

Only one year to go!

Things are really picking up pace with us at the Hertfordshire is Ready for Winners Partnership now with the London 2012 Olympic Games only a year away.

We are making plans with the National Olympic Committees that we have signed up for pre-games training as well as still negotiating with NOCs and NPCs who haven't yet committed themselves to anywhere Pre-Games training yet.

We have also been busy with Hertfordshire's Olympic venue, the Lee Valley white Water Centre which earlier this month invited 360 of the county's school children down the Olympic course.

The Olympic Delivery Authority is also pleased with progress in the Olympic Park with only one year to go until the greatest sporting event in the world takes place in London. ODA Chairman John Armitt said: 'The ODA has hit all of its milestones to date and we are firmly on track to deliver the venues and infrastructure required for the Games and in legacy as planned.'

Celebrate one year and counting with us!

On the 27 July it is just one year and counting until the greatest sporting event hits Britain. Hertfordshire as a host county for the London 2012 Olympic Games, with the canoe slalom event taking place at the Lee Valley White Water Centre, is celebrating the countdown across the county.

There are several events taking place across Herts as part of the London 2012 Open Weekend on 23-24 July. On Saturday 23 July 11am until 5pm, One Year and Counting is taking place in Waltham Cross town centre, near to the Eleanor Cross, with six hours of free entertainment on stage showcasing local singers, bands, dancers and sporting demonstrations and the possibility of meeting an Olympian this is an event not to be missed..

On Sunday 24 July is another local celebration for one year to go to the Games, OFest takes place at Paradise Wildlife Park where you can watch local talent performing on stage and take part in various the Beat the Pro competitions. Take on the pros at tennis, golf and keepy uppy. The Shaolin Monks will be showing off their skills and strength and you can see the Animalympics at the Park too. All the usual attractions will be open on the day so you can wander around the Park and see all the animals. OFest starts at midday but the Park opens at 9.30am. You can buy entrance tickets online on www.pwpark.com

Open Weekend 2011, supported by BP, is set to be the biggest and best yet, with hundreds of thousands of people participating in events and bespoke projects to celebrate the 'One Year to Go' countdown to the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Sebastian Coe, Chair of the London 2012 Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games (LOCOG), announced that there will be a programme of over 1,000 unique sporting and cultural initiatives.

Live Sites across the UK will have a full weekend of participatory activities at the big screens which will include exclusive chances to try the mascot motion sensor game 'Swim Wenlock Swim', newly commissioned interactive games from artist Chris O'Shea which allow live inter-city competitive play, and a special screening of the Academy Award winning British film 'Chariots of Fire'.

Country heritage sites nationwide will also open their doors for Open Weekend 2011 to help communities discover the hidden secrets of their local environments, with areas such as Box Hill National Trust Park and the North Face of Ben Nevis welcoming visitors from across the UK. Other Open Weekend 2011 highlights include a celebration of medieval sports in Conway and parkour demonstrations and art activities at the National Portrait Gallery, inspired by the BP Portrait Award.

Full listings can be found at www.london2012.com/openweekend



Quito Rymer brings the Caribbean to Hertfordshire

The Hertfordshire is Ready for Winners Partnership hosted a visit from an artist and musician from the British Virgin Islands (BVI), Quito Rymer, visiting numerous places across Hertfordshire and doing a variety of activities, from an art master class to a musical show.

Hertfordshire is Ready for Winners (HRFW) work closely with the BVI after signing a Memorandum of Understanding in 2009 for the BVI Olympic team to train in Herts Pre-London 2012 Games. Now with one year to go until the Games this friendship has grown, so when Quito Rymer came over to the UK to exhibit his latest art collection HRFW thought it was a great opportunity to show him where some of his fellow Islanders will be staying next year.



The visit started at Turnford School with Quito holding an art master class with a group of students of mixed age and ability. The students looked through Quito's exhibition brochure and discussed his inspirations as well as how he begins to compose his pieces, before setting them a task of sketching one of his works 'The Hat Maker'. Quito was really impressed with the calibre of what the group produced under his watchful eye and guidance. The school are planning to display the work that was produced during the master class in the school hall for everyone at the school to see.

Then Quito travelled to Sele School in Hertford where he performed some of his music to a group of 60 year 8 and 10 music students, hoping develop their own performing styles. He played his songs in a variety of styles including Caribbean folk, reggae and calypso, talking about his life in the BVI and answering questions in between tracks.

In the afternoon Quito was blown away by the grandeur, history and art collection at Hatfield House. He had a whistle stop tour of the house taking in all the main attractions and relishing the stories and anecdotes from the past.

Quito then finished his day with a quick trip to Roundwood Primary School in Harpenden, who have a steel pans group. He saw them perform a couple of songs to give him a taste of home.

The Vice-Chairman of the Hertfordshire is Ready for Winners Board and Leader of Broxbourne Borough Council, Councillor Paul Mason said, "We had a great time hosting Quito in Hertfordshire for the day and hearing about life in the BVI. It was a great opportunity to showcase a different culture, to some of our talented young people; as well as the art and music it inspires."

Quito Rymer's 'Phoenix Collection' is currently on display at BVI House in Central London and some of his music is available on

www.myspace.com/quitoandtheedge



Hertfordshire businesses compete in new corporate event

The partnership's new business event, the Hertfordshire is Ready for Winners Corporate Games, saw teams from local companies battling it out in events such as five-a-side football, kwik cricket, doubles tennis and athletics, whilst also meeting new people, networking, promoting their services and getting back into sport – fulfilling part of the Partnerships ambition to increase participation levels in sport.

The fully subscribed event took place on 18 July 2011 at Gosling Sports Park in Welwyn Garden City and was organised by the Hertfordshire is Ready for Winners Partnership and Gosling Sports Park and supported by the NHS, Saracens Foundation and The Ultimate Promotions Company.

Winners on the day were Stevenage Leisure Ltd who came top in the doubles tennis, high jump and grand finale, followed by St Albans Art, Sport and Health Development Team and bronze medals were awarded to Hertsmere Leisure Trust.



The event also raised £330 for the Herts Talented Athlete Programme through the raffle. That makes a running total of £4,344 raised for the Talented Athlete Programme by Herts is Ready for Winners with the funding going to local young athletes such as golfer Tom Lewis who has been in the news recently while taking part in The Open.

Mark Jennings, Fitness Manager at North Herts Leisure Centre and competitor on the day for Stevenage Leisure Ltd said,



We had a great day, and would really like to thank the team who organised the event.

We were hoping for at least a top three finish at the start of the day and as the day progressed we were more and more confident that we could win. We thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon athletics and relay as it took us back to our school days!

We would definitely take part again and look forward to joining in if it is running next year.



The teams who entered were:

- CDG, a Boeing Company
- East Herts Council
- Hertfordshire Constabulary
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Hertfordshire Football Association
- Herts Sports Partnership
- Hertsmere Leisure Trust
- Hicks and Company
- HMT/Mears
- John Lewis Welwyn
- Lee Valley Regional Park
- Newsprinters
- NHS Hertfordshire
- North Hertfordshire College
- Purchase Direct Ltd
- Serco
- St Albans Art, Sport & Health Development Team (SAASH)
- Stevenage Leisure Ltd
- Welwyn Hatfield Community Housing Trust





Dani, Champion of the World throws some great advice

Hertfordshire is Ready for Winners welcomed the reigning discus world champion to the county this month for a couple of days. Australian Dani Samuels was already in the country after competing in the Birmingham Athletics Grand Prix on 9-10th July, a tournament in which she threw her season's best throw of 62.33m coming third overall, missing out on second spot by 30cm.

Dani managed to fit in a two day stop in Hertfordshire in between the Grand Prix and heading to Cologne to do last minute preparation for the next Diamond League meeting in Monaco on 22nd July.

During her visit to Hertfordshire Dani did strength and conditioning training at one of our venues approved for pre-Games training, the Hertfordshire Sports Village in Hatfield. As she was staying at the Ramada Hotel just across the road this was ideal for the World Champion.

Dani described the facilities in Hertfordshire as "just what she needed" and when asked about what she is hoping to achieve in Monaco Dani said, "I'm looking to be more consistent, and improve on the season's best throw I did in Birmingham at the weekend."

On 12th July Dani went to Gosling Sports Park in Welwyn Garden City, another of the county's approved Pre-Games training venues, to practice her throwing. Herts Talented Young Athletes Renee Hector and Michael Pope came along to watch Dani train and also to pick up tips from her and her coach about how to improve their discus throwing technique.

Renee in particular said that she learnt a lot from the visit about the positioning and use of hips and how not to push any one particular area of the body too hard in training as this can result in injury.

Director of Sport at The University of Hertfordshire, Nick Brooking said,

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It is not every day that young athletes get to meet the elite stars of their discipline. Today has been like a dream come true for Renee and Michael as not only is Dani an incredible athlete she is the reigning discus world champion.

I'm sure that our talented young athletes will never forget this meeting and the advice Dani has given them.

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With one year to go the Lee Valley White Water Centre is delivering a fabulous early legacy for Hertfordshire

Fresh from the Lee Valley Schools Festival we caught up Simon Ricketts, Centre Manager at the Lee Valley White Water Centre to find out about what has been going on at the Centre since it opened to the public earlier in the year and also what we can expect at the Centre over the next year, the Games and beyond!

1. What is your role at the White Water Centre?

I am the Centre Manager at Lee Valley White Water Centre and I am tasked with ensuring that the Centre is offering an early legacy for the Games allowing as many customers as possible to access the water prior to the London 2012.

2. How has the rafting been going at Lee Valley White Water Centre since it opened to the public at Easter?

Since we opened on 22nd April 2011, over 5,500 people have already experienced white water rafting on the Olympic Standard Competition Course – the same course that the Olympians will use in London 2012. Customer feedback is great and we have already had over 16,000 people booked in for 2011 with rafting spaces still available. People can book their chance to raft via www.leevalleypark.org.uk or by calling **08456 770 606**.



3. What can customers expect from a day out at Lee Valley White Water Centre?

When rafting, customers will get half a day's activity which includes all equipment, a safety briefing and an adrenaline pumping experience on the Olympic Standard Competition Course. For those who don't want to raft the rapids themselves, we are lucky enough to have a venue that is accessible to all and allows spectators the opportunity to feel part of the Games and enjoy the countdown to London 2012, simply by watching the rafters and kayakers ride the waves themselves.

4. Do you have any good stories about rafters who have already gone down the Olympic standard course?

We have had a vast range of people rafting the rapids and its great to see people from all walks of life having a go - and it has been fantastic to see people as young as 14 – the minimum age to raft the course – and up to 86! We've had politicians, sportsmen and women and famous comedians.

We recently had our Schools Festival – which saw over 1,500 young people from across Hertfordshire, London and Essex – experience rafting the course for free. To hear some of the young people talking about the fact that paddlesports may now be something they'd pursue was a great feeling.

5. Currently the Lee Valley Schools Festival is going on with Hertfordshire pupils took part on 5th July. It is a great opportunity for local kids; Have you enjoyed this project?

Lee Valley White Water Centre's School Festival has been very rewarding for all those involved. It was fantastic to see so many local young people having the opportunity to experience rafting for free at an Olympic venue. Also sporting links were made with the British Canoe Union, British Cycling, and Tottenham Hotspur Football Club, giving school children an opportunity to experience exciting and different sporting challenges.

6. This autumn is an interesting time for the Centre with the test event preparing for the Games next year, what will be your role during this time?

I will be working with the LOCOG venue operations team to help deliver and co-ordinate venue requirements supporting the individual operations teams required to deliver the test event and Games time events in 2012.



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7. The British Canoe Union have been training at the Centre, what feedback have they given you about the course?

Team GB have been training at the Centre since January 2011; they have found the course the most challenging in the UK, and Albert Woods President of British Canoe Union recently said of the Centre: "its the best centre of its type anywhere in the world creating a brand new attraction and allowing Canoe Slalom to develop into a major league sport in this country."

8. Congratulations to Lee Valley for securing the 2015 Canoe Slalom World Championships, you must be really pleased with this as it secures a legacy for the White Water Centre.

Yes, this success was due to hard work by the British Canoe Union and Lee Valley Regional Park Authority. We are delighted to be the first London 2012 venue to secure a World Championships ahead of the Games. This will keep the spot light on Canoe Slalom for this venue and competitions in the UK through to 2015 and beyond.



And finally... Young people from Hertfordshire set to witness world class sport at Lee Valley White Water Centre

London 2012's Canoe Slalom venue, Lee Valley White Water Centre, will play host to the Olympic Canoe Slalom test event from 28-31 July 2011 and young people from Turnford School and Sports College in Cheshunt, The John Warner School in Hoddesdon, St Marys C of E High School in Waltham Cross have been given the chance to cheer on teams from around the world and witness world class sport in action.

Lee Valley Regional Park Authority have teamed up with the London 2012 Organising Committee to offer this exclusive chance to watch the closed test event happening right on their doorstep.

Herts Talented Young Athlete wows the Open Championship

Herts Talented Young Athlete Tom Lewis has made an amazing start to the 140th Open Championship in Sandwich, Kent, at the time of going to press.

The 20 year old from Welwyn Garden City was leading the tournament after the second day, very impressive for the talented young athlete who is yet to turn professional.

We will certainly be following Tom's career with interest.

