

OFFICIAL PROGRAMME

IRELAND V LATVIA | FIBA WOMEN'S EUROBASKET 2025 QUALIFIERS | 09.02.2025 | 1700 | NATIONAL BASKETBALL ARENA | €4



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CEO Message	5
Head Coach Programme Notes	7
Ireland Squad List	8
Latvia Squad List	11
Referee Signals	13
Kids Zone	16
Sing The Anthem!	16
Up Next	17

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CEO'S MESSAGE



John Feehan

Welcome to the National Basketball Arena for our final fixture of this FIBA Women's EuroBasket 2025 qualifying campaign. It's wonderful to have such super backing for our women's team and I'd like to thank everyone who's come along today to cheer them on once more.

James Weldon, his players and backroom staff have delivered a fine qualifying campaign in what was a tough group, but everyone has stepped up. We have seen plenty of debutants throughout and it's great to see so much talent coming through the ranks to senior level, which is a testament to the work being done by our Irish underage coaches, as well as our clubs and schools around the country. It also highlights the promise of what's to come in future FIBA Women's EuroBasket qualifying campaigns.

2024 saw huge progress for the sport, including an increase in playing population of 21.5%, welcoming new partners in Nike and AIG, agreeing a new broadcast partnership with TG4 and receiving planning permission for a redeveloped National Basketball Arena. While we didn't receive funding in the initial round Government's Large Scale Sports Infrastructure Fund (LSSIF) for our new Arena, Basketball Ireland remains in dialogue with key stakeholders and we're determined to take the next steps to deliver on the project, which will be transformative for Irish sport. 2025 is one of huge promise, as we continue the positive momentum generated from the last number of years.

I'm delighted to have the President of FIBA Europe, Jorge Garbajosa, in attendance for this game. An iconic player on the court, he's also worked tirelessly off the court and it's wonderful to see someone of his calibre in the role. FIBA Europe have been a great supporter of Basketball Ireland, including on our return to EuroBasket level and we look forward to strengthening our relationship further over the coming months and years.

Finally I'd like to thank Latvia, who were excellent hosts to us over our three visits to Riga during the qualifying campaign. On behalf of all at Basketball Ireland I'd like to extend a warm welcome to the Latvian team, along with today's referees, table officials and commissioners.



**"Bring
The Noise."**



Programme Notes

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you all here and thank you for your continued support.

This current campaign has been challenging as some games became geo-politically charged but I am so impressed at how our squad focused on the sporting task in hand namely to try qualify. I am also thankful for the support of Basketball Ireland CEO John Feehan; the Elite Performance Committee (EPC) as well as all the BIHQ and Arena staff throughout this campaign.

The summer games brought a win over the Netherlands and a narrow loss to Den-

mark which helped us move quickly up the FIBA ranking. Our last game against France was memorable and even though there was only a basket between the teams that intensity necessary at the top level was hard to maintain.

It is important to acknowledge how difficult it is for our fully committed home based amateur players to hold down their demanding work schedules while trying to maintain the same rigorous training schedule as professionals without having access to the necessary recovery time.

We do currently have three players on the professional pathway with Claire and

Bridget playing exciting basketball in Spain and Abigail after signing a contract with Oaklands in the UK.

Finally it's fantastic to have our captain back. Edel brings a special energy to the group and has managed her recovery exceptionally well. A special shoutout also to our family and close friends who our commitment to this programme affect the most, a big thank you for your unwavering support.

Please bring the noise tonight it's a special place when it's a FIBA game.

James Weldon
Ireland Head Coach



MEET THE SQUAD

Edel Thornton

Gurranabraher Credit Union Brunell



Abigail Rafferty

Oakland Wolves England



Aine O'Connor

FloMAX Liffey Celtics



Amy Dooley

Midlands Park Portlaoise Panthers



Bridget Herlihy

Unicaja Baloncesto Spain



Claire Melia

University of Ferrol, Spain



Hazel Finn

FloMAX Liffey Celtics



Kate Hickey

SETU Waterford Wildcats



Lauryn Homan

Gurranabraher Credit Union Brunell



Michelle Clarke

Killester BC



Sarah Hickey

SETU Waterford Wildcats



Sorcha Tiernan

FloMAX Liffey Celtics



MEET THE STAFF

James Weldon

Head Coach



Jillian Hayes

Asst. Coach SETU Waterford Wildcats



Ioannis Liapakis

Asst. Coach UCD Marian





LATIVA SQUAD

3 Elizabeth Bulane
4 Paula Strautmane
6 Kathy Wichman
12 Anette Steinberga
16 Ilze Jacobson
18 Laura Melder
23 Lina Member
31 Louise Silas
33 Kitty Lax
35 Kate Wolf
44 Katrina Ozola
45 Digna Strautmane

Martin Gulbis - Head coach
Aigars Nerips - Coach
Matīss Rožlapa - Coach
Anda Eibele - Volunteer trainer
Elvis Brokans - Volunteer trainer
Sandy Button - Volunteer trainer
Ivars Ikstens - Fitness trainer
Martin Pulveris - Doctor
Marcis Jakovic - Doctor
Toms Abeltins - Physiotherapist
Ansis Member - Physiotherapist
Eddie Eglitis - LBS Women's Team Coordinator

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TOP SCORER



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EUROBASKET
QUALIFIERS

ALL-TIME

CLAIRE MELIA	70
BRIDGET HERLIHY	70
EDEL THORNTON	45
SORCHA TIERNAN	41
SARAH HICKEY	41



KIDS ZONE

CAN YOU SPOT FIVE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THESE TWO PHOTOS?



CAN YOU GUESS THE PLAYER?

1. She is the current Ireland senior women's captain.
2. She led her club Gurranabraher Credit Union Brunell to last season's Paudie O'Connor National Cup.



LET'S SING THE ANTHEM!

Sinne Fianna Fáil, atá faoi gheall ag
Éirinn,
Buíon dár slua thar toinn do ráinig
chugainn,
Faoi mhóid bheith saor,
Seantír ár sinsear feasta,

Ní fhágfar faoin tíorán ná faoin tráill.
Anocht a théam sa bhearna bhaoil,
Le gearr ar Ghaeil, chun báis nó saoil,
Le gunna-scréach faoi lámhach na
bpiléar,
Seo libh canaig' amhrán na bhFiann.

UP NEXT



FIBA
BASKETBALL
WORLD CUP
2027 EUROPEAN
PRE-QUALIFIERS



Switzerland

Fribourg

Thursday, February 20th | 18:30
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Azerbaijan

BAKU

Sunday, February 23rd | 13:00
Live on TG4 Player