

Press Release

10 January 2024

For Immediate Release

In case of questions:

Jacky Delapierre

CEO

jdelpierre@athletissima.ch

Tel: +41 79 210 24 37

Olivier Petitjean

Athletissima Press Service

olivier.petitjean@athletissima.ch

Tel: +41 79 320 50 34

Returning to the lake for a new era

About forty years after leaving the lakeside in Vidy, Athletissima is set to return, by 2027 or 2028, in the new Pierre-de-Coubertin stadium. The allure of novelty will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the event, but the departure from La Pontaise will inevitably evoke nostalgia.

The architectural competition won in 2016 by the Bern-based firm Translocal Architecture envisions a compact stadium with a capacity of 12'000 seats, including 4'000 covered seats. The rest, still with seating, will be open to better blend the site into the beautiful lakeside setting of Vidy. "The renovated stadium aims to be multipurpose and blended into the surrounding landscape," said the City of Lausanne, the project's sponsor.

The facility is designed for a wide range of users, including Athletissima, athletics clubs, schools, and the general public. The main stand is planned to be equipped with photovoltaic panels. Athletissima and the athletics clubs of Stade-Lausanne and Lausanne-Sports have committed to being involved in the project from the early stages of planning. The meeting organisers have ensured that the stadium can be adapted also to host major championships such as the European Championships or youth competitions (U20/U23). In these cases, the opposite stand will also be covered, and the seating capacity will be increased for the duration of the respective events.

Track under the stand

The site promises to be very welcoming and bright. Athletissima and the athletics clubs have specific needs that Lausanne has considered in the current project. The warm-up stadium, spaces for television and partners, as well as the public hospitality village, will be accommodated. The warm-up stadium is essential to meet regulations and allow events to maintain their standards.

The space under the main stand will have a crucial function and many advantages compared to La Pontaise: a covered 100m track will be installed, with a pit for long jump and triple jump. It will also be possible to train there for high jump. This element is essential for athletes' winter preparation. Two entrances will allow vehicle access to the facility. The creation of a mixed zone for athletes and journalists for interviews is also planned.

A true showcase of modern architecture, a modular glass space with a view of the lake will enhance the overall experience and allow for events such as seminars and conferences. Specific spaces will house public refreshment areas.

Athletissima and the Lausanne clubs are participating in the project in direct collaboration with the City's Metamorphose department, under Mayor Grégoire Junod. The municipal council still needs to approve a credit of 4.4 million Swiss francs to initiate the building permit application process.

Preserving the natural setting

The process is progressing, but authorities are taking their time to minimise the environmental impact, given the sensitivity of the project in a preserved setting. The lakeshores will be maintained in their natural state, and particular care will be given to vegetation. Access points between the lake and the stadium will be limited.

It will be, in a way, a return to Athletissima's roots. Memories still hold the feats of champions from the 1970s and 1980s at Vidy from the 1st edition of the meeting in 1977, before moving to La Pontaise in 1986. Athletes like Dwight Stones, John Walker, Ed Moses, Renaldo Nehemiah, Petro Mennea, Pierre Délèze, Anita Protti, Cornelia Bürki, and Markus Ryffel contributed to the magic of those early days.

The modern era at La Pontaise was marked by athletes like Usain Bolt, Wilson Kipketer, Stéphane Diagana, Noah Lyles, Carl Lewis, Sergueï Bubka, Lea Sprunger, Armand Duplantis, and of course, the world records of Leroy Burrell (100m in 1994), Elena Isinbayeva (pole vault in 2005), and Liu Xiang (110m hurdles in 2006), not to mention the achievements of the Swiss 4x100m relay teams.

In 2022, there was a brief return to the lakeside in Ouchy for the City Event, marked by a splendid pole vault competition won by Armand Duplantis in front of an enthusiastic crowd. The beautiful and calming setting, a characteristic of the Lausanne shores of Lake Geneva, will undoubtedly resurface when Athletissima moves to its new venue in a few years' time. Athletissima is already looking forward to it.

Athletissima/Press Service



For updates and news, follow us on our social networks:



www.facebook.com/athletissima



www.twitter.com/athletissima



www.youtube.com/athletissimalausanne



www.linkedin.com/company/athletissima