



# AROUND THE RINGS

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# “It Doesn’t Get Much Better” Says LOCOG’s Sebastian Coe

Two-time Olympic champion, IAAF vice president and London 2012 chairman Sebastian Coe tells *Around the Rings* the privilege is all his.

Interview by Ed Hula

**ATR:** You are a child of athletics, and you get to bring the Olympics to your home. What does that mean to you?

**SC:** I feel incredibly privileged both because the IOC has entrusted London with the delivery of the Games and because I’m actually helping to deliver my sport to the world as well. Of course I’m committed to delivering 26 sports to impact on billions of people, but you can take the man out of athletics but you’ll never take athletics out of the man. Athletics is my sport. The only reason I will stay involved in sport post-2012 is within the athletics family. I’m very privileged. I’m delivering a sport for which I’m a vice president as well, and if you look at it in that context, it doesn’t get much better.

**ATR:** What about the fans themselves?

**SC:** Track and field has been the blood of this country, and I absolutely believe that in front of full houses and noisy passionate fans – and British athletics fans are as knowledgeable as they get – then we’ve got a good chance to bequeath a really memorable track and field celebration at the London Olympics.

**ATR:** You’re very keen on making a contribution to the international federation. You’re running for re-election as one of four vice presidents here in Daegu. What is your future with the IAAF? Are you interested in being president one day?

**SC:** I’m hoping to get re-elected as vice president. I’ve agreed with the president that post-2012 I will have more time to focus on track and field. I enjoy working closely with Lamine. We’ve developed a very good working relationship. He’s been very helpful to me in London, particularly in helping me fight for the track and field legacy, and I know that for my sport to prosper we need to continually broaden our global reach, we

need to deepen the commercial reach, we need to build profile and crucially, we need to excite and inspire young people to choose a life in athletics.

**ATR:** One very historic figure in British track and field is Sir Roger Bannister. Though an Olympian in 1952, he’s certainly more acclaimed for what he did two years later with the mile, a distance you certainly can appreciate. Will he have any role to play in London next year?

**SC:** As we get nearer to the Games, Roger has offered to help and support our volunteers. He’s a very close friend of mine, and we speak

regularly. Most crucially, he was a volunteer at the 1948 London Games.

**ATR:** Any chance he would light the flame in the Olympic cauldron?

**SC:** We haven’t gotten around to that decision yet, but I would be very surprised if Roger wasn’t recognized in some way around our celebrations. ■



▲ LOCOG chairman Sebastian Coe shows around IAAF president Lamine Diack during an Aug. 5 visit to London Olympic Stadium. The track should be completed any day now. (Getty Images)

## AROUND THE RINGS

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# IAAF Confident, Not Complacent Ahead of Daegu 2011, London 2012

Based upon the previous 12 editions of the IAAF World Championships, the bar by which the international governing body measures success has been set very high, general secretary Pierre Weiss tells *Around the Rings*.

## Interview by Karen Rosen

“We must not forget that the IAAF World Championships are the third largest sporting event on the planet after the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup,” he says.

Roughly 2,500 athletes from more than 200 countries are coming to Daegu along with 10,500 officials and volunteers. Organizers hope as many as half a million spectators will stop by as well.

“It’s an enormous organizational task for any city to manage, but the IAAF is confident that Daegu will live up to the impressive history of these championships,” Weiss says.

“We very much look forward to nine exciting days of competition in Korea.”

In the meantime, Weiss discusses some of the issues facing his sport with *ATR*’s own Karen Rosen.

**ATR:** How healthy is the state of track and field one year out from the London Olympics?

**PW:** If we remember two years ago the tremendous IAAF World Championships we celebrated in Berlin, championships which followed directly from the outstanding success for our sport at the Beijing Olympic Games, we can confidently diagnose our sport as being fit and ready for London 2012.

Athletics wears the mantle of the Olympics’ number one sport with great pride, yet neither are we complacent. We are adapting our competition programs to reflect the increasing diversity of the sport and entertainment world from which the public can now choose. Attracting and, most importantly, retaining the young as both participant and spectator are essential if athletics and the whole Olympic Movement are to retain their appeal.

**ATR:** What’s new for Daegu?

**PW:** In line with recent developments to the IAAF competition program, Daegu will mark a first in the history of the competition. A brand new and modern approach has led to a revamped and revolutionized competition timetable designed to reach optimum impact for both the fans and media on the one hand but also in order to support athletes on the other.

The philosophy behind the new competition timetable in Daegu was three-fold:

- To have evening sessions of not more than three hours
- To have a balanced number of finals across all days
- To schedule qualification rounds in the morning sessions only

**ATR:** In 2009, marketing director Luis Carulla said the IAAF sold seven of eight possible packages for the Berlin World Championships. How many did you sell for Daegu, and what does that mean for the sport?

**PW:** With agreement reached with the Korean international steel giant Posco on May 16, the IAAF achieved its eighth international sponsorship package for Daegu. In any context, exceeding the commercial heights of what we achieved two years ago for the championships in Berlin, a capital city in one of the traditional heartlands of our sport, is exceptionally good news for our sport. As a gauge, it shows that even when we venture into comparatively virgin territory for our sport, the core strength and appeal of athletics means commercially we are regarded as a strong and an attractive partner.

**ATR:** The transition from the Golden League to the Diamond League was supposed to provide a big boost for athletics. How do you gauge its success so far?

**PW:** We set out to reinvent the one-day meeting structure of our sport, to bring clarity to the elite international athletics competition which takes place outside the IAAF World Championships and Olympic Games. Therefore, we were delighted that within a few weeks of the inaugural season opening in 2010, the attraction of our concept was enthusiastically

supported by Samsung, who joined us as a committed title sponsor for the series.

In terms of international TV ratings, the 14 meetings of the Samsung Diamond League have seen world audience totals nearly triple in 2010 when compared with 2009, with the hours of coverage dramatically increasing, too, to fully justify our expansion of the top one-day circuit outside Europe for the first time.

**ATR:** How is the fight against doping going?

**PW:** Working with the World Anti-Doping Agency and in partnership with the Swedish-based company International Doping Tests &

Management, the IAAF with its own specialist department of 10 staff members is maintaining its long-term and persistent fight against doping.

The statistics of the IAAF 2010 Anti-Doping Program (1,325 in-competition tests and more than 1,800 out-of-competition) speak for themselves.

When you also take into account the thousands of other tests carried out at the national level, the sport of athletics implements one of the most widely based out-of-competition doping control programs of any international sport.

**ATR:** What do you think of the false start rule – one false start and you’re out?

**PW:** It was a difficult decision to take and the vote of our Congress was far from unanimous. That being said, we have now almost two seasons of experience behind us, and we can say that it was a wise decision: athletes accommodated this new situation, and results are continuing to improve. ■



▲ IAAF general secretary Pierre Weiss (Getty Images)



▲ Organizers of the 2009 IAAF World Championships in Berlin set the bar high for Daegu 2011, then handed the flag over to its South Korean leaders. (Getty Images)

# 10 Events to Watch

Compiled by Karen Rosen

A Jamaican is the odds-on favorite to cross the finish line first, but he isn't necessarily **Usain Bolt**. Former world record holder **Asafa Powell** ran a world-leading 9.78 seconds at the end of June, a full one-tenth of a second faster than defending world champion Bolt ran in his early efforts this season. Powell, who calls himself the "man to beat" and the "No. 1 sprinter this year," must prove he can withstand big-event pressure. Tyson Gay, the American record holder and runner-up two years ago, is out due to injury. Steve Mullings could contribute to a Jamaican sweep. Bolt may be untouchable in the 200. After running a world-leading 19.86 seconds, he said, "I was never out of business. I think business was just slow."

MEN'S 100 METERS



As if going against two-time Olympic champion Veronica Campbell-Brown of Jamaica isn't enough on her plate, three-time world champion **Allyson Felix** of the U.S. will attempt a rare 200/400 double. Felix may have tired legs since the three rounds of the 400 come first on the Daegu schedule. "Will be very difficult," she tweeted, "but first step to accomplishing greatness is trying." Felix would be the first woman to achieve such a feat at the IAAF Worlds. France's Marie-Jose Perec won double gold at the 1996 Olympics. Felix must also contend with Shalonda Solomon, who won the U.S. trials with a world-leading 22.15 seconds.

WOMEN'S 200 METERS



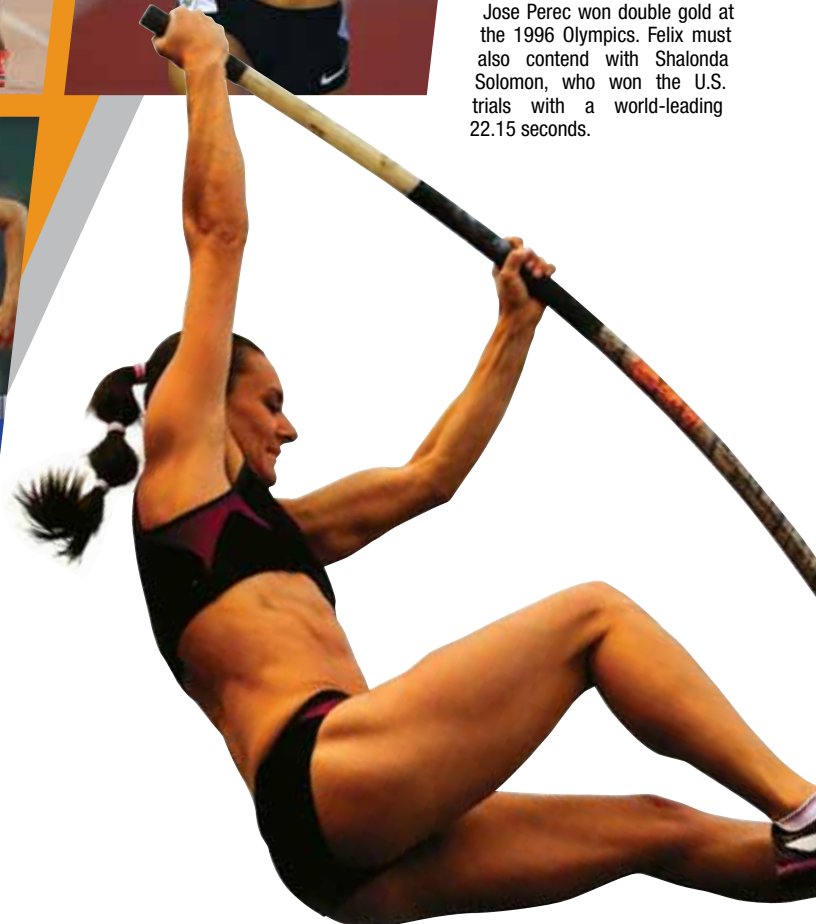
History's three fastest hurdlers – Dayron Robles of Cuba, **Liu Xiang** of China and David Oliver of the U.S. – are all in top form. IAAF general secretary Pierre Weiss points to this as "THE potential race of the championships." Robles, who holds the world record of 12.87 seconds, has never won at the IAAF Worlds. In Berlin, on the one-year anniversary of his Beijing Olympic gold, he was injured in the semis and had to be helped off the track. Liu and Oliver were injured and missed the event completely. Oliver ran a world-leading time of 12.94 seconds on the same day Liu ran the second-best time of 13 flat.

MEN'S 110-METER HURDLES



By the end of July, world record holder **David Rudisha** of Kenya had run four of the seven fastest times of the season and was the only man under 1:43. Rudisha, who broke a 12-year-old world record last year before lowering it to the current mark of 1:41.01, would shatter history by going under 1:41. His main rival has been Abubaker Kaki of Sudan, who says Rudisha's record runs "have put fire in my belly." The pair have had thrilling duels that are reminiscent of Sebastian Coe and Steve Ovett, including last year in Oslo.

MEN'S 800 METERS



## WOMEN'S POLE VAULT

An over-confident **Yelena Isinbayeva** no-heighted two years ago in Berlin. Though she promptly went out and set her 27th world record at 5.06 meters (16 feet, 7¼ inches), Isinbayeva was so unnerved by poor performances she skipped the 2010 outdoor season. Returning to the sport after a year off, she will try to add to her tally of two Olympic and five World Championships golds (three outdoor and two indoor). Olympic silver medalist Jenn Suhr of the U.S., who vaulted a world's best 4.91 (16, 1¼), did not compete in Berlin because of an Achilles injury.

Controversy followed **Caster Semenya** of South Africa around the track in Berlin when she won the world title with a time of 1:55.45 – and then flexed her muscles – and it could certainly swirl around her again. Amid inquiries about her gender, Semenya was suspended from competition. Upon her return, she has looked invincible in some races, but not up to speed in others. Russian runners, led by Mariya Savinova, and Jamaica's Kenia Sinclair have been the top contenders at the two-lap distance. Savinova was the 2010 world indoor champion as well as a finalist in this event in Berlin.

**WOMEN'S 800 METERS**



**WOMEN'S 100-METER HURDLES**

Olympic silver medalist **Sally Pearson** of Australia has the world-leading time of 12.48 seconds and will run the 100 meters as well. Pearson became the first Australian woman since 1968 to win three national championships at the same event when she added the 200 title. U.S. champ Kellie Wells (12.50 seconds) hopes triumph on the track will help her start a foundation for battered women and abused children. "People don't listen to the girl in fifth or sixth place who is not making teams," she says. "They listen to the person who is successful." And don't forget Olympic champion Dawn Harper of the U.S.

**Dylan Armstrong** of Canada, who finished fourth in the Beijing Olympics, has the top mark of the year at 22.21 meters (72 feet, 10¼ inches). He is closely followed by three formidable American veterans: 2005 world champion Adam Nelson, 2007 world champ Reese Hoffa and 2009 champ Christian Cantwell. Cantwell is known for saving his best for last. He won in Berlin on his final throw of 22.03 (72, 3½), beating Olympic champ Tomasz Majewski with the heave. A year earlier in Beijing, Majewski won Olympic gold, but Cantwell grabbed the silver on his final throw. Of course, Armstrong's Canadian record throw was also on his last attempt.

**MEN'S SHOT PUT**



**WOMEN'S 5,000 AND 10,000 METERS**



Training partners at home, **Vivian Cheruiyot** and **Linet Masai** of Kenya will battle for top honors in Daegu. Cheruiyot, who won the 5,000 meters in Berlin two years ago, will try to repeat as champion and add the 10,000 title for good measure. She'll have to go through Masai, the defending world champion in the 10K. Cheruiyot won the 10,000 at the national championships with a time of 31 minutes, 55.08 seconds while Masai skipped the race to work on her speed for the shorter distance. "I think I am in good shape to double in Daegu," says Cheruiyot.



**MEN'S 400 METERS**

There are two controversial entrants in this event – for two entirely different reasons. **Oscar Pistorius**, the "Blade Runner" who races on prosthetic devices, has posted a time of 45.07 seconds. This will be a major test for him against able-bodied runners prior to the 2012 Olympics. LaShawn Merritt, the defending world and Olympic champion, served a 21-month drug ban after he used a male enhancement product. He missed the U.S. trials because of the suspension but made the World Championships roster as reigning champ and is appealing his ban ahead of the London Games. Athens 2004 gold medalist Jeremy Wariner is out with a foot injury.

# LOCOG Looks for Lessons in Daegu

If a terrible thunderstorm disrupts competition in Daegu, a handful of people won't mind. They're the observers from the London 2012 Olympics organizing committee.

Written by Karen Rosen

"How that gets dealt with will be very useful to us," Terry Colton, LOCOG's competition manager for athletics, tells *Around the Rings*.

About half a dozen LOCOG staff members from the areas of competition and venues will attend all or part of the IAAF World Championships. The London Marathon organization, which is helping with the Olympic marathon and race walks, will also send a representative.

"Our people will be observing the general setup and the procedures they use out there to see how it all works," Colton says. "We also want to have people there to see how the competition is presented in the stadium and how the public address system is used with the screens to keep the public informed of all the events that are going on."

Presentation is a "really important area for next year to try to make that the best that we can," he adds. With multiple disciplines going on at the same time, "it's sometimes quite tricky to make sure that the public and people don't miss anything special."

Colton will not make the trip to Daegu, but technical operations manager Keith Davies will attend the full nine days of competition.

Chris Cohen, athletics Paralympics manager for LOCOG, will work with the IAAF as an international technical official, putting him behind the scenes at no cost to London. "They'll have a long checklist of things that they'll be reporting on," Colton says.

Technical delegates from LOCOG will be able to have discussions with their counterparts at the IAAF. Stadium representatives will study the setup in Daegu and meet with the IAAF and Olympic Broadcasting Services to talk about camera positions. "It's important to get that fixed now so we're all in agreement how that's going to work," Colton says.

His team is also keen to see how Daegu handles the marathons and race walks, he adds. Like they will in London,

both events will start and finish outside the stadium. Daegu plans to hold medal ceremonies outside the stadium as well. "We haven't decided yet," Colton says.

LOCOG director of sport Debbie Jevans says the fundamental principles are the same for the World Championships and the Olympics as far as the delivery of the event. "We want our key staff that are on-site in 2012 to be experienced, not in the least so that the athletes are only worrying about their performance on the field of play, not having staff members in the wrong position or not doing the right thing."

With 11 months to go until London 2012, the Olympic Stadium at last has a track, with installation expected to be complete about the time the first starting gun is fired in Daegu.

"The key things for the moment for us are finishing off the stadium build, which is coming to completion now and we'll take over the stadium in the next few weeks," Colton says. "We've still got quite a bit of work to do from a LOCOG point of view to make it completely ready for the Olympics."

LOCOG is also building the warm-up track and throwers field adjacent to the stadium. The site had to be cleared and made level. Colton says the plan is to install the warm-up track through September and into October.

Detailed elements such as catering and services must be worked out in time for the test event, the British University & Colleges Sport Championships in May 2012.

"Whether an athlete runs the 100m in 20 seconds or just

over 9 seconds, what goes into getting the athletes there, what happens at the end is exactly the same," Jevans says. "We'll be testing our command and control from what happens at the stadium back to the main operations center. We'll be testing the drop-off points for the athletes. We'll be testing where the media sit. We'll be testing where the Olympic family sits and the whole logistics of the venue, so the fact that we've got some extraordinarily talented university athletes as opposed to the best athletes in the world does not make any difference to our readiness."

Colton, a former elite runner who studied at Loughborough University alongside London 2012 chair Sebastian Coe, was Championship Director of the 9th IAAF World Indoor Athletics Championships in 2003 in Birmingham.

"I'm glad that we have a few more months yet," he says, "but it will pass very quickly." ■



▲ London Olympic Stadium won't have its test event until the British University & Colleges Sport Championships in May 2012. (Getty Images)



◀ Daegu International Bodypainting Festival is the art form's largest annual celebration. (Getty Images)

As if 47 elite athletics events in nine days aren't enough to keep anyone busy, rest assured there's a bit more to do in Daegu.

Written by Elayna Rose

Situated in a flat valley surrounded by mountain ranges and major rivers, the city has proved a prime location for economic growth and development since its establishment around 1000 B.C.

A highway and railroad connect Daegu to the country's two largest urban centers, key for travelers who often stop in Seoul and stay in Busan. The Paradise Hotel Busan and Westin Chosun are two tourist favorites. With major international airports in Daegu, Busan and Incheon, air travel is also convenient.

A typical Daegu day in late August or early September hits at least 26 degrees Celsius (79 degrees Fahrenheit). These are also among the city's wettest months, so expect a shower or two during the nine days of competition.

Daegu is recognized as a hub for industries ranging from textile production to technology to fashion. Major companies

▼ Daegu is South Korea's third largest metropolitan area with a population of roughly 2.5 million. (Getty Images)



## What to Do in Daegu?

such as Samsung got their start here. It's also home to some of the most prestigious universities in the area, the campuses of which provide scenic walking paths throughout the city.

The Daegu Olympic Memorial Citizen's Hall offers exhibitions on health and fitness as well as a chance for visitors to practice their table tennis skills and loosen up in the exercise room and swimming pool.

True to the city's focus on fashion, Dongseongno Street features stores for every taste and style alongside restaurants, bookstores and movie theaters. One of many culinary specialties is a dish called makch'ang, or cow intestines. The guts are grilled over an open flame and often served with a dipping sauce.

The Daegu Hyanggyo Confucian Academy was established in 1398 as an academy for Confucian beliefs. Its campus is now used for lectures, wedding ceremonies and, twice a year during spring and fall, memorial services in honor of the famous Chinese thinker.

For visitors looking to explore off the beaten path, the Gyeongsang Gamyeong Park gives outdoor enthusiasts ample green space and a respite from the hustle and bustle of this high-paced city.

And for those seeking a bit of color – and skin – to get their trip started right, the annual Daegu International Bodypainting Festival at Kolon Field Concert Hall coincides with the opening weekend of these IAAF Championships. ■

▼ Daegu also hosted the 2003 Summer Universiade as well as a share of the 2002 FIFA World Cup, both at the stadium for these IAAF Championships. (Getty Images)



## Looking Ahead to Moscow 2013



Written by Elayna Rose

The IAAF Championships are coming to Russia for the first time from August 10 to 18 of 2013.

Moscow's the host, and the venue is Luzhniki Stadium, site of ceremonies for the 1980 Olympics. Built in 1956, the 78,360-seat stadium is the country's largest, hence its selection for the final match of the 2018 FIFA World Cup.

Past world champions Yelena Isinbayeva (pole vault), Yaroslav Rybakov (high jump), Olga Kaniskina (20km race walk), Mariya Savinova (800m) and Sergey Kiryapkin (50km race walk) will likely be among Russia's strongest hopes to medal on home soil.



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