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Posted: April 15, 2008

Athletics (TPR): Xiang, Campbell-Brown New York-Bound

From Bob Ramsak
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Reigning world and Olympic 110m hurdles champion Liu Xiang will be making a return engagement to the Reebok Grand Prix in New York City on May 31, organizers announced today.

The Shanghai native, one of the most wealthy and recognized athletes in China, has selected the New York competition, this year celebrating its fourth edition, as one of a handful of competitions prior to the summer Olympic Games in Beijing, where he will be carrying the weight of the world's most populous nation on his 24-year-old shoulders.

In New York last year, Xiang scorched to a 12.92 victory, a performance that held up as the best of 2007. He later went on to win the world title in a dramatic race in Osaka, clocking 12.95. In 2006, he set a world record of 12.88 in the event at the Athletissima Super Grand Prix in Lausanne. In his only appearance during the 2008 indoor season, he collected the world indoor 60m hurdle title in Valencia last month.

Since winning the Olympic crown in [Athens](#) nearly four years ago, Xiang has been the poster boy for the Beijing Games, carefully trying to balance his competitive and training schedule with a public appearance and endorsement demands.

Organizers also announced a rematch of last summer's women's world championship 100m featuring gold medallist Veronica Campbell-Brown of [Jamaica](#) and American Lauryn Williams in the closest race of the championships, Campbell-Brown, the reigning Olympic 200m champion, given the edge over Williams, the reigning Olympic silver medallist; both were clocked in 11



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Following a season shortened by injury, Campbell-Brown was the leading sprinter of 2007, producing four of the season's fastest performances, including the fastest, 10.89 at the Jamaican championships. Last year in New York, she topped a solid field in 10.93.

Since her rapid rise among the sprint ranks in 2004, Williams hasn't been nearly as dominant in one-day meets, but has gained the reputation of being well-prepared at major championships. In 2005, she followed up her Olympic silver with world championships gold in Helsinki and in Osaka continued her perfect record of reaching the podium in global appearances.

Following last year's sell-out crowd at Icahn Stadium on Randall's Island, 1500 seats will be added for this year's event.



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