



who will it be?

Media Release – “The Big Shot hits Christchurch”

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For immediate release

Canterbury athletics fans will be treated to more excitement this February, when double World Indoor Champion Ryan Whiting (USA) comes to Christchurch to take on local hero Tom Walsh.

The Big Shot – an international shot put competition to be staged in the midst of the rebuilding Christchurch CBD – will be held on the 25th of February at the Retro Sports Facility, a new Gap Filler project on the former Crowne Plaza Hotel site, opposite the Christchurch Casino.

Whiting has won the last two World Indoor Championships, winning most recently at Sopot, Poland in March, an event which was Walsh’s international breakthrough when he took a surprise bronze medal. The 27-year-old successfully defended the title he first won in Istanbul in 2012, and between those titles also won the silver medal in the 2013 World Championships outdoors in Moscow.

Walsh, a double international medallist in 2014 at the World Indoor Championships and Commonwealth Games, and five-time New Zealand champion, was looking forward to competing here against Whiting. He said today “I competed against Ryan over in Europe, but to have an athlete of his class coming to NZ to compete on our home turf is awesome.”

Also confirmed already for the event are the Australian duo Damien Birkinhead and Matt Cowie – current Australian champion Birkinhead has been a crowd favourite at the International Track Meet, while this will be Cowie’s first competition in Christchurch. Event Director Paul Coughlan said that the organisers were hoping to add more internationals to the field, including former World Junior Champion and multiple age-group world record holder Jacko Gill, and would make further announcements as athletes were confirmed.

The event is a new direction for organisers of the International Track Meet, which was originally established at QE2 pre-earthquakes, and has been at Christ’s College for the past three years. Organisers said that for a range of reasons, that event was being put on hold for this year, but are excited about the opportunity to put total focus into the shot put and showcase the talent that New Zealand has in that particular discipline of sport.

“New Zealand has a proud history in shot put, dating back to Les Mills and Val Young, and currently it is stronger than ever with Tom and Jacko, and of course Val Adams as well – if we can continue to put their talents on show then hopefully we can inspire more youngsters to follow in their footsteps” said Coughlan today.

Further ticketing information will be released on the website thebigshot.co.nz in January.

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For more information contact Paul Coughlan, 027-2233-028, or paul@internationaltrackmeet.co.nz