

Montjuïc showcases 'fastest track in the world'



Mayor Jordi Hereu at the presentation of the new track

The new blue track in the Montjuïc Lluís Companys Olympic Stadium has been inaugurated. The Mayor of Barcelona, Jordi Hereu, the State's Sport Secretary Jaime Lissavetzky, the European Athletics President, Hansjörg Wirz, and seven Barcelona 2010 ambassadors led by Fermín Cacho, 1500m Olympic Champion on the old track in 1992, were the most famous celebrities from a long list of attendees that made this event an important one.

Mayor Hereu, who described the track by saying "it reflects the ambition and passion that Barcelona lives with sport", was very pleased with this new step from the Barcelona 2010 organisation.

The new blue Mondotrack FTX is the latest synthetic surface from MONDO hailed by athletes as the fastest ever and is, apart from the colour, identical to the one in Beijing's Bird's Nest stadium.

The Barcelona 2010 ambassadors present at the event were Cacho, Javier García Chico, Pole Vault bronze medal also in 1992, Carlota Castrejana, José Manuel Abascal, Valentí Massana, Abel Antón, and Martín Fiz.

Lissavetzky highlighted the important financial contribution that the High Council for Sports has made for infrastructures and mentioned that every time he comes to Barcelona he sees something new: "In this city I always find something new and this time it was this fantastic new track." The Secretary of

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State for Sports noted that for athletics “this is the stadium” and insisted that Barcelona is still “a European and world leader open to big international projects that promote and highlight its image”.



The invited guests at the starting line

After the speeches, all guests signed the back of one of the synthetic plates that were then installed on the 100m straight. They hoped that the new track will be the stage for some extraordinary results, reminiscent of previous successes, such as the 400m hurdles world record by the US athlete Kevin Young (46.78), which will be 18 years old on 6 August.

ATHLETICS ON THE STREET.- Ruth Beitia (High Jump) and Richard Spiegelburg (Pole Vault) are the two greatest stars in the street athletics exhibition that Barcelona 2010 organised as the main attraction to announce the 100 days leading up to the start of the European Athletics Championships. The two athletes were the main celebrities and won the exhibition race under the Arc de Triomf, one of the most characteristic areas in the city centre. The public and athletics fans were able to prove their skill in the Long Jump and sprint, and the exhibition showed that athletics can easily take place on the streets. People from Barcelona are aware of the importance of practising athletics and the proximity of Barcelona 2010.



Ruth Beitia clears 1.93 m



THE BARCELONA DERBY WITH AN UNQUESTIONABLE BARCELONA 2010 FEEL.-The 40,000-plus spectators who attended the Espanyol- Barça football game were surprised to see the intensive campaign carried out by the championships organisation before, during and after the game. Barcelona 2010 posters, videos broadcast on the giant screen, T-shirts distributed from the field by B10 volunteers at half-time, and a contest to win two multi-day tickets via text messages were organised at this very attractive sporting event.

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ESPANYOL AND BARÇA CELEBRITY SUPPORTERS RELAY.- A



Espanyol team wins relay derby against Barça

curious 9x100m relay race took place a few hours before the football derby to find out who are the fastest supporters, the Espanyol (pericos) or Barça (culés) supporters. Journalists, celebrities, former sportsmen had a good time in Pau Negre Stadium in Montjuïc, in an unusual and fun duel that was won by Espanyol supporters, the fastest ones on this new track which will be used as a warm-up track during Barcelona 2010.

26,000 ATHLETES WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE HALF MARATHON CHALLENGE EVENTS.-

At the end of the Half Marathon challenge that took place in Vilanova i la Geltrú, the final number of athletes who have participated in these 14 events was 25,995. This number is a 7.7% increase in participants compared with last year. Barni, the Barcelona 2010 mascot, had a relevant role in the award ceremony, where all athletes who were able to run and finish the 14 challenge races were congratulated.



BEITIA AND ESTÉVEZ TO DRAW PLAYERS FOR BARCELONA OPEN.-

Two of the main Spanish athletes at the moment, the High Jump indoor world silver medallist, Ruth Beitia, and the 1,500m Spanish champion, Reyes Estévez, drew the fixtures for the Tennis Barcelona Open BancSabadell, Trofeo Conde de Godó, together with tennis players Nicolás Almagro and Marcel Granollers. It was the first time that two athletes drew the names of participants in this legendary Barcelona tennis tournament.



Two athletes drew the fixtures for the Barcelona Open for the first time

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BARCELONA 2010 AND THE CROSS COUNTRY SCHOOL CHALLENGE.

CHALLENGE.- The Barcelona 2010 promotional campaign in Barcelona schools is almost finished. On 15 May, the last Cross Country race will be held. This race is part of the school challenge, where more than 6,000 school children between 7- and 18-years-old have participated. This last event will be held in San Andreu district. During the last few years, the European Athletics Championships Barcelona 2010 has actively taken part in this challenge in order to encourage young children to practise athletics.



SPANISH TEAM MODELS CLOTHING TO BE USED IN MONTJUÏC.-



The Barcelona Olympic and Sports Museum was the improvised stage for a show of the Barcelona 2010 Spanish team clothing by Joma Sport. Some of the athletics stars such as Rosa Morató, Jesús Ángel García Bragado, Chema Martínez, Natalia Rodríguez, Sergio Sánchez and Javier Cienfuegos wore the clothes designed by this Spanish company. During this same event, the collaboration agreement between Joma Sports and Barcelona 2010 was signed.

KIPRONO MENJO CONFIRMS THAT BARCELONA IS A RECORD CITY.-

The end of the Firemen popular race 2010 was the beginning of the countdown to the European Athletics Championships Barcelona 2010. It was a spectacular race by the Kenyan Kiprono Menjo, who improved the road 10km world record with a time of 27:04. 18,000 athletes took part and B10 was present at every moment. After the Barcelona Marathon, and at least three months before the championships start, Barcelona has already become a "record city".



Carles Castillejo, Kiprono Menjo and Chema Martínez
(from left to right)

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- **98** combined events of Decathlon and Heptathlon in which Roman Sebrle, the world record holder, has participated
- **107** Spanish athletes have the minimum qualifying results to participate in Barcelona 2010. 79 are men and 28 are women. The deadline to obtain the qualifying result is 18 July
- **7th** place was obtained by Lena Berntsson in the European Weightlifting Championships (53kg category), a few days after she competed in the 60m semi-finals in the Doha World Indoor Championships
- **15** is the number of medals that José María Odriozola wants Spanish athletes to obtain in Barcelona 2010, a target he announced during the Joma Sports clothing presentation
- **1,93m** was the result of Ruth Beitia's best High Jump in the Barcelona Arc de Triomf exhibition. Richard Spiegelburg, the Pole winner, jumped 5.20
- **350** Barcelona 2010 volunteers participated on 17 April in a giant mosaic with de B10 acronym in the Montjuïc Olympic Stadium

Barcelona inaugurates 11 brand new running circuits to promote athletics



Barcelona 2010 ambassadors Abel Antón and Martín Fiz presented 11 new running circuits in the Catalan capital. The two ex- Marathon world champions also gave an athletics master class lesson at the inauguration.

Barcelona 2010 executive committee president Pere Alcobee and Imma Mayol, who represented the Barcelona government, led the inauguration.

The 11 running circuits are: Diagonal-Cervantes (3,400 metres), Mirador de les Aigües (9,000), Joan Miró (700), Can Dragó (900), Parc del Clot (700), Aragó-Guipúscoa (2,600), Rambla Prim (2,200), Diagonal Mar (2,600), Parc de la Ciutadella (2,600), Paseo Marítim (1,500) and Castillo de Montjuïc (1,340 the short and 1,992 the long one).



Antón and Fiz after their masterclass

The growing running fans community in Barcelona can now enjoy the brand new circuits.

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Great Britain at top of European Athletics Championships medal table

34 of the 50 countries that will take part in the European Athletics Championships Barcelona 2010 have obtained at least one medal in the 19 championships that have taken place so far. The event, which is 76 years old, has been affected by different international conflicts, and some of the first countries to participate have since changed enormously.

The results table that is published below only lists today's countries. It does not take into account the successes of former powers such as the Soviet Union, the German Federal Republic, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia. The fall of the Berlin Wall meant a complete change in the political geography of some of the strategic areas, and following the disappearance of those big powers, other small countries appeared, which now are part of the European Athletics panel.

Great Britain is at the top of the list. It has participated in all the European Athletics Championships and has obtained 221 medals, which means an average of 11.6 medals per event. Barcelona 2010 will not affect Great Britain's first place even though Russia, Poland, Italy will fight for fourth place in this historical medal table.

Spain, with 53 medals, 17 of which are gold, is in ninth place and does not have a chance to move up one place, as Sweden is a considerable distance ahead.



British 4x400m relay team wins 1997 worlds in Athens

MEDAL TABLE

	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Great Britain	84	65	72	221
Germany	48	53	51	152
France	42	38	38	118
Russia	35	38	32	105
Poland	35	35	46	116
Italy	34	36	37	107
Finland	31	29	35	95
Sweden	26	35	35	96
Spain	17	13	23	53
Hungary	16	17	19	52
Netherlands	15	14	12	41

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Bulgaria	11	11	12	34
Portugal	10	6	6	22
Ukraine	9	12	7	28
Romania	7	19	10	36
Norway	7	11	12	30
Greece	7	3	8	18
Belgium	5	10	7	22
Belarus	5	7	5	17
Switzerland	3	10	9	22
Denmark	3	5	4	12
Ireland	3	5	2	10
Estonia	3	3	2	8
Iceland	3	1	1	5
Czech Republic	2	5	3	10
Latvia	2	2	1	5
Austria	2	1	3	6
Slovenia	2	1	1	4
Israel	2	-	-	2
Turkey	1	-	2	3
Lithuania	1	1	2	4
Croatia	-	1	1	2
Luxembourg	-	1	-	1
Serbia	-	1	-	1

Most appearances at European Athletics Championships



Kjersti Plätzer

In the history of the European Athletics Championships, only five athletes can boast about having participated in six events, which means that they have competed at the highest level throughout two decades. The inherent difficulty in appearing on this list arises from the long periods of four years between events. From 2012, however, athletes will be able to participate in more European championships.

Helena Fibingerova, Heike Drechsler, Abdon Pamich, Ludvik Danek and Nenad Stekic are five outstanding athletes who have obtained all the successes possible in athletics. They are at the top of this list of the most persevering athletes, having taken part in six European Athletics Championships. To this list, the Norwegian Kjersti Plätzer can be added in sixth place. She is a 38-year-old race walker who is in top international athletics. Another athlete, the Portuguese Fernanda Ribeiro, who qualified to participate in the Barcelona 2010 Marathon, can now also be added to this list.

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As it happens, Plätzer, whose maiden name is Tysse, competed in the 1986 European championships, but missed the following championships in Split 1990. If she participates in 2010, she will have taken part in high-level competitive athletics for 24 years. In Stuttgart she finished in 11th place when she was only 14-years-old. Eight years later, in Helsinki, she finished in 16th place; in the 20km event in Budapest 1998 (before then, the women's walk race was only 10km) she reached 9th place; in Munich 2002 she was disqualified, and in Göteborg she accomplished her best performance, finishing in fourth place.

The Norwegian may have no medals in a European championships, but has a record of more than 30 titles as national champion, and has also achieved two extraordinary results in the Olympic Games: she won the silver medal in Sydney, beating María Vasco, and in Beijing as well. In 2009, at the age of 37, she obtained one of her best results (1:28.50) in the classic race of Sesto San Giovanni.



Fernanda Ribeiro

Fernanda Ribeiro, who will be 41-years-old (23 June) when she competes in Barcelona, is an athlete who has succeeded in all major competitions, and is the point of reference in Portuguese athletics. In Helsinki 1994, she became 10000m European champion.

18 male and female athletes appear on the list with five participations. This list will be enlarged with some distinguished names if they qualify to compete in Montjuïc. The most famous ones are the German pole vaulter Tim Lobinger, the Italian Marathon runner Stefano Baldini (who defended his title in Göteborg 2006), the Lithuanian Discus thrower Virgilius Alekna (also champion four years ago), and the Spaniards Jesús Ángel García Bragado and Manuel Martínez.

The race walker García Bragado has two medals (bronze in Munich and silver in Göteborg). He made his debut in Helsinki 1994, and achieved a fourth place in 50km. Four years later he was disqualified in the Budapest Nepstadion. Unfortunately, Martínez has already announced that he will miss this summer's European Athletics Championships due to an Achilles tendon surgery.

THE MOST CONSTANT ATHLETES

With 6: Helena Fibingerova (TCH), Heike Drechsler (GDR/GER), Abdon Pamich (ITA), Ludvik Danek (TCH), and Nenad Stekic (YUG)

With 5: Lia Manoliu (ROM), Sara Simeoni (ITA), Fernanda Ribeiro (POR), Kjersti Plätzer (NOR), Adolfo Consolini (ITA), John Ljunggren (SWE), Janusz Sidlo (POL), Gergely Kulcsar (HUN), Vilmos Varju (HUN), Gyula Zsivotzky (HUN), Igor Ter-Ovanesyan (URS), Gaston Roelants (BEL), Janis Lulis (URS), Jean-Claude Nallet (FRA), Vittorio Visini (ITA), Udo Beyer (GDR/GER), Imrich Bugár (TCH/CZE), Mick Hill (GBR)

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Ukhov looking to fly high in Barcelona



There is no debate about the man who has been the best high jumper in the world indoors for the last two winters. His name is Ivan Ukhov. The Russian is the reigning European and world indoor champion, having won the first title in Torino last year and then he followed it up with a victory on the global stage in Doha just a few weeks ago.

Now, Ukhov is looking to transform his success in rarefied conditions with a roof over his head into a gold medal outdoors at the European Athletics Championships this summer. "It's the main target for the summer. I won the European junior title back in 2005 but since then my big victories have come indoors.

"At the last European Athletics Championships in 2006 I was still only 20, and although I made the final, I didn't jump very well. This time I obviously want to do much better.

"It was also a huge disappointment to only finish 10th in Berlin last summer as I went there believing I could get a medal. However, the rain and the delay before getting the competition started made everything difficult.

"However, when you jump badly, it is easy to blame your own problems on things like the level of organization, the stadium and the weather. When you are really ready to do something good, then such things hardly affect you," he reflected.

"Nevertheless, I hope it will be dry in Barcelona. I'm hoping that the crowds will come and support the field events, like they did in Berlin. I've been at many meetings across Europe where there has been a strong feeling for the High Jump."

Ukhov was an outstanding jumper as a youngster but clashes with coaches and other personal issues meant he has taken his time fulfilling his potential, losing his way slightly in 2007 and 2008.

The man who can take much of the credit for getting Ukhov back on the metaphorical flight path is the 2000 Olympic Games High Jump champion Sergey Klyugin.

The pair competed against each other regularly between 2005 and 2007, until Klyugin retired from competition and switched to coaching, and it was to him that Ukhov turned at the end of 2008 to act as a mentor and restore the smile to his face.

"I like jumping but he was the first person who said to me, 'jump for fun' and really meant it. I see Sergey more as a friend than a coach ordering me to do things.

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"He recommends and we discuss things. Sergey has ideas about what should be done and not done but usually we compromise. Sometimes I have different ideas but his advice is always valuable and important."



"If he insists very strongly, I yield to him, although occasionally he has also given way because I can be a strong character. This happened in Doha (at the World Indoor Championships) when I really wanted something, and he gave way, but it ended with injuries so I wonder if he will give way again," joked the apparently shy and serious Ukhov.

"He wanted me to do some jumping over hurdles. I decided to put the hurdles much higher than he wanted and he stubbornly resisted at first, but eventually relented. What happened? I tripped up over them and got a banged knee and a bruised coccyx!"

If Ukhov can replicate his indoor form when he gets to Barcelona - where he has never competed before although he is familiar with Spain after visiting Zaragoza and Castellon in recent years - the European Athletics Championships record of 2.36m set by his compatriot Andriy Silnov in Göteborg four years ago could be under threat.

In 2009, Ukhov went over 2.40m indoors in the Greek capital Athens to become only the third man in the last decade to scale such a height. This winter, he had a best of 2.38m, won eight of his nine competitions and also cleared 2.36m to win the world indoor title, despite his bruised back. However, Ukhov could have to fight in Barcelona, not just for European supremacy but even to finish as the top Russian.

Silnov, who is also the 2008 Olympic champion, is returning to fitness after being injured for most of last summer. There is also the ever-consistent Yaroslav Rybakov, who coped with the conditions presented in Berlin much better than Ukhov and took the World Championships gold medal.

The Russian trio possess all five of the major athletics titles on offer. However, journalists should not expect to get many words out of Ukhov where he wins or loses. The Muscovite is well-known to be reticent to open his mouth, whether in Russia or elsewhere in Europe, and has a reputation for not talking to journalists.

"I really don't see anything good in them," Ukhov has said in the past, although he made an exception when talking to the B10 Newsletter.

In May...

Day 10: Signing of cooperation agreement between Barcelona 2010 and Turisme de Barcelona

Day 31: Deadline for journalists' accreditation registration for Barcelona 2010

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