

Live athletics event at Weltklasse level on Thursday, 9 July 2020

Weltklasse Zürich Inspiration Games: 30 top stars to compete in eight events at seven arenas

Zurich, 9 June 2020 –The OneMillionRun on 30 and 31 May marked the beginning of the Weltklasse Zürich Inspiration Series. People all over Switzerland ran more than one million kilometres within 48 hours. On 9 July, the athletics community is in for a live athletics treat at Weltklasse level: At the Weltklasse Zürich Inspiration Games, a Wanda Diamond League exhibition event, 30 top stars will – simultaneously – compete in eight disciplines – at seven venues. The 90-minute event will be produced by SRG SSR and broadcast live in three Swiss language areas and worldwide.

Restrictions due to measures against the Coronavirus pandemic have been eased recently, and athletics in Switzerland is starting to get back on track. Yet, international stadium events on the highest level will not be possible for a while. The Wanda Diamond League finals, a three-day highlight initially planned for this September, have been rescheduled for 2021 and 2022. Weltklasse Zürich does not want to keep athletes and fans waiting that long: "We would like to present a live event at Weltklasse Zürich level even this year. Therefore, we have been looking for creative ideas and working on new formats," explains Co-Meeting Director Christoph Joho.

Innovative TV format

In their Weltklasse Zürich Inspiration Games, the Zurich promoters bring the world's best athletes together in a virtual event and a high-level, emotional team competition. The novel format, developed in cooperation with representatives of World Athletics, the Wanda Diamond League, SRG SSR (broadcaster), and Swiss Timing (timekeeping), will showcase a traditional sport in an innovative fashion. The TV coverage will be produced by SRG SSR and broadcast in the three language areas of Switzerland and worldwide.

Stellar line-ups in the three-way competitions

Viewers are in for an exciting athletics show on Thursday, 9 July. The 90-minute live experience at Weltklasse level during prime time will include eight three-way competitions with stellar line-ups. A Wanda Diamond League exhibition event, the Inspiration Games will be a competition between Europe, America, and the rest of the world. Three stars per event will compete in various arenas in their respective region. Some of the events are unusual: There will be a women's 150m race, for instance. The entry list includes Shaunae Miller-Uibo (BAH), 400m Olympic champion and 200m Diamond League champion, Allyson Felix (USA), a six-time Olympic champion, and Switzerland's fastest sprinter of all times and 200m world championship bronze medallist, Mujinga Kambundji (SUI). Kambundji will run in Zurich, Felix in California and Miller-Uibo in Florida.

Inspiring role models

The three top sprinters are exemplary for the Weltklasse Zürich Inspiration Games, the second event of Weltklasse Zürich's Inspiration Series. The first was the successful OneMillionRun at the end of May, in which more than 80 000 Swiss residents decided to get moving again. "Both projects are about sending a positive message and overcoming obstacles," says Co-Meeting Director Andreas Hediger, throwing a bridge between sporting Switzerland and global athletics. According to him, both national and international sports stars play an important part as inspiring role models. "Stars can show young talents where their road could lead if they never stop trying to get even better, if they pursue their dreams, and if they believe in themselves." The national programme of events will therefore be a platform for young athletes who are on their way to international athletics stardom. They get to compete in the basic skills of running, jumping, and throwing – and to face top stars of other sports. With this initiative, Weltklasse Zürich continues its ambition to inspire on all levels and to promote athletics.

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Weltklasse Zürich Inspiration Games

Quotes

Sebastian Coe, President World Athletics

"We have seen some inspiring and creative initiatives across our sport during this pandemic to keep athletics front of mind and to motivate people to either try our sport or continue to participate in it. What is particularly encouraging are the numbers of people who have done more exercise, particularly running and walking, during the various lockdown periods in their countries and we want our athletes, our events and initiatives like «Weltklasse Zurich Inspiration Series» to motivate all these people to continue to work on their health and their fitness and become a part of our great sport. The results of the OneMillionRun at the end of May speak for themselves and show the enthusiasm of people to participate. I am quite sure the ambitious and creative «Weltklasse Zurich Inspiration Games» on 9 July will be equally successful and wish the organisers and all the athletes participating the very best of luck."

Roland Maergerle, head business unit sport at SRG

"To synchronize up to three locations per discipline for the TV audience is a great technical challenge. We are delighted to be actively involved in this Swiss innovation project and to be able to offer athletics fans an exceptional sporting experience."

Alain Zobrist, CEO Swiss Timing

"Swiss Timing will provide four stadiums with synchronized timing systems that will generate real-time data during the competitions and broadcast the results directly on TV. In particular, the latest transmission technologies will be used, which will be controlled centrally from Zurich. This is a great innovation for athletics and we are very happy to take on this technical challenge. We are looking forward to working with the teams of Weltklasse Zurich and Swiss Television in order to offer the athletes an opportunity to compete at an international level."

Allyson Felix, most successful athlete at athletics world championships

"Weltklasse Zurich always holds such a special place in my heart so it's unfortunate that there will be no Wanda Diamond League Final there this year, but of course safety is the top priority. This new format will hopefully give the fans something fun to look forward to it during a time that has been really difficult for everyone."

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Facts & Figures

Date: Thursday, 9 July 2020

National programme: 2pm – 4pm

Three-way competitions featuring the Swiss athletics talents and stars representing other sports

Main programm 8pm – 9.30pm (CET) – live-TV

Main venue: Letzigrund Stadium, Zurich

Additional venues: USA 1: California / USA 2: Florida / USA 3: New York / Portugal: Lisbon / Netherlands: Papendal
1 additional venue tba

Events and entry list (status: 09.06.2020)

Women

discipline	athlet	nat.	team	
150 m	Allyson Felix	USA	NA	Most decorated female athlete at World Champs
	Mujinga Kambundji	SUI	E	World Champ Bronze 200m 2019
	Shaunea Miller-Uibo	BAH	W	Olympic Champion 400m 2016 / DL winner 200m 2019

300 m h	Dalilah Muhammad	USA	NA	World record holder & World Champ 400m h 2019
	Lea Sprunger	SUI	E	European Champion 400m h 2018
	tba		W	

3 x 100 m	Niederlande	NED	W	Incl. Dafne Schippers
	Schweiz	SUI	E	Incl. Mujinga Kambundji, Ajla Del Ponte
	USA	USA	NA	Incl. Allyson Felix

pole vault	Sandi Morris	USA	NA	World Indoor Champion 2018 / 2nd Olympic Games 2016
	Ekaterini Stefanidi	GRE	E	Olympic Champion 2016 & European Champion 2018
	tba		W	

Men

discipline	athlet	nat.	team	
100 yards	André De Grasse	CAN	NA	Multiple World Champs and Olympic Games medallist
	Omar McLeod	JAM	W	Olympic Champion 110m hurdles 2016
	Jimmy Vicault	FRA	E	European Record holder 100m

200 m	Noah Lyles	USA	NA	World Champion 200m 2019
	Alex Wilson	SUI	E	European Bronze 200m 2018
	tba		W	

triple jump	Omar Craddock	USA	NA	3rd Worldlist 2019
	Pedro Pablo Pichardo	POR	E	Multiple World Champs medallist
	Christian Taylor	USA	W	World Champion 2019

4th discipline men tba

W = Team World / NA = Team North America / E = Team Europe

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