



## MEDIA NEWS

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# World Class Athletics in Berlin: 78<sup>th</sup> Edition of ISTAF – Dress Rehearsal for the World Championships

BERLIN. World Championships feeling in Berlin – and not only because of the high temperatures in the capital city! Four weeks before the World Championships in Doha, the ISTAF will be the final acid test for Germany's athletics stars and top athletes from around the world this Sunday, September 1. In just one afternoon almost 200 world class sportsmen and -women will compete in 16 events, each of these disciplines peppered with world-class athletes. More than 37,000 tickets have already been sold.

Among the stars will be Germany's fastest woman sprinter, **Gina Lückenkemper** (100 m), the world's best javelin throwers around Olympic Champion **Thomas Röhler** and World Champion **Johannes Vetter**. Germany's world-class long jumper **Malaika Mihambo** competes against five other women who have also cleared the seven metres. Germany's European steeplechase champion **Gesa Krause** runs the 2,000m 'chase at ISTAF and her compatriot **Mateusz Przybylko** (High Jump) also competes as well as the women's European 100m hurdles champion **Elvira Herman** from Belarus and Lithuania's World Champion in the discus, **Andrius Gudžius**, who wants to challenge the Olympic Champion and home favourite **Christoph Harting**. In the men's 110m hurdles the German Champion Gregor Traber will be facing world class competitors including the European Champion **Pascal Martinot-Lagarde** from France.

The top trio in men's pole vaulting will be in action: the World Champion **Sam Kendricks** from the USA faces the European gold medallist **Armand Duplantis** from Sweden and Poland's record holder **Piotr Lisek**. The then 19-year-old Duplantis jumped into the hearts of the spectators at the 2018 European Championships when the Swedish shooting star won the title with a European Championships and U-20 World record of 6.05m ahead of Timur Morgunov, who cleared 6.00m. Only three men have cleared this height in 2019: Sam Kendricks with 6.06m, Piotr Lisek, in breaking the Polish record with 6.02m and Duplantis with 6.00m.

The ISTAF meeting director Martin Seeber summed up the sporting delights on offer: "In just one afternoon we shall be offering fans top drawer athletics and the best Germans against top performers from around the world. Spectators can experience 16 world class contests. The qualifying period for the World Championships ends a few days after the ISTAF. Many stars are going to give their everything one more time, for some of the athletes the ISTAF will perhaps be their last chance to jump on board of the train going to the World Championships. The weather obviously also does its tint. With Berlin's fantastic fans we want to turn the 78<sup>th</sup> edition of ISTAF into a World Championships turbo-charger for the athletes."





**“This is exactly the right thing to travel to the World Championships with a due portion of tailwind”**

Gina Lückenkemper is among the many who are looking forward to ISTAF: “A great meeting in a great stadium – with fans who create a terrific atmosphere. This is exactly the right thing to travel to the World Championships with a due portion of tailwind. I’m in good shape and delighted that I can run in two events at ISTAF – the 100 metres and the relay at the end. That will be the perfect acid test for me.”

Olympic Champion Thomas Röhler, who celebrated his European Championships title in Berlin last year with a spontaneous jump into the water ditch, also has a special relationship to the largest German athletics meeting and the Olympic Stadium: "The ISTAF and the Olympic Stadium are a special place for me. For the first time I experienced it as a U18 triple jumper. Back then, I won a medal that is particularly important to me. I love coming back here every single time".

Long jump ace Malaika Mihambo is aiming for the next record in Berlin on Sunday. "Already at the German Championships it was great here with the 7,16 meters I jumped. At the ISTAF the meeting record is 7.08 meters - so that is a goal to reach on Sunday".

European pole vault champion Armand Duplantis (Sweden) returns to the place of his greatest triumph for the ISTAF. "The European Championships in Berlin were truly amazing. The competition has changed my life". On Sunday he will compete against the absolute best in the world. "The ISTAF is a great opportunity to gain self-confidence for Doha right before the World Championships."

### **The 16 ISTAF Events at a glance**

**Men:** 100m, 110m Hurdles, 400m Hurdles, 1500m, High Jump, Pole Vault, Javelin, Discus.

**Women:** 100m, 4x100m, 100m Hurdles, 2000m Steeplechase, 5000m, Long Jump, Triple Jump, Shot Put.

### **Timetable**

The gates of the Olympic Stadium will open at 12.30 and it will be especially worth arriving early on this occasion. Right after the traditional ISTAF SCHOOLS CUP the stars will also be in action. From 13.30 the world class shot putter Christina Schwanitz will be competing. The programme of events ends at 17.30.

### **Television: ISTAF live on ZDF and in more than 100 Countries**

ZDF will broadcast ISTAF live from 16.10 to 17.35. ISTAF is also in demand from television stations around the world with the meeting to be seen in more than 100 countries including the USA, South Africa, Japan, New Zealand and Jamaica. The television production will have 7.5 km of cables laid in Berlin’s Olympic Stadium and 38 cameras in operation.





## World Championships Silver Medal for Ariane Friedrich at ISTAF

For many world-class athletes the 78<sup>th</sup> edition of ISTAF this Sunday, September 1 will be their toughest test before the 2019 World Championships in Doha in four weeks – and for one exceptional sportswoman the meeting will be an emotional highlight ten years after “her” World Championships. Germany’s best female high jumper Ariane Friedrich, now 35 years old, will receive, retrospectively, the silver medal of the 2009 World Championships in the Olympic Stadium. The Russian athlete who finished ahead of her, Anna Chicherova, was disqualified for doping in February 2018. “I am so looking forward to ISTAF,” said Ariane Friedrich, who wanted to have the retrospective ceremony at Germany’s oldest athletics meeting. “Of course it would have been better if nobody had taken drugs and I would have been able to experience all this in 2009. The fact that I am now going to receive the medal retrospectively at ISTAF is a happy ending and perfect culmination.” She has “A special affinity to ISTAF and the Olympic Stadium.” Friedrich explained: “It was at ISTAF in 2008 that I first jumped two metres outdoors and in 2009 I set the German record – and afterwards won the World Championships medal in Berlin.”

At the 2009 World Championships Ariane Friedrich cleared 2.02m as did the Russian Anna Chicherova, subsequently suspended for doping, and the winner from Croatia, Blanka Vlasic, who jumped 2.04m. The athlete from the Thuringian region still holds the German outdoor high jump record with 2.06m.

On Sunday Ariane Friedrich will be presented with the silver medal by Jon Ridgeon, Chief Executive Officer of the IAAF. Also in the stadium will be Friedrich’s partner, the four-times Olympic bobsleigh champion André Lange, her five-year-old daughter Amy, longtime coach Günter Eisinger and her boss in the Thuringia Police, Commissioner Heike Langguth.

Ariane Friedrich retired from her sports career in 2018. The police detective sergeant works at the Thuringia police academy in Meiningen and as a team member in junior staff recruitment.

## Stars up close: “Fanzone” above the Marathon Gate

After a successful test run at the ISTAF INDOOR at the beginning of the year the organizers have set up a fanzone for the 78<sup>th</sup> edition of ISTAF in Berlin’s Olympic Stadium on Sunday. During the competition spectators can meet their favourite athletes and the mascot “Berlino.” The meeting director Martin Seeber explained: “We want to further reduce the distance between the sports performers and fans and make track and field stars role models you can meet. The fanzone at ISTAF INDOOR was a complete success – for fans and athletes alike. We are creating a space above the marathon gate where fans of all ages can meet their idols and get autographs and selfies.” The meeting area (8 x 4 metres in size) in this prominent vantage point in the Olympic Stadium is open to all ticket holders. As well as current top athletes, star performers will be dropping by the fanzone such as double Olympic long jump champion Heike Drechsler and the triple World gold medallist in the women’s shot put, Astrid Kumbernuss.





## Event Summaries

### Start: 13:30 | Women's Shot Put

Four weeks ago Germany's **Christina Schwanitz** threw 18.84m in the Olympic Stadium to win her seventh national title. Her personal best is 19.37m but will Schwanitz be able to beat rivals who include the world's number three this season, **Daniel Thomas-Dodd** from Jamaica (SB 19.55m), the American **Jessica Ramsey** (SB 19.01m) and Poland's **Paulina Guba** (SB 18.57m) who staged a surprise to beat the German for European gold here in 2018?

### 13:50 | Women's Triple Jump

The clear favourite should be **Shanieka Ricketts** of Jamaica who has set a personal best of 14.93m this season and won the Diamond League Final in Zurich on Thursday. Only one athlete has jumped further this year. The leading hope for Germany, following the withdrawal of Kristin Gierisch, is **Neele Eckhardt** who is fractionally short of the World Championships qualifying distance – she has jumped 14.16m and the qualifying mark is 14.20m

### 14:30 | Men's Discus

The Olympic Champion against the World and European gold medallist: **Christoph Harting** faces **Andrius Gudžius** from Lithuania. The latter has this season's best performance of anyone in the ISTAF line-up, having thrown 67.73m while the longtime Polish contender **Piotr Małachowski** is not far behind. The 36-year-old has a best of 67.23m this season. Can Christoph Harting achieve another big throw after a series of disappointments in the Olympic Stadium in the 2018 European Championships and this year's National competition? The Olympic Champion's best this season is 66.01m. His compatriot **Martin Wierig** won the German title this year and has a season's best of 65.86m but has yet to win at ISTAF.

### 14:45 | Men's High Jump

This has all the makings of a re-match of an amazing duel at the European Championships in this stadium last year. Germany's **Mateusz Przybylko** cleared height after height at the first attempt but he was matched time after time by the Belarusian **Maksim Nedasekau**. Only when Przybylko jumped 2.35m at the first attempt, the European gold was secured for the German. Both men will compete here on Sunday but also have to reckon with this year's European Indoor silver medallist **Andriy Prozenko** and **Takashi Eto** of Japan. Andriy Prozenko won the Diamond League Final with a season's best of 2.32m.

### 15:00 | Men's Pole Vault

The top three vaulters in the world at present will be on the runway and this trio are the only men to have cleared six metres this season: **Sam Kendricks** from the USA, who has a season's best of 6.06m, **Piotr Lisek** from Poland, whose height of 6.02m this year is a Polish record and the European Champion **Armand Duplantis** from Sweden who has done 6.00m this year. Leading the home contingent will be Torben Blech, the World Student Games silver medallist this season.





### 15:03 | Men's 400m Hurdles

The event returns to the ISTAF programme for the first time in seven years, not that it has lacked an illustrious history here: the great Ed Moses from the USA, who dominated the event with his world record in the 1980s, won the ISTAF title on six occasions. This time the story focuses on the home favourites' bid to run the World Championships qualifying times. National champion Luke Campbell has already achieved that with his 49.24s this season but others such as Constantin Preis, Joshua Abuaku and Emil Agyekum will have the qualifying time of 49.30s as their target.

### 15:35 | Women's 100 m

There will be plenty for the home fans to cheer with the German contingent led by **Gina Lückenkemper**. Another local competing is **Lisa Marie Kwayie**. They will have to be at their best against the fastest woman in the field, China's **Mangi Ge** who has run 11.04s this season.

### 15:45 | Women's 5000m

The Kenyan **Norah Jeruto Tanui** shows her versatility after breaking the meeting record in the 3,000m steeplechase on this track at the 2018 ISTAF. The Kenyan should provide a suitably tough challenge for Germany's Alina Reh who won the European U-23 10,000m title this season. She has been preparing for her ISTAF debut with altitude training in St. Moritz.

### 16:05 | Women's Long Jump

ISTAF's back straight in the Olympic Stadium should provide plenty of entertainment for long jump fans. **Malaika Mihambo**, the European Champion and currently world number one, is the top hope for home fans as she takes on a quartet of women who, like her, have jumped seven metres: **Ivana Spanovic** from Serbia is the 2018 World Indoor gold medallist and 2016 European Champion with a best of 7.10m. Alongside her will be the Briton Shara Proctor, third in the Europeans last year (PB 7.07m), **Nastasja Sjarhejeuna Mirontschyk-Ivanova** from Belarus (PB 7.08m) and the Olympic silver medallist **Yelena Sokolova** (PB 7.07m), competing as a neutral athlete.

### 16:10 | Men's 1500m

This is an event loaded with top names. Lining up among them with the chance to gain experience will be the 21-year-old German runner **Robert Farken**, twice winner of the national indoor title over 800m.





### 16:10 | Men's Javelin

The elite of German men's javelin throwing will be competing: **Thomas Röhler**, the Olympic and European Champion has a season's best of 86.99m while the World Champion **Johannes Vetter** (SB 89.28m) and this year's national winner **Andreas Hofmann** (SB 89.65m) will offer stiff competition. All three should be vying for the world title in Doha. "I'm looking forward so much to ISTAF, it will be a top quality competition," said World Champion Johannes Vetter. "I won here in 2016 and 2017 but had to miss the 2018 European Championships and this year's German Championships. It's high time to set Berlin rockin'!" Also watch out for the 21-year-old decathlete **Niklas Kaul** who finished fourth in the multi-event discipline at the European Championships in this stadium a year ago. He is already selected for Germany in the decathlon for the World Championships.

### 16:25 | Women's 100m Hurdles

Last year's European Champion **Elvira Herman** from Belarus competes against the bronze medallist from those Championships, **Cindy Roleder** from Germany. The field is high quality throughout, including **Nia Ali** from the USA, the 2016 Olympic silver medallist and her compatriot **Christina Clemons**, formerly Manning, the 2018 World Indoor silver medallist. Clemons has won the event at ISTAF the past two years.

### 16:35 | Men's 110m Hurdles

As with the women's sprint hurdles, the men's event sets the European Champion against the German title winner this season. **Pascal Martinot-Lagarde** from France steps up to compete against **Gregor Traber** but the favourite should be **Omar McLeod** from Jamaica, the Olympic and World Champion. His best for his specialist event is 12.90s and he has also run 9.99s over the 100m, the first man ever to break 13 and 10 seconds respectively.

### 16:50 | Women's 2000m Steeplechase

**Gesa Krause** and the blue track of Berlin's Olympic Stadium seem to be made for each other. After all, it was here that she won the European steeplechase title a year ago and this season achieved her fifth national title on the same track. At the 2015 ISTAF Krause ran a national record of 6:04.20 for the 2000m steeplechase, also running a national record of 9:11.85 for the more usual distance of 3,000m in 2017. No wonder she enjoys running here: "I am so looking forward to running at ISTAF." She drops down in distance to the 2000m 'chase once again. Is another German record on the cards? She is in great shape! Three days before the ISTAF she already set a new German record over the 3,000 meter steeplechase in Zurich (9:07,51).







### 17:12 | Men's 100m

The top name is **Andre De Grasse** from Canada who is returning to form after lengthy injury, running 9.98s this season. It's been a long road back since he won Olympic silver over the 200m in Rio in 2016 and bronze in the 100m. Those and other performances had him touted as the successor to Usain Bolt but the Canadian has had to go through hard times since. Other sub 10 second performers to note are Japan's **Yoshihide Kiryū** (PB 9.98s), the Commonwealth Champion from South Africa, **Akani Simbine** (PB 9.98s) and the Jamaican **Tyquendo Tracey** (PB 9.96s). De Grasse's fellow Canadian **Aaron Brown** (PB 9.96s) is having an excellent season with three wins in the Diamond League plus beating his rival at the national championships.

### 17:27 | Women's 4 x 100m

The German sprinters are at their best when they come together for the sprint relay, as proven by their fourth place in the 2016 Olympics and the same position in the World Championships the following year. Their record in the European Championships is also impressive with gold in 2016 and bronze two years later. China and Poland should be their main competitors this time. Three days before the ISTAF, the DLV team triumphed at the Diamond League Meeting in Zurich and won with a season's best of 42.22 seconds ahead of the Netherlands and China.

*For more information about the 78<sup>th</sup> edition of ISTAF including logos and picture material or for any other queries, please contact:*

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