



## Grace and Hodgkinson set for a fast 800m

British and American women's middle distance running is very strong this season ahead of the Olympic Games in Tokyo. And in tomorrow's 800m in the Stockholm Diamond League, Keely Hodgkinson of Great Britain and USA's Kate Grace will be looking to continue their own excellent form.

At just 19 years old Hodgkinson, the European Indoor champion, arrives in Stockholm full of confidence after being crowned British Champion last weekend which secured her place in the British team for the Olympic Games.

Competing in her second Diamond League of the season, Hodgkinson said, "The 800m in the UK is really on fire at the moment for both the women and the men. The trials last week was certainly a good day at the office for me. All the girls are raising their game with five of us having the qualifying time."

After the tactical racing in Manchester, Hodgkinson will be looking to get back to her faster early season times which included her personal best of 1:58.89 in Ostrava in May. Reflecting on her successful season she said, "I did feel confident coming into the season. Last year I didn't feel I got to show what I was capable of due to Covid restricting race opportunities but in the back of my mind I always thought I could reach Tokyo this year."

USA's Kate Grace is sure to be in the mix tomorrow after her great race on Thursday evening in Oslo. She won the Bislett Games 800m finishing in a personal best of 1:57.60 which gave her some confidence following the US trial last month where she was disappointed not qualify for Tokyo.

She said, "After the major disappointment of Eugene it was a great call to go to Oslo and help me get over it and move on. Going into the race both my coach and I had zero expectations but surprisingly my legs felt ok."

On the intensity of the American trials, Grace said "They really are magical because it is all or nothing. This time it was hard for me but in 2016 I experienced the joy of success there. It makes for great TV and, also, prepares you for championships with the three rounds. American women's middle distance running is very strong with those getting through definitely in with a shout of the medals."

Going into tomorrow's race with the fastest time this season is Rose Almanza from Cuba who ran 1:56.42 in Spain last month.