



PRESS RELEASE

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'On Camp with Kelly' hosts training session for young athletes

Double Olympic champion Dame Kelly Holmes and athletes from her Aviva-sponsored 'On Camp with Kelly' mentoring and education initiative were at Tonbridge School on Thursday 8 July to host a training and education session for young middle distance athletes.

65 young athletes aged 10-17 from Kent attended the session, including 25 from Tonbridge Athletics Club and 11 from Dame Kelly's old school, Hugh Christie Technology College, with her former PE teacher Debbie Page.

The event was part of a week long training camp for 15 of the 'On Camp with Kelly' athletes at the excellent sports facilities at Tonbridge School. As part of their personal development through the initiative, the athletes have completed a UK Athletics Coaching Assistant qualification and were able to put their new skills into practice by devising and running the training session and mentoring the next generation under the guidance of Dame Kelly. This was the first time that 'On Camp with Kelly' has run such a session.

The young athletes were split into four groups according to their age, with two 'On Camp with Kelly' athletes leading each group. After a welcome from Dame Kelly, the youngsters took part in a warm up and drills session, following by training on the track and an 800m race for the two groups of younger athletes and training on the grass sports pitches for the older athletes. They were then divided into seven teams for a fun relay before warming down and stretching to end the session.

Dame Kelly said: "I believe it is very important that the athletes I mentor through 'On Camp with Kelly' give something back to the sport and pass on their knowledge to the next generation of athletes as I have done with them. They have experienced many of same things as these young athletes will go through as they progress from school, to junior and then to senior athletics. I am very pleased to invite some of the 'On Camp with Kelly' athletes to train in my home town and that they are able to assist local young athletes. I would like to thank Tonbridge School and Tonbridge AC for their support."

'On Camp with Kelly' athlete Dani Christmas said: "Being able to plan and deliver a training event for young athletes from the local area as part of the 'On Camp with Kelly' camp in Tonbridge was a great experience. Working with younger athletes is a passion of mine and I feel very privileged to have the opportunity to pass on the experiences I have acquired while being an OCWK athlete."

Lucy Dowsett added: "Coaching the young athletes and school children was an enjoyable experience. They had great enthusiasm and it was lovely to see how they were inspired by Kelly and the members of 'On Camp with Kelly'. Just as we learn tips from Kelly, they were able to learn from us which was very rewarding."

One of the young athletes who took part, Josh Bentham, age 17 from Tonbridge AC, said: "It was a good, productive session and I enjoyed it. Having Kelly there was wicked, it's so good to see a home grown hero. The 'On Camp with Kelly' girls were really helpful and I worked hard."

Beth Jeffrey, age 12 from Paddock Wood AC, added: "I'm going to practise the running technique that we were taught today. Having Kelly here has made us work harder and it was really nice to meet her."

Dame Kelly began her 'On Camp with Kelly' mentoring and education initiative in 2004, with the support of Aviva, as she wanted to help the next generation of British middle distance athletes to fulfil their potential. Eight athletes were selected by Kelly to take part in the first education and training camp in South Africa in autumn 2004 and since then the initiative has gone from strength to strength and there are now 60 athletes, including 14 young male athletes, who are part of the initiative.

For more information about 'On Camp with Kelly' and latest news and updates go to www.uncampwithkelly.co.uk

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'On Camp with Kelly'

'On Camp with Kelly' (OCWK) was started by double Olympic champion Dame Kelly Holmes in January 2004 and with support and sponsorship from Aviva has grown from strength to strength. Over 60 athletes have been involved in the initiative to date.

Dame Kelly set up OCWK because she wanted to help talented young female middle distance athletes to achieve their dreams and to retain them in the sport. Her vision of OCWK was that it should be an educational development programme so that the athletes who are part of it gain life experiences as well as learn what it takes to become a world class athlete. Since 2008 15 talented young male athletes have also been involved in the initiative.

Eight girls were given the opportunity to participate in the first OCWK camp in South Africa in October 2004, funded by Aviva, and since then there have been regular Get-Togethers, a training camp in Spain and camps in Melbourne during the 2006 Commonwealth Games and at the GB Team Preparation Camp in Portugal and the IAAF World Championships in Berlin in 2009. OCWK athletes also have the opportunity to race in international meetings across the UK and Europe and benefit from mentoring from Dame Kelly as well as medical and financial support funded by Aviva.

For more information about 'On Camp with Kelly' visit www.uncampwithkelly.co.uk

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For more information about Aviva's support of athletics please contact Steph Burke at Hill & Knowlton on 0207 413 3000 or sburke@hillandknowlton.com