



Thursday, 08 February 2018

### **IAAF World champion Justin Gatlin to run at Athletix Grand Prix Series**

World champion, Justin Gatlin - who owns three world sprint titles including an Olympic title, has joined the list of world class athletes who will be competing at the much-awaited Athletix Grand Prix Series in March 2018.

Gatlin, the 2017 World 100m Champion and the 5<sup>th</sup> fastest ever human being in the 100m and 200m, will line up in the men's 150m race at Tuks Stadium (Tshwane) on Thursday, 08 March in the second of the three series Meetings.

He is the biggest name to compete on South African soil since Michael Johnson in 2001 and is a massive boost to South African athletics. His presence shows once again how far the sport has come and that global champions are again seeing South Africa as a top global player.

The 35-year-old has astoundingly never run a competitive 150m so this will be a new experience for both him and for South Africans alike.

"I have obviously done 150's in training, but have never raced over that distance before. It will be interesting to see how I do. It is also my first race of the season which adds to the excitement for me," said Gatlin.

The USA star spoilt the retirement party of Usain Bolt in 2017 when he dipped countryman Christian Coleman and Bolt, to win his first global title since 2005, testimony to the longevity of his career.

He ascribes his ability to stay at the top to his ongoing work on his technique. A glance at race videos of the last four years will show just how much his technique has improved, coming as close to perfection as possible.

In 2015 Gatlin set a world lead in the 100m when he broke his previous best of 9.77sec to clock 9.74sec for the win at the Diamond League in Doha on 15 May. This is also his best time ever and sits 5<sup>th</sup> on the World All Time lists. That same year he would run times of 9.75sec twice.

Gatlin was so dominant in 2015 that the only race that he was beaten in was the 100m final where his arch rival, Usain Bolt, again snuck victory from him at the World Championships. The margin of victory was a mere 1/100<sup>th</sup> of a second. Only Bolt was able to run faster than him in the 200m in 2015.

Gatlin's 19.57sec in Eugene on 28 June was 2/100<sup>th</sup> of second slower than Bolt's 19.55sec. It is also the 5<sup>th</sup> fastest time ever run.

To date Gatlin has run an incredible 55 times under the 10 second barrier, a feat very few can boast of. He has also gone under 20 seconds seven times in the 200m.

"Having Justin Gatlin running in South Africa is a big coup for us," said Aleck Skhosana, President of Athletics South Africa (ASA). "We have such incredible depth in the sprints in South Africa. To have an athlete of Justin Gatlin's calibre compete here against our athletes means that the world sees us as a major contender in the sprints.

"It also brings other great benefits as it inspires other aspiring sprinters and beyond. It also inspires coaches to produce the calibre of sprinters along the likes of Gatlin and Akani Simbine."



**EVENT INFORMATION:** Athletix Grand Prix Series

**Dates and Venues:**

Thursday, 01 March 2018	Ruimsig Stadium, Johannesburg
Thursday, 08 March 2018	Tuks Stadium, Tshwane
Thursday, 22 March 2018	Dal Josaphat Stadium, Paarl

**Ticket Prices:**

*Main Pavilion Tickets*

Standard Ticket:	R 100 each
Children under 16 years of age:	R 50 each

*Open Stand/Grass Banks*

Standard Ticket:	R 50 each
Children under 16 years of age:	R 50 each

**ONLINE TICKET SALES** will open on **Wednesday, 14 February 2018**. Tickets can also be purchased at the gates of each event.

**Facebook:** AthletixGrandPrix

**Twitter:** @AthletixGP

**Instagram:** @athletixgrandprix

**Website:** [www.athletixgrandprix.com](http://www.athletixgrandprix.com)

**About Athletics South Africa:**

*Athletics South Africa (ASA) is the national governing body for the sport of athletics (including track and field, cross country, road running and racewalking) in South Africa, recognised by the IAAF, and also a member of Confederation of African Athletics. The association is based in Johannesburg.*

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**For media queries, please contact:**

Sifiso Cele  
ASA Media Consultant  
081 394 2597  
[sifiso.cele@athleticsa.co.za](mailto:sifiso.cele@athleticsa.co.za)



**For media queries, please contact:**

Jacky McClean  
PR and Media Manager  
083 291 9283  
[jacky@newsportmedia.tv](mailto:jacky@newsportmedia.tv)