

Press release

26 Olympic and world champions lined-up at Athletissima

With 13 Olympic champions from Rio 2016 and 13 reigning world champions from the 2015 world championships confirmed, this year's edition of Athletissima should be another one to remember. Icing on the cake: 4 of the 17 events - 400m men, 800m women, 400m hurdles women and high jump - of the main programme will feature the top-3 of the Rio Games.

Van Niekerk, Taylor and Lavillenie

The South African **Wayde Van Niekerk** will be one of the star athletes of the evening. The world record holder, world and Olympic champion will run his first 400m in Europe this season. Considering his great performances in the 200m this season so far, including his world leading time of 19.84, everyone will be excited to see him run in the 400m.

Another athlete who has already shown how fit he is in 2017 is the reigning world and Olympic champion **Christian Taylor**, who has jumped beyond the 18m mark this year. He had already jumped over 18m when he won the event at Athletissima in 2015. He may very well jump this far again, especially if pushed by **Will Claye (USA)** and **Pedro Pablo Pichardo (CUB)**.

In the 1500m, a great head-to-head can be expected between the Olympic champion **Matthew Centrowitz (USA)** and the world champion **Asbel Kiprop (KEN)**. The same goes for men's pole vault, where the world record holder **Renaud Lavillenie (FRA)**, Rio bronze medalist **Sam Kendricks (USA)**, reigning world champion **Shawn Barber (CAN)** and the rising star from Sweden **Armand Duplantis**, who currently holds the world lead at the age of just 18. In the shot put, all eyes will be on the impressive **Ryan Crouser**, who has already thrown the 7.25kg four times beyond 22m.

Last but not least, in the 100m, the runner-up at the world championships and the Olympic Games **Justin Gatlin (USA)** and **Asafa Powell (JAM)**, 4-time winner on the Pontaise track, will face the very fast South African **Akani Simbine**, who has already clocked 6 sub 10 second times this year. This race will also feature **Alex Wilson**, the Swiss national record holder in the 100m and 200m.



Among the many other Swiss who will be present, the performances of **Kariem Hussein** on 400 m hurdles as well as **Julien Wanders**, who will try to get the qualifying standards for the world championships in the 5000 m will be interesting to follow. This last will be facing quite a field of African runners led by the Ethiopian **Yomif Keigelcha**, second world fastest in 2017 with a time just above 13 minutes, a barrier that he hopes to break in Lausanne.

Top notch women's plateau

The women's events will be just as attractive. The 400 m hurdles will be very exciting as the three medallists from Rio - **Dalilah Muhammad (USA)**, **Sara Slott Petersen (DEN)** and **Ashley Spencer (USA)** - will be on the start line. With the double world champion **Zuzana Hejnova (CZE)** also present, this event will very probably be one of the high points of the meeting.

In the 800 m, the winning trio from Rio - **Caster Semenya (RSA)**, **Francine Niyonsaba (BDI)** and **Margaret Wambui (KEN)** - will have the opportunity to show their supremacy in the event.

In the 200 m, everyone will be eagerly awaiting the encounter between the reigning world champion **Dafne Schippers (NED)** and **Tori Bowie (USA)**, the fastest this season.

The Swiss **Lea Sprunger**, **Selina Büchel** and **Mujinga Kambundji**, who will feature in the line-up of the three above races, will have a good opportunity to highlight their ambitions on an international level.

Another event to look forward to is in the long jump with the Olympic and world champion **Tianna Bartoletta (USA)** facing off against the indoor and outdoor European champion **Ivana Spanovic (SRB)**. In the javelin throw, the Olympic champion **Sara Kolak (CRO)** and **Tatsiana Khaladovich (BLR)** should logically be able to outthrow their rivals.

In another category, **Genzebe Dibaba**, world champion and world record holder of outdoor 1500 m, as well as on 4 indoor distances including the mile, will be without a doubt the favourite on this distance (1609 m). This race will be run for the second time only in Lausanne 25 years after its first appearance in the meeting.

Finally, in the high jump, the world champion **Mariya Lasitskene** born Kuchina (**ANA**), has very recently jumped the best world performance in 5 years (2,04 m) before failing to break the world record. She will obviously be the favourite even though **Ruth Beitia (ESP)**, winner in Rio will also be participating.