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With image (caption in notes)**

## **World class wrestling set for Sheffield**



Sheffield will be used to showcase the Olympic sport of wrestling in the run up to 2012 via three international tournaments and a grass roots participation programme.

The national governing body of wrestling, the British Wrestling Association, has partnered with the city to stage the GB Cup until 2010 which will attract around 200 world class wrestlers from across the globe every year.

The association will also target local communities in a bid to raise the profile of the sport, attract new athletes and integrate wrestling into the strong sporting traditions of the city.

Malcolm Morley, chair of the British Wrestling Association (BWA) said: "Sheffield is a large metropolitan city with a diverse population and a strong sporting tradition. Many of the established communities within the city have a strong Asian influence with other emerging smaller communities originating from Eastern Europe.

"All these communities have a strong cultural affinity for Olympic Wrestling, supported by the fact that wrestling is a national sport in Asian countries such as India. The sport also enjoys massive support in Eastern European states such as Poland, Russia and Turkey."

British Wrestling has been consistently successful in integrating wrestling into ethnic communities, particularly in cities such as Birmingham and London.

British Wrestling will target key age groups from 10-16 years and local communities through close co-operation with key stakeholders such as Sheffield City Council.

Malcolm added: "British Wrestling is seeking to use the opportunity of holding the GB Cup in the city for the next three years to promote the sport within the local Sheffield communities."

Around 200 international athletes and support staff, including competitors from giant wrestling nations the Ukraine, Poland, Russia, USA and Iran, have been invited to attend the first ever GB Cup to be staged at the English Institute of Sport Sheffield on June 7 and 8.

The event, organised by the BWA, backed by international governing body FILA and funded by UK Sport's World Class Events Programme until 2009, follows the success of the English Senior Championships at the Sheffield International Venues (SIV)-managed facility in early March.

Cllr Tim Rippon, Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Culture and Planning at Sheffield City Council, said: "This is a brand new event for the country and Sheffield is to play a key part in the development of this Olympic sport as we head towards 2012.

"The event and programmes will be used as a platform to develop wrestling in Britain prior to 2012 and to help build knowledge and awareness of the sport."

Invitations have gone out to the key wrestling nations in Europe, the USA and Russia and organisers anticipate a good take up including the GB squad.

UK Sport's Event Consultant, Clare Hartley, said: "We are delighted to be working with the British Wrestling Association to host this event in Sheffield. The GB Cup will showcase all seven Freestyle men's and four freestyle women's weight category competitions that are found in the Olympic programme, and will give British wrestlers a fantastic opportunity to compete in an international competition on home soil, ahead of London 2012."

The city was approached late last year by the event organisers to stage the 2008, 2009 and 2010 GB Cup competitions which are also being backed by SIV and Yorkshire South Tourism.

Tickets will go on sale from Sheffield Arena Box Office on 0114 256 5656 or via [www.sheffieldarena.co.uk](http://www.sheffieldarena.co.uk) shortly. Day tickets cost £7.50 for adults and £5 for concessions (under 16/senior citizen/student). Weekend tickets cost £12 for adults and £8 for concessions. Tickets on the day will be cash only.

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Photo caption: Olympic hopeful and English Seniors Champion Leon Rattigan (in blue) has already signed up for the GB Cup.

Notes to editors:

The BWA is based in Chesterfield and operates a wrestling academy in Salford, Manchester. More at [www.britishwrestling.org](http://www.britishwrestling.org)

UK Sport's National Lottery-funded World Class Events Programme aims to secure events of strategic importance that deliver a range of lasting benefits. These include economic, social and cultural benefits as well as improving sporting performance by home athletes, encouraging participation and leaving a legacy of facilities and development initiatives. Over 120 sporting events have been staged in the UK through the programme since 1997. More at [www.uk sport.gov.uk](http://www.uk sport.gov.uk)

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