Our Olympic hopefuls

As the UK's biggest sporting event is starting to rise over the horizon, many of the University's alumni and current students are in the midst of their preparations in a bid to make their mark on at the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games starting in July. We looks at the top athletes to watch for London 2012 and beyond.

Archery

Naomi Folkard (BA Music, 2005) - Naomi made her Olympic debut at Athens in 2004 as the youngest member of the GB Archery squad. She has since gone on to collect an array of medals including silver at the 2010 World Field Archery Championships, gold at the 2007 World Cup in Dover and silver at the 2006 Melbourne Commonwealth Games.

Athletics

Hannah England (BSc Biochemistry, 2009) - Middle distance runner Hannah made headlines across the world after following an incredible 1500m run to earn herself silver at the 2011 IAAF World Championships in Daegu, Korea. The 24-year old was previously runner-up at the 2009 World Athletics 1500m final, placed 4th for the 800m and 1500m in the 2009 European Team Championships and took home 1500m bronze at the 2008 National Championships. Most recently Hannah became the UK women's 3000m indoor Champion.

Luke Gunn (BSc Sports and Materials Science, 2006) - Luke specialises in the 3000m Steeplechase and was crowned the UK National Champion for the third consecutive year in July 2011. The 27-year old is currently on a 12 month sabbatical from his role as University of Birmingham Sport Scholarship Manager to focus on his bid to make the GB team for London 2012.

Louise Hazel (BA French Studies, 2008) - Louise specialises in the heptathlon which involves competing in seven events (100m hurdles, high jump, shot put, 200m, long jump, javelin and 800m) over a two day period. The 27-year old is currently the Commonwealth Champion after securing the gold with a personal best (pb) of 6,156 points at the 2010 games held in Delhi.

Dean Miller (BA Sport, Physical Education and Coaching Sciences, 2011) - In 2011 Dean not only completed his final year of study, but competed in the IWAS World Junior Championships (800m bronze, 1500m gold), Paralympic World Cup (800m 6th) and German National Paralympic Championships (800m silver).

Cycling

Lora Turnham (BSc Physiotherapy, 2011) - Along with her sighted pilot Bex Rimmington, Lora has taken the Para-Cycling world by storm. In 2011 she won silver in both the Para-Cycling World Cup and Para-Cycling Track Championships. Her achievements are all the more impressive considering the she only began her sporting career in 2009 after being talked into trying cycling by a close friend.

Hockey

Susie Gilbert (BA Geography, 2012) - 22-year old Susie is a regular fixture on the women's GB and England hockey squads. She is part of their centralised programme based at Bisham Abbey National Sports Centre, where the GB team train together four times a week. In 2010 Susie won three bronze medals with England hockey for the Champions Trophy, World Cup and Commonwealth Games. She also plays for University of Birmingham women's hockey team.

Simon Mantell (BCom Commerce, 2007) - Simon has had a successful career with GB and England hockey collecting 116 international caps since his debut in November 2005. The 27-year old currently plays for Reading Hockey club.

Rowing

Pamela Relph (BSc Physics, 2011) - Pam was part of the team that took two gold medals in 2011 at the World Cup in Munich and the World Championships in Slovenia. In 2009 the 21-year old captained the University's award-winning cheerleading squad the Birmingham Pussycats.

Triathlon

Non Stanford (BSc Sport and Exercise Sciences, 2010) - Non began competing in Triathlon in 2008 following an injury from Cross Country running, where she turned to swimming for rehabilitation. By 2009 she was a top triathlete and won her first bronze medal at the 2010 Premium European Cup in Brasschaat, Belgium.

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