

## Jamaica – A Top Venue For International Sporting Events

Double world champion Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce and Olympic champion Allyson Felix will headline the galaxy of track and field stars expected to converge on the National Stadium in Kingston on Saturday, May 9 at the Jamaica International Invitational, an IAAF World Challenge meeting.

The Jamaica International Invitational, which is sponsored by the Jamaica Tourist Board, is now in its 12th year, and has attracted other world-class athletes including Americans Tyson Gay, Ryan Bailey, and Walter Dix. Jamaica's Commonwealth champions Kaliese Spencer, Stephanie Ann McPherson and Kemar Bailey-Cole, and well as Nigeria's Blessing Okagbare are athletic trailblazers confirmed to compete. With the IAAF World Championships in Athletics on the horizon this summer, this Kingston event will serve as one of the tune up opportunities for many athletes to prepare and to size up the competition for the August showdown in Beijing, China. Jamaica has a fairly constant climate throughout the year, averaging approximately 80-86°F (27-30°C) making the island a desirable destination for year-round training and a wonderful location for international sporting events. "Jamaica remains a preferred location to host major international sporting events such as the Jamaica International Invitational," noted Paul Pennicook, Jamaica's Director of Tourism. "Jamaica has been able to attract and retain the highest caliber athletes for this meet, because our track stars are among the best in the world. Add to that, our ideal climate and excellent facilities. Visitors to the capital city Kingston can enjoy top quality athletics as well as experience some of our rich culture and heritage," he concluded. The island is filled with many world-class venues capable of supporting the most revered of international sporting competitions. A fact substantiated when the National Stadium hosted the 2002 IAAF/Coca Cola World Junior Championships in Athletics, hailed as one of the best ever by the IAAF. Since then, the island has served as host to a number of major sporting events islandwide including the Caribbean Island Swimming Championships, the World Netball Championships, the ICC World Cup of Cricket, the International Taekwon-Do Federation World Cup, the CONCACAF Under-20 football championship, the Negril Open Beach Volleyball Classics and the first-ever Jamaica International Badminton Championships, a qualifier for the World Championships and 2016 Olympic Games. Part of Jamaica's popularity for hosting international sporting events is due to its world-class venues. Among them, the venues in Kingston: the Independence Park Complex (ICP) which comprises the National Stadium, the National Arena and National Indoor Sports Centre as well as the University of the West Indies (UWI) and University of Technology (UTech). In neighbouring St. Catherine, the GC Foster College of Physical Education offers a complete facility with accommodation catering to a variety of sports. In western Jamaica, there is the Catherine Hall Sports Complex in Montego Bay as well as the Trelawny Multi-Purpose Stadium.