

## Get set for London - Birmingham students and alumni competing in London 2012

Posted on Friday 27th July 2012

It's not just hosting the Jamaican Olympic team that the University of Birmingham is excited about – nine alumni and one current student have been chosen to represent Team GB at the Olympics and Paralympics in London. Competition was extremely fierce for places, so each of these athletes has excelled in booking themselves a spot in one of the biggest sporting events in the world.

University of Birmingham Director of Sport, **Zena Wooldridge** says “*The University of Birmingham has a long and proud heritage as a sporting University over the last 70 years, not just for its range of degree programs and research activity, but also for its wide range of participation opportunities and its sports performance record.*”

*Birmingham has finished consistently in the top 3 in inter-varsity competition over the last 20 years, and helped nurture its own graduate Olympians, past and current”*

**HANNAH ENGLAND – Athletics, 1500m** - Biochemistry graduate England burst on to the scene when she won a silver medal at the World Championships in Daegu last year. However, an Achilles injury placed doubt over a place at the Olympics, after missing the trials. England also missed the 2008 Beijing Olympics, but did not suffer the same fate with her A-standard qualifying time enough to guarantee her place in London. Our former student won the indoor 3000m UK title in February and has attended two UK Athletics training camps in Kenya in order to prepare for the summer.

**Hannah's London 2012 adventure begins on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> August, at 11:45**

**JAMES FAIR – Hockey** - Having made his international debut in January 2005, Fair will be going to his second Olympics - although he will hope to make up for the disappointment of 2008 where he did not feature in any of the matches. A veteran of several international tournaments, Fair highlights the winning of a gold medal and being named goalkeeper of the tournament at the European Cup in 2009 as his most memorable achievement. Fair will hope that after this summer he has a new favourite sporting moment to look back on.

**James will begin his Olympic challenge on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> July at 18:50.**

**NAOMI FOLKARD – Archery** - 28-year-old Music graduate Folkard has been shooting since the age of seven. London will be her third Olympics: in 2004 she finished 11<sup>th</sup> individually with the women's team placed 12<sup>th</sup> overall, whilst four years later she managed a 15<sup>th</sup> place individually but lost by six points to the Chinese in the team semi-final and could not claim the Bronze medal. She is a talented violinist and pianist, having played regularly for the University's Orchestra in her spare time. Her love of archery has always come first, with a series of impressive results including two Golds at the 2007 World Games. In May she came second in the European Championships to suggest she is once again in good form.

**Naomi will hope to continue her run of form when her challenge begins on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> July at 13:00.**

**TOM HALL-BUTCHER – Wheelchair Fencing** - As a multi-talented sportsman, Hall-Butcher was voted Derbyshire's Junior Disabled Sportsman of the Year in 2006 when he was 16 and even played for the Sheffield Steelers basketball team. However, the current UoB student will be competing in London at wheelchair fencing where he has seen great success. Hall-Butcher competed at the 2006 World Cup in Paris and won the Master at Arms award at the 2012 Nottingham Open. Confidence will be high at the Paralympics, having come 12<sup>th</sup> in the sabre competition in last year's World Championships in Catania, Italy.

**Tom's Paralympic tournament truly begins on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> September at 9:30.**

**LOUISE HAZEL – Athletics, Heptathlon** – Many eyes will be focused on Jessica Ennis in the Heptathlon this summer, but she is not the only home competitor seeking a medal. 2010 Commonwealth Games gold medallist Louise Hazel secured her place after achieving the 'A' qualifying standard last July in Germany, and our former French Studies student will look to follow the lead of Denise Lewis who claimed gold at the Sydney Olympics in 2000 aged just one year above that of 26-year-old Hazel.

**Louise will begin competing on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> August at 10:05.**

**LINDSEY MAGUIRE – Rowing** - Edinburgh born Maguire has spent time in Birmingham, Durham and France, but her eyes will be firmly set on London now after being selected as part of the women's eight rowing team. Maguire began rowing in 2004 at Durham as part of GB Rowing's Team Start Programme having already passed through the University of Birmingham. Such was her progress, Maguire competed for GB at the 2007 and 2008 European Championships and medalled on both occasions. At the 2011 World Championships she won bronze alongside the rest of her team and the ambition now must surely to show that type of form once again.

**Lindsey's push for a podium finish will begin on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> July at 9:30.**

**DEAN MILLER – Athletics, 1500m** - The Sport, Physical Education and Coaching Sciences student graduated last year in what was a successful 12 months which saw him also compete at the IWAS World Junior Championships (where he won 800m bronze and 1500m gold) as well as the Paralympic World Cup (where he came 6<sup>th</sup> in the 800m). Miller, who will compete in the T37 division of the 1500m (a category for athletes with cerebral palsy) has decided not to race the 800m as well in order to give himself the best chance to win a medal.

**Dean will be racing on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> September at 21:20.**

**PAMELA RELPH – Rowing** - Relph was part of the team that took two gold medals in 2011 at the World Cup in Munich and the World Championships in Slovenia. She had ambitions to join the Royal Engineers, but after suffering arthritis she took to rowing in 2010 after being introduced by older sister Monica who has also competed internationally. The Physics graduate – who also captained our award-winning cheerleading squad the Birmingham Pussycats - has progressed swiftly and can now look forward to competing in front of her home fans.

**Pamela's Olympic challenge begins on August 31st at 11.30am.**

**LORA TURNHAM – Cycling** - Physiotherapy graduate Turnham only began the sport in 2009 whilst at university, but her startling rise has seen her win silver at both the Para-Cycling World Cup and Track Championships last year alongside her sighted pilot Bex Rimmington. This year she won gold in the Time Trial at the Road World Cup in Segovia. The visually impaired student suffers from a hereditary sight loss condition and lost her vision at the age of five, but her rapid rise on the bike could be crowned with a medal.

**Lora will be in contention on Thursday, 30<sup>th</sup> August at 9:30.**

**DAVE WEBB – Marathon** – Webb was one of three men selected for the marathon thanks to his 15<sup>th</sup> place finish in last year's World Championships where he recorded a time of 2 hours 15 minutes 48 seconds, although he has not run the A qualifying standard of 2 hours 12 minutes and did not compete in the London Marathon this year.

**Dave was selected for Team GB, but unfortunately had to pull out due to injury, in the last week before the games.**

