



## For Immediate Release

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*Contact Keith Peters for race-day media credentials. Space on media trucks (one for the men's race and one for the women's race) is extremely limited, so call ahead to ensure seating. TV crews should also call in advance to secure parking for vehicles on Jefferson Drive SW on race morning.*

*Please note: There will be very limited space on the finish line for photographers. Access to this area will require a special credential and will be determined by the Media Coordinator. Please be respectful of race officials and volunteers as they try to keep the area clear and safe for all involved.*

*All of the latest race information is available at [www.CherryBlossom.org](http://www.CherryBlossom.org), including an [extensive media guide](#), which is available for download in both Flipbook and PDF formats.*

## 2018 Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile Champions Jemal Yimer And Buze Diriba Will Defend Titles On April 7

***Open, American and RRCA Prize Money and Bonuses Offered Totals \$96,500***

**April 4, 2019, Washington, DC:** Organizers of the 47th Credit Union Cherry Blossom Run announced today that 2018 champions **Jemal Yimer** and **Buze Diriba** will return to our nation's capital to defend their titles on Sunday, April 7. Past champions **Stanley Kebenei** (2017) and **Stephen Sambu** (2014 & 2015) will join Yimer on the starting line at 7:30 a.m., while Diriba will be joined by 2017 women's champion **Hiwot Gebrekidan** and the other elite women, who will have their own separate start at 7:18 a.m. One other past champion, **Joan Nesbit Mabe**, who was the last American woman to win Cherry Blossom in 1996, will be competing as an age grouper in the 55-59 women's category, starting alongside some 16,000 other runners.

This year's race will offer \$96,500 in prize money and bonuses to top runners in the 10-mile:

- . \$40,000 in prize money, plus a possible \$3,500 in bonuses will be awarded in equal amounts to the top 10 international men and women;
- . time bonuses include \$1000 for 1st sub-46:00 male; \$750 for 2nd sub-46:00, \$1000 for 1st sub-52:00 female; \$750 for 2nd sub-52:00 female;
- . \$25,000 in American Development Prize Money will be awarded in 2019 to the top 10 U.S. men and women, with double dipping allowed - meaning top American runners can collect top-10 overall prize money and top-10 American Development Prize Money;
- . As they have since 2017, race organizers are offering a \$10,000 American record bonus for the first American man to break **Greg Meyer's** American record of 46:13, set here in 1983, and for the first American woman to break **Janet Bawcom's** single-sex American record of 52:12, set here in 2014;
- . Thanks to a collaborative effort between Credit Union Cherry Blossom Run organizers and the Road Runners Club of America (RRCA), \$1,500, \$1,000 and \$500 will be awarded to the top-three men and women alumni of

two innovative developmental programs, the RRCA Roads Scholars Grants, and RRCA's RunPro Camp.

Event Director Phil Stewart said: "We are pleased to host the Washington area's only internationally significant road race, featuring top runners from around the globe. We also believe in helping Americans onto the world stage through our American prize money and support for RRCA Roads Scholars and RunPro Camp alumni. These elite athletes provide inspiration to 16,000 others who chase after them in vain."

Defending champion and two-time runner-up (2016 & 2017) Buze Diriba comes in as the favorite in the women's race. As it has since 2006 - with the exception of the wind-plagued 2016 event, when the women's start was combined with the men's - the separate start for women mentioned in the first paragraph will allow for the women's times to be considered as women's-only records without any effect of being paced by males. The format also provides increased visibility for these talented female athletes.

Diriba will be challenged by fellow Ethiopian Hiwot Gebrekidan, who won the race in 2017 and finished second here last year. Diriba ran 53:45 to beat Gebrikidan's 53:48 in 2018, while Gebrekidan ran 53:37 to prevail over Diriba's 53:52 in 2017. Diriba, however, owns the faster personal best for 10 miles, having run 51:38 to win the 2016 EQT Pittsburgh 10 Miler.

Three other Ethiopian women are also entered: **Gotytom Gebreslase**, who has run 52:16 for ten miles, **Hiwot Ayalew**, who has a personal best of 53:51, and **Etagegne Woldu**, who ran 1:07:51 for the half marathon recently. They'll be joined by **Stephanie Twell** of Great Britain, with a personal best of 53:52 for 10 miles, and Kenyan **Rosemary Wanjiru**, who ran a personal best 30:50 for 10K earlier this year, among others.

**Emma Bates**, from Boise, ID, is the top returning American, having run 54:45 to place seventh overall and second American here last year. Bates vaulted to another echelon among U.S. women last December when she claimed the National Marathon title in her first-ever marathon with a time of 2:28:18 at the California International Marathon. Top local runner **Bethany Sachtleben**, from Fairfax, VA, finished right behind Emma in eighth place here last year, with a time of 54:59 (and just a short distance behind her at the California International Marathon with a personal best time of 2:31:20). Other top Americans include **Maddie Van Beek** (54:23), from Fargo, ND, **Meghan Peyton** (54:42), from St. Paul, MN, and **Katy Jermann** (54:49), from Burnsville, MN, among others.

One other very notable woman in the field is 46-year-old **Deena Kastor**, from Mammoth Lakes, CA. The 2004 Olympic Marathon Bronze Medalist and American record holder in the marathon (2:19:36) will be pursuing both the American 45-49 age group record of 57:09, held by Linda Somers Smith, and the Cherry Blossom masters record of 53:47 set by Priscilla Welch back in 1987. She appears ready, after having run an American 45-49 age group record for 8K at the recent Bank of America Shamrock Shuffle (27:12).

In the men's race, Kenyan Jemal Yimer will wear bib number one as the favorite. But he'll be competing with past winners Stanley Kebenei (USA) and Stephen Sambu (Kenya) as well as a number of other very fast men, including last year's runner up **Aweke Ayalew**, from Bahrain. In placing 1-2 last year, Yimer ran 46:17 to Ayalew's 46:22. Kebenei's winning time in 2017 was 46:36, while Sambu ran 45:29 in 2014 and 46:10 in 2015. Not to be overlooked, Kenyan **Josphat Tanui** has run 59:22 for the half marathon.

Other top Americans include **Kiya Dandena**, from Flagstaff, AZ, who ran his 46:58 personal best here in 2017, when he placed ninth overall and fourth American; and **Matthew McClintock**, from Blowing Rock, NC, who ran

47:10 to place ninth overall and third American last year.

**Clint McKelvey**, from Arlington, VA, is the top local runner returning from last year, when he ran 50:14 to finish 26th overall and 12th American. The top local male and female runners each win a trip to the Professional Road Running Organization's (PRRO) Championship at the 2020 Boilermaker 15K in Utica, NY, in July 2020.

As is often the case with the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile, a number of other notable runners have entered the race this year: Canadian Triathlete **Lisa Bentley**, from Caledon, Ontario, Canada, overcame cystic fibrosis to win 11 Ironman Championships; **Michael Wardian**, from Arlington, VA, is arguably the most prolific American distance runner ever; **Dick Beardsley**, whose world-class marathon career hit a marvelous peak in the early 1980s - most notably in his "Duel in the Sun" with Alberto Salazar at the 1982 Boston marathon; and Sri Lankan Olympic hopeful **Hiruni Wijayarathne**, who grew up in nearby Herndon, VA, and holds every Sri Lankan record from the mile to the marathon.

The only man to have run every Cherry Blossom Ten Mile, **Ben Beach** of Bethesda, MD, will toe the line again this year, just as he will line up to start his 53rd consecutive Boston Marathon on April 15.

The Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile Run and 5K Run-Walk attracts some 16,000 participants on a course which starts and finishes on the Washington Memorial Grounds and passes by all of Washington DC's major monuments and memorials. The 47th running of the event is scheduled for Sunday, April 7, 2019, with the elite women's start at 7:18 a.m., followed by the elite men and mass start of the 10-mile starting at 7:30 a.m. The 5K Run-Walk starts at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday morning.

The first running event of the weekend will be the Kid's Run, a 1/2 mile event that will take place at 9:30 A.M. on Saturday, April 6 at the National Building Museum, 401 F St., NW, Washington, DC. Nearly 500 kids will get launched into the fitness lifestyle at this event for ages 4-10.

Over 27,000 runners submitted applications to participate in the 2019 Credit Union Cherry Blossom 10 Mile and 5K Run-Walk, and the list of accepted runners represents all 50 states and 14 foreign countries. The event is limited to 16,000 finishers by the National Park Service.

The 2019 Credit Union Cherry Blossom Run will mark the 18th year of title sponsorship by Credit Union Miracle Day. Since 2002, over \$9.5 million has been raised for the Children's Miracle Network Hospitals, including \$400,000 this year.

### **About the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile**

The Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile, organized by Cherry Blossom, Inc., a 501c(3) chapter of the Road Runners Club of America, is known as "The Runner's Rite of Spring®" in the Nation's Capital. The staging area for the event is on the Washington Monument Grounds, and the course passes in sight of all of the major Washington, DC Memorials. The event serves as a fundraiser for the Children's Miracle Network Hospitals, a consortium of 170 premier children's hospitals across North America. About one-third of the funds raised support Washington, DC's own Children's National ("Children's Hospital"). The event also funds two \$5,000 Road Runners Club of America "Roads Scholar" grants designed to support up-and-coming U.S. distance running talent.

Since 2002, the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile Run and 5K Run-Walk have raised over \$9.5 million

dollars for Children's Miracle Network Hospitals, with \$400,000 of that total being raised this year. The 2019 event marked the 18th year of title sponsorship by Credit Union Miracle Day.

Credit Union Miracle Day, Inc., a consortium of credit unions and credit union suppliers in partnership with CUNA Mutual Group and PSCU, is the title sponsor of the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile Run, 5K Run-Walk and Kids' Run. Other sponsors include Garmin, the presenting technology sponsor; and supporting sponsors E-Trade, Gatorade, Gold's Gym, Honey Stinger, Mamma Lucia, MedStar Sports Medicine, ParkMobile, Peet's Coffee, Potomac River Running, Suburban Solutions, Under Armour and UPS.

The event is a proud member of the **PRRO Circuit** ([PRRO.org](http://PRRO.org)), a series of non-marathon prize money road races in Tampa, FL; Washington, DC; Spokane, WA; and Utica, NY. The circuit is committed to a drug-free sport and funds drug testing at all circuit events in compliance with the standards of international and U.S. drug testing authorities.

In addition to being sanctioned by **USA Track & Field** and the **Road Runners Club of America**, the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Run has earned Gold Level Inspire Certification from the **Council for Responsible Sport** in recognition of its legacy of commitment to sustainability and thoughtful resource management. To learn more, visit [www.CherryBlossom.org](http://www.CherryBlossom.org) and follow the event on social media @CUCB and #CUCB2019.

#### **About Credit Union Miracle Day**

Credit Union Miracle Day is a partnership of over 100 credit unions, CUSOs and partner organizations united to sponsor the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile Run promoting awareness of the credit union difference and benefitting Children's Miracle Network Hospitals nationwide.

#### **About America's Credit Unions:**

Credit unions provide consumers choices for financial services such as checking accounts, investments and loans of all kinds including mortgages. Funds are federally insured, but unlike banks, there are no stockholders at credit unions. Earnings are returned to member-owners in the form of lower loan rates, higher savings rates, low or no-fee products and services. The credit union philosophy of placing members' needs first is why more than 115 million Americans do their banking at one of America's 5,500 credit unions. Credit unions are for everyone – no matter where you live, there is a credit union to meet your needs.

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