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Four Monegasque athletes in Beijing

On Monday 28th July, the President of the Monegasque Olympic Committee, H.S.H. Prince Albert II, officially presented the four athletes who are to wear the "red and white" colours at the Beijing Olympic Games.

Monaco and the Summer Olympics represent a long and fine tradition. Since Anvers (1920) until Athens (2004), the Principality of Monaco and the Monegasque Olympic Committee have always been loyal participants, taking part in 17 Summer Olympiads with a total of 96 athletes (in 11 disciplines).

Third Olympics for Sébastien Gattuso (athletics)

The Monegasques Sébastien Gattuso, Romain Marchessou, Yann Siccardi and Mathias Raymond will be extremely happy and proud to be representing their country in the Chinese capital.

The Olympics are not new to Sébastien Gattuso. At the age of 37 (1.83m for 92 kg), this will be the third time he is to take part in the Olympic Games. After Salt Lake City in 2002 (he was a member of the bobsleigh team, as a pusher, where he gets his physical strength and explosiveness in the sprint), he competed in Athens (2004). In Beijing, he will once again be in competition in the 100m flat in the National Stadium on Friday 15th August. Recording a time of 10'58 in Athens four years ago, Sébastien has improved his personal record with 10'55 in the world championships in Osaka last year, then 10'53 a few days ago in the French National Championships (Dijon). "I have already "tasted" international competitions and this type of event in particular. Therefore I'm tackling the Games with no pressure.

And I will give 100% as I'm extremely proud to be able to represent the Principality".

A first for Romain Marchessou (weightlifting), Yann Siccardi (judo) and Mathias Raymond (rowing).

The weightlifter Romain Marchessou will be experiencing a true baptism of fire: "It is a dream coming true". The 22 year-old top athlete will be competing in the gymnasium at the Beijing University of Aeronautics on Wednesday 13th August in the under 77 kg category. A finalist at the last European championships in Italy (18th), he has set himself the goal of "giving my utmost to beat my personal records". Also a big first for the judoka Yann Siccardi (22 years old). An INSEP boarder for the last four years (where he rubs shoulders with the French judo team) Yann has gained ground. The results and podiums achieved (gold medal at the Games of the Small States in 2007 in Monaco) confirm this commendable progression.

He will be competing on the tatamis of the gymnasium of the University of Science & Technology on Saturday 9th August (the day after the opening ceremony). "I'm not going to put any pressure on myself. I consider myself lucky to be taking part in such an event. I always begin a competition to win. But given the level, being amongst the first seven would be a good result."

On the same day, Mathias Raymond (22 years old; rowing - skiff) will be out on the lake in the Shunyi Olympic Park (situated 45 km from Beijing). As a boarder with the French team (which has enabled him to take on a new dimension in contact with the best), he admits: "The Olympics ? I haven't yet come to terms with it..." His goal forms part of an approach to progress: "I hope to perform as best as possible. I finished 19th last year in the world elite championships. I would like to do at least as well."

During the official presentation, H.S.H. Prince Albert II announced that Mathias Raymond would be the standard bearer for the Monegasque delegation at the opening ceremony, "an immense joy and an extremely proud moment".



From left to right, Sébastien Gattuso (athletics), Yann Siccardi (judo), H.S.H. Prince Albert II, Romain Marchessou (weightlifting) and Mathias Raymond (rowing).