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For Immediate Release

WORLD CLASS ATHLETES TO FEATURE IN SHOT PUT SERIES

New Zealand's two greatest ever shot putters, Dame Valerie Adams, and man of the moment World Champion Tom Walsh, will have world class competition in headline the 2018 Athletics NZ International Series, featuring the Timaru Super Shot, The Big Shot in central Christchurch, and the Sir Graeme Douglas International Track Challenge at Waitakere.

Alongside multiple world and Olympic champion Dame Valerie in the women's field at The Big Shot will be American Brittany Smith, and Canadian Commonwealth Games team representatives Brittany Crew and Taryn Suttie. All three are capable of throwing in the 18-19m range, and will provide the Kiwi star with a strong challenge as she completes her preparations for next month's Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast.

Hometown hero Walsh hit the headlines this week when he defended his World Indoor title with a stunning performance in Birmingham, and next week will face five of his fifteen opponents again, in unquestionably the strongest shot put field ever assembled in this country. Six men from six different countries, all 21m+ throwers, and seeking revenge on Walsh for last week will be Ryan Whiting (USA), who won the two World Indoor titles prior to the big Kiwi, in 2012 and 2014, along with Walsh's fellow medallists from the Glasgow Commonwealth Games, Jamaica's O'Dayne Richards and Canada's Tim Nedow. Rounding out the field will be Australian champion Damien Birkinhead, also leading up to the Commonwealth Games in his home country, and rising Polish star Konrad Bukowiecki, the World Junior champion and world junior record holder.

General admission to the Timaru event is by gold coin donation, and the Christchurch event will be free, with hosting packages available on site. Further information about these can be found on the event webpages, thebigshot.co.nz and www.athletics.org.nz/Events/timaru-super-shot

Full biographical info on all athletes below.

For more information and media accreditation to the events, contact:

The Big Shot - Paul Coughlan, paul@internationaltrackmeet.co.nz or 027-2233-028

Timaru or Auckland – Brett Addison, brett@athletics.org.nz or 021-849-099

Tom Walsh NZL	Age 26 PB: 22.31m 2016 Olympic bronze medallist 2017 World Champion 2016 & 2018 World Indoor Champion 2016 Diamond League Champion 2014 Commonwealth Games silver medallist Ranked #1 in world 2018 Ranked #4 in world 2017
Ryan Whiting USA	Age 32 PB: 22.28m 2014 & 2012 World Indoor Champion 2018 US Indoor Champion 2018 World Indoors Finalist
Konrad Bukowiecki POL	Age 20 PB: 22.00m World Championships Finalist 2017 World Indoor Championships Finalist 2018 World U20 Champion 2014 World Ranking #11 2017
O'Dayne Richards JAM	Age 29 PB: 21.96m Commonwealth Champion 2014 World Championships Bronze medallist 2015
Tim Nedow CAN	Age 27 PB: 21.33m 2018 World Indoors Finalist 2018 2014 Commonwealth Games Bronze Medallist
Damien Birkinhead AUS	Age 24 PB: 21.35m 2016 Rio Olympic finalist Ranked #16 in world 2017

Dame Valerie Adams NZL	Age: 33 PB: 21.24m Double Olympic champion, Olympic silver medallist 4x World Champion, and 4x World Indoor Champion 3x Commonwealth champion
Brittany Smith USA	Age: 26 PB: 18.96m Former USA under-23 champion
Brittany Crew CAN	Age: 23 PB: 18.58m National Record Holder – Canada 6 th 2017 World Championships 2016 Canadian Champion Ranked #14 in the world last year
Taryn Suttie CAN	Age: 27 PB: 17.88m Canadian Commonwealth Games Representative 2018 2015 Canadian Champion 2016 Rio Olympian
Torie Owers NZL	Age: 23 PB: 17.50m NZ no 2, formerly of USA, now lives in Christchurch 2017 MPSF Indoor Track & Field Champion (US)