

### **South Africa Choose South London for 2012 Preparations**

South Africa has chosen South London to host their Pre Games Training Camps for the London 2012 Olympic Games. South African athletes planning to compete in the 2012 Olympic Games will be based at St Mary's University College and the Lensbury club and will also use a number of top quality club venues in the area.

South African Sport Commission and Olympic Committee (SASCOC) President Gideon Sam said:

"In line with all our planning for the 2012 Games and the run-in to London it's absolutely critical that we quickly identify the areas where we are going to train so in this regard we are delighted to announce St Mary's and the Lensbury club as our choice of venue. It's important that we get the support structures in place and also build and maintain sporting relationships in England that will benefit our athletes both pre and post 2012.

I must say that in the run-up to the 2012 Games it's fantastic that we were able to identify a training camp venue so early on. It's very important that we do it right and get the athletes into the international atmosphere at an early stage and let them get used to their surroundings. They must be exposed to the international set-up. At the Beijing Olympics it was quite an eye-opener and I think some of the athletes were a bit over-awed. Hopefully these kind of camps will be a great help. At SASCOC it's all part of the greater scheme of things, trying to look after the athletes."

Professor Dick Fisher, Head of St Mary's 2012 Preparations, said

"We felt that St Mary's strengths as a high performance centre and the Lensbury's excellent accommodation backed up by internationally recognised clubs in South London was an attractive offer. We are absolutely delighted that South Africa chose us to be part of their Road to 2012 programme and collaboration beyond that."

In July this year a SASCOC delegation spent three days in South London looking at facilities as they reviewed potential sites in the UK. The announcement to use South London as the main base is welcome news to the consortium of clubs, universities, colleges and local authorities that together make up the Go South Go consortium.

SASCOC general manager (High Performance) and 2012 Project Manager Ezera Tshabangu said:

"We visited various venues around Britain. On our return our report was discussed with the High Performance Commission and recommendations were forwarded to the national federations for final input.

"From this point we will give tentative training times and months for facilities to be reserved for Team SA and will be encouraging the National Federations to use the facilities from next year so that they are not something new in 2012. We are also planning a camp with the provisional squad for 2011 whereby we will also visit the actual competition venues for 2012."

Linda Taylor OBE, Chair of the Go South Go Task Force, said

"We formed Go South Go to co-ordinate South London's programme for 2012 and to have been chosen by such a prestigious and high profile team as South Africa to host its Pre-Games training camps has given a great boost to everybody. We are sure that South London will really get behind South Africa in 2012."

Sebastian Coe, Chair of the London 2012 Organising Committee, said:

"This is great news for St Mary's University College and its south London partners. These facilities will help South African athletes train and prepare well for the London Games. It also gives St Mary's and other world class clubs in the area a chance to get involved in our plans in many different ways and feel the excitement of the Games."

The partners in the Go South Go consortium have worked hard to develop and promote a strong package of facilities and services and are delighted to have been chosen to host such a prominent team as South Africa. They feel also that it is a great opportunity to rally South London communities to encourage people to engage with Olympic ideals, lead healthier lifestyles and aspire to fulfil their potential.

London Mayor Boris Johnson welcomed the announcement, saying:

"Having just marked 1000 days to go to the 2012 Games, this is fantastic news. I am delighted that the South African squad has taken advantage of the LOCOG scheme and chosen to base itself at St Mary's and other venues in South London. Not only will the athletes be able to prepare using first rate facilities, they will be within easy reach of the very best that the greatest city on earth has to offer."

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Notes for Editors:

St Mary's University College in Twickenham has an outstanding reputation for sport with past and current students including Rebecca Romero, Andy Baddeley, Mo Farah, Steph Twell and Simon Amor. For additional information on St Mary's University College visit:

<http://www.smuc.ac.uk/2012/index.htm>

Go South Go is a consortium of LOCOG recognised sporting facilities, universities, local authorities and organisations working together to maximise the opportunities and benefits of the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games to South London. For additional information visit:

<http://www.gosouthgo.co.uk/>

The Lensbury on the River Thames at Teddington offers high quality accommodation and recreational facilities for meetings and events and specialises in providing for sports teams. For additional information visit:

<http://www.lensbury.com>

For an interview with Professor Dick Fisher, contact details are as follows: [fisher@smuc.ac.uk](mailto:fisher@smuc.ac.uk) Tel 0208 240 4123 M- 0776 9643998

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