**Discus throwers renew battle**

The top two in the men’s discus from the IAAF qualifying meeting in Oslo will renew rivalries just three days later when they meet here in Stockholm tomorrow (Sunday) afternoon.

Local favourite, Daniel Stahl took the win and eight qualifying points on the Road to the Final in Oslo with a throw of 68.06m

He shares the lead with Jamaican Fedrick Dacres, second in Oslo with his 67.10m throw; both have 14 points.

On Sunday the discus will again involve the men’s and women’s competitions running together with alternate throwing. Double Olympic champion, Sandra Perkovic will be the favourite on the women’s side. Her winning throw in Oslo was 66.79m securing her the maximum 16 Road to the Final points from her two meetings.

Stahl, Dacres and Perkovic discussed thoughts ahead of tomorrow’s event.

Dacres, the 2011 World Youth and 2012 World Junior Champion, is looking forward to the competition, “European competitions are good for me as in the Caribbean there are not enough throwers to really push me. It is nice to be under pressure and to try and compete with the best.”

On how he got into discus throwing:

Still only 23, Dacres said, “Jamaicans are not known for their throwing. I started because my brother was throwing. And I never looked back. It has been a good journey so far. It has encouraged more throwers in Jamaica too as we have a strong group now.”

Stahl has already had four competitions this year, throwing more than 60m and increasing the distance each time. On this improvement, he said, “I have been doing more in the gym, I am stronger this year and I am injury free.

“I would like to get the Swedish record. I am looking forward to competing in my hometown. I live here and train here. It would be great to have a full stadium with lots of noisy support. I have around 150 friends and family coming to watch!

“It is a really strong field and fantastic to have these top athletes in my home city.”

On his prospects for tomorrow Stahl added, “My main goal this year is to throw over 70m but I cannot promise anything. I have been working hard and wanted a good start to the season so I can relax as we go into the World Championships.”

Seven of the eight competitors in the men's discus at Stockholm also find themselves in the top eight of the qualification standings. With just two rounds left after this weekend, victory for any of those seven could be decisive on the Road To The Final. Poland’s Piotr Malachowski, Philip Milanov from Belgium and, Lithuanian, Andrius Gudzuis will be the biggest threats to Dacres and Stahl.

Croatian, Perkovic has a record 36 Diamond League meeting wins and is looking to secure another in the Stockholm Olympic Stadium. She said, “I enjoy my sport and I always want to do my best. I am happiest when I win.

“I prefer to train on my own or in small groups as I can concentrate well and work on my technique. But I look forward to meeting the other Croatian athletes in London for the World Championships.”

Perkovic is pleased to be back in Stockholm, commenting, “I came after the Olympics in 2012 so I wanted to come back again. I am very satisfied with my start to the season but I always want more. My own targets are what push me on. I have very high standards.”

Perkovic’s biggest rivals on Sunday will again be Cuba’s Yami Perez, who was second in Oslo, and Nadine Muller of Germany.

The three throwers are all delighted to see the discus throw in the main programme tomorrow.

Perkovic said, “Discus is one of the original Greek disciplines so it should always be prime time!”

But they were less enthusiastic about the mixed competing. Dacres said, “With 14 athletes it can be a long wait between throws. Our muscles get cold and we can get tired.”

Perkovic agreed, “We need the competition to emulate the World Champs events so that it is good preparation.”

Stahl added, “While I like being with the women, it makes the competition too long as it can last two and half hours.”