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# PAN AMERICAN CHAMPIONSHIP WILL START THIS FRIDAY WITH 17 NATIONS

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The Pan American Senior Championship will start this Friday, July 18, in the Mexican Olympic Training Center in Mexico City, with a record participation of 17 countries. Assisted by the Pan American Sports Organization (PASO), the Championship has included an athlete's training camp and coaches clinic in which both experienced athletes as well as relative newcomers to our sport have taken part. The athletes will be competing for spots to the Toronto 2015 Pan American Games as well as the Veracruz 2014 Central American and Caribbean Games.

The women will take the stage on Friday and some of the world's top performers such as Yane Marques, Margaux Isaksen, Melanie McCann, Ayelen Zapata and Tamara Vega will be starting in the field of over 40 athletes. The competition will be intense at all levels since the qualification of a second athlete to the Games will depend on the placing of the second best athlete from each nation, so all the places will be of utmost importance to the nations.

The men will follow on Saturday with a field of more than 45 athletes. Among the best ranked we will have Ismael Hernandez, Esteban Bustos, Dennis Bowsher, Manuel Padilla and Leandro Silva, who will be looking to help their teams get the two available spots for their countries.

On Sunday the teams will face off in the men and women's relays as well as the mixed relay in what should be an exciting finish to the tournament.

The nations taking part are Canada, USA, Mexico, Guatemala, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Panama, Costa Rica, Venezuela, Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Ecuador and Uruguay. Of these nations Costa Rica, Peru, Bolivia and Puerto Rico are taking part in a Pan American Championship for the first time.

The Pan American Congress will also be held on Saturday, as the nations will get together to discuss how to continue to grow the sport in the American Continent. It will be headed by Pan American Confederation President, Ivar Sisniega as well as by Juan Manzo, NORCECA President, Jorge Salas, South American Confederation President and Janusz Peciak, UIPM Director for Sport.