



NEWS RELEASE

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**MORE OLYMPIANS JOIN USAIN BOLT
AT UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO'S FESTIVAL OF EXCELLENCE**

The University of Toronto today confirmed that Canadian hurdlers Perdita Felicien and Priscilla Lopes-Schliep as well as decathlete Bryan Clay, known as the “world’s greatest athlete,” will join Usain Bolt at the Festival of Excellence on June 11th.

The Festival of Excellence, which will be broadcast live nationally on TSN, is a world-class track and field meet that brings together an impressive cadre of athletes to compete at Varsity Centre’s state-of-the-art facilities.

Priscilla Lopes-Schliep captured a bronze medal in 100mH at the 2008 Summer Olympics. It was the first medal for Canada in athletics at the Summer Olympics since the 1996 Games, and the first for a Canadian woman in Olympic track and field since the 1992 Games. Lopes-Schliep also won gold in the 100mH and bronze in the 100m at the 2008 Canadian track and field championships, and pulled off several top finishes at events around the globe last year.

Two-time world champion and seven-time Canadian champion Perdita Felicien became Canada’s first-ever female world gold medalist when she won the 100mH final at the 2003 world championships in Paris, France. She set a Canadian record in 2004, defeating three-time hurdles world champion Gail Devers in 60mH at the 2004 IAAF world indoor championships. She also took silver in the 100mH at the 2007 world championships. Down with an injury for the 2008 Olympics, Felicien was a guest commentator with CBC.

Bryan Clay is the reigning Olympic decathlon champion, having won gold at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. Clay won by an amazing 240-point margin, the largest since 1972, to finish with 8,791 points and claim the title of “world’s greatest athlete.” Clay also won the silver medal at the 2004 Olympics, gold at the 2005 world championships and finished first in heptathlon at the 2008 world indoor champions. Clay was ranked number one in the world in 2005, 2006 and 2008.

Key events for the Festival of Excellence include 800m women (wheelchair), pole vault (triathlon), high jump women, pole vault women, high jump men, 400m women, 400m men, 110mH (triathlon), mile men, 800m men, mile women, 400m men (triathlon), 100mH women and 100m men.

“The roster of athletes slated to compete at this event is just outstanding,” says Liz Hoffman, U of T’s director of athletics. “The Festival of Excellence promises to be an incredibly exciting day of world-class competition.”

The Festival of Excellence is part of a series of track and field events celebrating Varsity Centre’s IAAF-certified track and the new throws area that makes its debut in June. Other key events include the OFSAA track and field championships, Ontario’s biggest high school athletics event, which takes place June 4-6, and the 2009 Canadian senior track and field championships June 25-28.

The breadth of this summer’s line-up reflects U of T’s playground-to-podium philosophy, which fosters long-term development for all students and athletes, from the elementary school student to the international competitor. The playground-to-podium model extends to the proposed Goldring Centre for High Performance Sport, which when complete will feature a world-class sport medicine clinic, sport science research and teaching labs, and the 2,000-seat Kimel Family Field House for basketball and volleyball. The Goldring Centre will serve as a major nexus for innovation in sports science research, sports medicine and the training of coaches.

Tickets for the Festival of Excellence are available through www.ticketbreak.com.

The University of Toronto has three campuses and is one of the world’s greatest public research universities, committed to offering its students outstanding academic and non-academic opportunities. The Faculty of Physical Education and Health offers three degree programs – BPHE, MSc and PhD – while providing recreation, instruction, intramural and intercollegiate programs for U of T students. The Faculty also aims to build Ontario’s capacity for high performance sport through its plans for the Goldring Centre for High Performance Sport, an integrated research, teaching, training and competition centre of excellence adjacent to Varsity Centre at Bloor St. and Devonshire Place. For more information, visit www.physical.utoronto.ca.

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EVENT INFO:

www.varsityblues.ca/festivalofexcellence

TICKET INFO:

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tickets@festivalofexcellence.ca