be here. I'm fit and have worked on my starts in particular," said Lückenkemper, who will meet the British 4x100m European champion Bianca Williams among her rivals.

Gold, silver and bronze – the complete set of medallists from the 2018 European Championships will be lining up for the women's 60m hurdles. The German hurdling aces Pamela Dutkiewicz (silver medallist) and Cindy Roleder (bronze) will compete against the Belarussian Champion Elvira Herman. On the men's side the European outdoor champion Pascal Martinot-Lagarde from France should be a strong contender as well as Balázs Baji. The Hungarian won the 2017 ISTAF INDOOR and finished runner-up last year. The German champion Gregor Traber, having run 7.69 indoors this year is already in good form at this early stage of the season.

The men's pole vault once again has a strong field including three who have cleared 6 metres: the reigning World champion Sam Kendricks from the USA as well as the Olympic gold medallist Thiago Braz da Silva from Brazil and last year's winner Piotr Lisek from Poland.

The women's long jump renews the rivalry between Germany's Malaika Mihambo, who won gold last year at the European Championships in Berlin, and her predecessor as champion, Ivana Španović. The Serb was unable to defend the title she won in 2016 after sustaining an injury in the qualifying round in Berlin. Also the European silver medallist Maryna Bech from the Ukraine and Sosthene Moguenara from Germany should not be underestimated.

Live information and social media services will be available from Friday evening on at: www.istaf-indoor.de (Livestream: www.sportschau.de).

If you would like further information about the ISTAF INDOOR, logos and picture material or have questions concerning this press release, please contact:

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