PRESS RELEASE

Over 4,800 athletes from 93 countries have entered the 19th World Masters Track & Field Championships in Sacramento, USA, that runs from 6 to 17 July.

A Masters athlete is aged 35 years and over. Competition is conducted in 5-year age groups and covers the whole spectrum of Track & Field, including relays, marathon, an 8km cross-country and road walks.

Zola Pieterse (nee Budd) is one of many Olympians who have entered for this true Corinthian biennial Championships where the emphasis is on participation and WMA founders’ aims “to foster international friendship, understanding and co-operation through Masters athletics.” Zola faces 32 other women in the W45-49 age category 5000m and 31 in the 8km cross-country in Granite Park.

Other ex-Olympians who are determined to keep fit and healthy through Masters athletics’ competition are the double Olympic gold medallist Jearl Clark (nee Miles) who has represented the USA in five Olympics. She competes in the W40-44 age group 400m/800m. One of the 34 entries in the 800m lists a 2.09sec clocking this year. Jearl will face 31 opponents from 21 countries in the 400m.

Al Joyner is a surprise entry in the M50 category. The 1984 Olympic triple jump champion and the World champion from 1983-88 is one of 28 competitors from 15 different countries in the 50-54 group triple jump.

Ed Burke, a three-time Olympian who carried the U.S. flag during the opening ceremonies at the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, is making a re-appearance.

Willie Banks, the former world record holder in the men’s triple jump and a member of three U.S. Olympic teams, is a regular competitor at these Championships and competes on home ground.

Other evergreen Olympians and hardy biennials in World Masters Championships is the former East German star Karin Ilgen who has entered the W70-74 shot putt and discus and the 1960 Rome Olympics pole vault bronze medallist, Hans Lagerqvist of Sweden. Hans is one of the Masters most bemiddled competitors, now turned 70 he is still soaring over 3.10m, and takes on 21 men contesting the M70-74 age group pole vault.

Jason Chaston, the 1996 Atlanta Olympic steeplechaser, is in the 195-strong British Masters Athletics contingent.

The full list of competitors can be found on the Championships web site www.wma2011.com, click on Registration Status.

Further information telephone: BMAF 020 8683 2602