



26 February 2009

MEDIA RELEASE
2012 SPARC FUNDING / HIGH PERFORMANCE INVESTMENT PLAN

Athletics New Zealand welcomes the news regarding the 2012 High Performance investment from SPARC. Although the funding we have been allocated was less than what was submitted in our High Performance Investment Plan, we are glad to see that SPARC has recognized the gains made in our sport and the potential for success at the next Olympic Games in London. Two medals in Beijing exceeded our performance targets set with SPARC and the new investment acknowledges that New Zealand athletics is a credible investment as a targeted performance sport. We continue to improve and our ranking against other nations at the World Championships and Olympic Games is a valuable measure that our athletes and coaches can take pride in, because it demonstrates that New Zealand athletes can achieve success on the world stage.

In justifying the allocation of funds to NSO's the key highlighted comments from SPARC's media release states; "Priority has been given to sports with the greatest chance of success. We have had to be uncompromising in applying criteria based on past performance and the likelihood of future success." and "It is encouraging to see national sports organisations have across the board significantly improved their planning and sharpened their focus on raising standards for elite athletes." and finally, "This investment supports SPARC's High Performance strategy aimed at creating depth rather than breadth at the elite level."

Website link: <http://www.sparc.org.nz/sparc-investment-plan-for-high-performance-success>

The positive news for Athletics New Zealand will be the overall increase in funding of \$1.7m over the next four years for Olympic preparations compared to the previous 2005-2008 Olympic build-up.

Sport	2008 Investment	2009 Investment	Total 2005–2008 Investment	Total 2009-2012 Investment
Athletics	\$1.15m	\$1.3m	\$3.5m	\$5.2m

The reality remains that SPARC is only funding those initiatives based on the support and preparation for the 2012 Olympics Games and not initiatives that revolve around the development of talent as a whole.

We all know that talent development is critically important to the sport and we all agree that it would be ideal to receive funding for every level of our sport but, it has to be made **very clear** that the funding and investment received from SPARC through the High Performance Department is only for initiatives, athletes, and coaches that have the ability to impact on our 2012 performance goals and those who have the ability to achieve a top 16 performance and/or Olympic medal in London.

While there is a considerable amount of funding going towards Olympic initiatives, unfortunately, if there are development initiatives outside the scope of High Performance the sport as a whole along with Athletics New Zealand have to find ways to fund and support those programs. This will not be the priority of the High Performance Department.

The High Performance Investment Plan submitted to SPARC included both initiatives for Olympic preparations as well as a heavy emphasis on development initiatives. We remain committed to create a strong development pathway for all of our athletes and our plans are centered on pathways that can make an impact and difference to the sport. Although the majority of development initiatives cannot be funded through SPARC's High Performance investment we are very comfortable knowing that we can build a supportive programme for our elite athletes.

The High Performance Investment Plan and pathways to be introduced to the sport in the coming months will include a four tiered squad structure and will remain elite focussed with entry into the squads by way of published age related entry standards. We feel that the key to the High Performance pathways and supporting athletes has to go beyond the "gut feeling" and allow us to use objectives measures as much as possible to invest in the "right" athletes and program initiatives. The standards are likely to align with the current level expected for carding of athletes.

While the focus of the high performance department will remain at the elite level, and more so on those athletes specifically targeted as potential top 16 athletes in London, a junior development initiative will be implemented that will see identification and recognition of emerging talent and a series of regional initiatives implemented to assist in the development pathway of these athletes.

A full announcement on the squad structure, as well as the roll out of new initiatives based on the High Performance Investment Plan will be released in April.

I would like to thank those individuals that gave their time and effort to help produce the 2012 High Performance Investment Plan. With your effort and support we can make a difference to our sport.

ENDS

If you have any questions regarding this release please contact

Kevin Ankrom

High Performance Director

performance@athletics.org.nz

04 384 6021