Wounded Highlanders Ready to Smash Records at Stirling Highland Games

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A team of injured military veterans are set to smash adaptive athletics world records at this year's Stirling Highland Games.

The group of five men and one woman from Wounded Highlanders - the UK's only adaptive Highland Games team – are busy training for the event on Saturday, August 20.

Last August, they competed in the adaptive competition at Stirling's virtual Highland Games and were filmed throwing the hammer, weight for distance, shot put and caber.

Between them, they beat nine world records that day and are aiming to better that achievement when they compete in front of crowds at Stirling's first in-person Games since 2019.

Chairman Jim Holborn, who founded the team in 2019, set world records for hammer and shot put in his category last year and is looking to beat those distances and target a new record in weight for distance this year.

He said: "*I'm coming to Stirling with the aim of coming back with my two world records and more and we are all hugely looking forward to the event.*

"*All six of us are training hard to keep the world records we broke last year – and hopefully extend them – and to set some new records if we can.*

"Stirling Highland Games has a great fan base and I think the crowds will be surprised and excited when they realise adaptive athletes can participate in the same events as the heavyweight athletes.

"The distances we throw may be a little shorter and in certain classes the weights are lighter, but it's generally the same competition and an opportunity for us to show what we can do."

Stirling Highland Games President Matt McGrandles was delighted to see the Wounded Highlanders compete at the 2021 virtual event and is looking forward to watching them set more records this year.

He said: "*After hearing about the positive experience the Wounded Highlanders had at Mey Highland Games, I was keen to see how Stirling - as an inclusive Highland Games - could help take their ambitions forward.*

"I'm extremely proud the Wounded Highlanders are coming to Stirling – they have a huge amount to offer and we are keen to be at the forefront of being an open, inclusive and fair Highland Games.

"And after breaking an impressive nine world records in 2021, we know the team are eager to challenge themselves further which makes it all the more exciting for Stirling to host such a high level of competition."

The Wounded Highlanders, who train at The Power Bar gym in Sunderland, have been campaigning for more inclusivity for people with disabilities at Highland Games events.

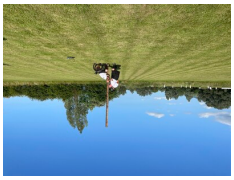
This year the team – who include Scottish-based athletes Trish Lawson and David Dent MBE who uses a wheelchair – will compete at Mey Highland Games as well as Stirling and hope more event organisers will follow their lead.

Mr Holborn said: "*Stirling and Mey are the only two Highland Games with adaptive events this year but there are others who are interested and who we are talking to.*

"I can't thank Matt and the team at Stirling enough for what they have done – last year was brilliant and a real boost for the adaptive community and once again he's given us the platform to show what people with disabilities can do.

"It's great for the team and it's good for the public to see an adaptive games and the more we are seen and spoken about, the more likely it is that we will receive invitations to compete in other Highland

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This year's adaptive contest is being sponsored by the Highland Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (HRFCA).

The organisation's Employer Engagement Director Roy McLellan said: *"We are delighted to sponsor the adaptive competition and help give disabled veterans a platform for their sport.*

"It's a great fit for us given our focus is on supporting and promoting the military and its veterans and we're looking forward to a wonderful day out in Stirling."

Stirling Highland Games runs from 10.30am until 5pm on Saturday August 20 and tickets can be bought now or on the day.

As well as the traditional and adaptive heavyweight competitions, the schedule features highland dancing, on-site heritage tours, children's activities and a food and drink experience showcasing award-winning Scottish produce.

Other highlights are performances from Stirling Gaelic Choir and local pipeband, The Balaklava Pipes and Drums.

The event is sponsored and grant-funded by a variety of organisations including Active Stirling, EventScotland, Forth Valley Chamber of Commerce and Specsavers Stirling.

For more details on the Games and to book tickets, visit www.stirlinghighlandgames.com

For more information on the Wounded Highlanders, visit www.woundedhighlanders.co.uk

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