

## British Olympians Set To Fly The Flag Against World's Best At 2009 British Taekwondo Open



Manchester is set to welcome the world's top taekwondo talent as the city plays host to the second BTCB British International Open from the 29th- 30th August 2009.

With Team GB's Olympic contingent in action against the top athletes from around the world, the event will be the team's final preparation ahead of the 2009 WTF World Championships.

The British duo of Aaron Cook and local teenager Michael Harvey, who placed 4th and 7th respectively at the Beijing Olympics, will be amongst those stepping up their training schedules in anticipation of the star-studded international field and the chance to take on some of their prospective 2012 opposition.

With the British Open preceding the World Taekwondo Championships which take place from 9th - 19th October, it will offer vital competitive preparation for the year's biggest tournament. The event is in its second year and is being supported by UK Sport and Manchester City Council as well as forming part of the European Taekwondo Union's A-Class grand prix circuit for the first time.

Andrew Link, Operations Director of BTCB - Sport Taekwondo UK Ltd, commented, "We are very pleased to be bringing the tournament back to Manchester and, having secured ETU A-class status following the success of last year's event, we expect a very competitive field."

"The event is a great chance to support our Olympic athletes on home soil and with taekwondo going from strength to strength in Britain following Sarah Stevenson's bronze medal in Beijing, we fully expect our team to be challenging the best in the world on a regular basis."

Sakis Pragalos, President of the European Taekwondo Union said, "With the London 2012 Olympics fast approaching it is great to have a world class event hosted by British Taekwondo. As the last A-Class event prior to the 2009 World Championships, we are expecting a strong attendance from the national teams and a highly competitive tournament featuring some of the world's best athletes"

Councillor Mike Amesbury, Executive Member for Culture and Leisure at Manchester City Council said: "Manchester is delighted to be hosting the BTCB British Taekwondo Open Championships in August, having successfully hosted the Olympic qualifying event in 2007 and the inaugural British Open in 2008. This further enhancement of Manchester's taekwondo event portfolio is a natural step to take and will present us with more opportunities in the future."

Clare Hartley, Events Consultant at UK Sport said, "We are pleased to be supporting the second annual British International Taekwondo Open in August this year. The event will allow both the elite and junior squads a chance to compete at the top of their game as well as helping British Taekwondo to develop its officials, staff and volunteers in the build up to 2012."

Other International Opens staged in Europe have often attracted competitors from over 50 countries including Asia, South America and Africa and have proved a vital stepping stone in developing the careers of Britain's athletes.



Taken from BTCB website