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Ethiopians Jemal Yimer And Buze Diriba Win 2018 Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile

1984 Olympic Gold Medalist Joan Benoit Samuelson sets single-age and age group records for women 60-64.

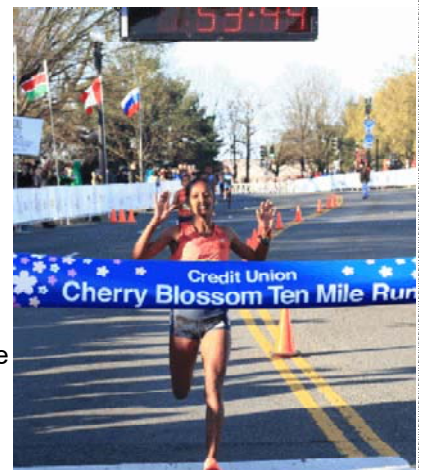
April 8, 2018, Washington, DC: On his first trip to America, 21-year-old **Jemal Yimer** broke away from a dwindling lead group in the last mile of today's Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile Run to win the race in a time of 46:17. His compatriot **Buze Diriba** won the women's race in 53:45 after finishing second here the past two years. In a race full of stories, another highlight was 60-year-old **Joan Benoit Samuelson's** single-age and 60-64 age group record for women of 1:07:56.

Given the dire weather forecast of snow on Saturday night earlier in the week, runners and race organizers were delighted to awake to clear blue skies and peak cherry blossoms this morning. While it was a cold 35 degrees at the start, conditions were ideal for racing, though it was a bit too windy for really fast times up front.

This year's race, often called The *Runner's Rite of Spring®*, was the Professional Road Racing Organization's (PRRO) 2018 Championship event as well as the Road Runners Club of America (RRCA) National Championship. As such, there was a total of \$14,900 paid to eligible runners, on top of the usual \$90,000 in prize money and bonuses on offer. As broken down below, today's actual payout totaled \$79,900.

A large pack of over 20 men ran together through five miles, with 15 men still side-by-side at seven miles, when eventual third place finisher **Philip Langat** dropped the pace from 4:37 to 4:26 over the eighth mile. This had the effect of reducing the single-file line of leaders to just five runners. Langat continued to push the pace, and was joined at the front by eventual second-place finisher **Aweke Ayalew Yimer** and winner Jemal Yimer. At the finish, times were close for the top three, with Aweke Ayalew Yimer running 46:22 and Langat running 46:25, in comparison to Jemal Yimer's 46:17. Top American **Chris Derrick**, who ran at the front of the pack through 10 kilometers before dropping to as far back as eighth place, rallied to finish fifth overall in a time of 46:53.

Jemal Yimer, who is looking forward to a little sightseeing in our Nation's Capital before heading home, won a total of \$10,500 - \$8,000 for the overall win, and \$2,500 for becoming the 2017-2018 PRRO Champion. He also became the 2018 RRCA National 10 Mile Champion. Aweke Ayalew Yimer, from Burundi, won \$4,000 for his second place effort; Kenyan Philip Langat won \$2,000 for third place; Kenyan **James Kibet** won \$1,500 for his 46:36 fourth place effort; Chris Derrick won a total of \$6,000 - \$1,000 for fifth place and \$5,000 for being first American; early pace setter **Edwin Kibichiy**, of Kenya, won \$900 for his 46:55 sixth



After two second-place finishes the previous two years, Ethiopian Buze Diriba finally prevailed at this year's Credit Union Cherry Blossom, taking not only the race's female crown, but also the titles of PRRO female Champion and RRCA Ten Mile female Champion.

place effort; and Libyan **Mohamed Hrezi** won \$800 for his 46:58 seventh place run. American **Abbabiya Simbassa** won a total of \$4,400 for his 47:04: \$700 for eighth place, \$2,500 for second American and \$1,200 for being the first male RRCA Road Scholar or Run Pro Camper (Simbassa was a RunPro Camper in 2016).

Rounding out the top-ten overall were Americans **Matthew McClintock** - ninth in 47:10 - and **Andrew Colley**, tenth in 47:12. McClintock's check for the day totaled \$2,100 (\$600 for ninth overall and \$1,500 for third American), while Colley's totaled \$1,500 (\$500 for tenth overall and \$1,000 for fourth American).

Josh Izewski won \$800 for his 47:26 as fifth American: **Tyler McCandless** was sixth American in 48:34 and won \$600; **Kiya Dandena** was seventh American in 48:37 and won \$400; **John Crain** ran 49:16 to win \$300 as the eighth American runner; **Luke Puskedra** won \$200 for his 49:28 ninth place American finish; and **Mark Leininger** won \$200 for his 49:30 tenth-place American effort.

Through the middle miles of the women's race, Ethiopian compatriots Buze Diriba and **Hiwot Gebrekidan**, who won here last year, took shelter behind four other runners: Ethiopians **Hiwot Yemer and Alemitu Hawi**, American **Diane Nukuri**, and Kenyan **Vicoty Chepngeno**. At the finish, Diriba prevailed in a time of 53:45 to win \$18,000 and the titles of 2017-2018 PRRO Champion and 2018 RRCA National 10 Mile Champion. Diriba's payday was considerably larger than men's winner Jemal Yimer's \$10,500 because, as the winner of the 2017 Lilac Bloomsday 12K PRRO Circuit Race, she won the PRRO Super Bonus of \$10,000, which only winners of 2017-18 PRRO Circuit Races were eligible to win.

Gebrekidan, who finished just three seconds behind Diriba in 53:48, won \$4,000; Yemer ran 53:51 to finish third and win \$2,000; Hawi was fourth in 53:53 and won \$1,500; Nukuri won a total of \$6,000 for her 53:56 fifth place overall (\$1,000) and top American finish (\$5,000); while Chepngeno won \$900 for her 53:59 sixth place effort.

American runners rounded out the overall top-ten, with **Emma Bates** finishing seventh overall and second American, and winning a total of \$4,500 for her 54:45 run (\$800 for seventh, \$2,500 for second American, and \$1,200 for being the first female RRCA Road Scholar or Run Pro Camper - she was a 2017 RRCA Roads Scholar grant recipient). **Bethany Sachtleben** ran 54:59 to win \$2,200 for her eighth place overall (\$700) and third-place American finish (\$1,500); **Samantha Bluske** ran 55:19 and won \$1,600 (\$600/\$1,000); and **Alaphine Tuliamuk** was the final "double dipper," winning \$1,300 total (\$500/\$800) for her tenth place overall and fifth American 55:43 run.

The next five American women also took home American Development Prize Money: **Sydney Devore** was sixth American in 55:44 (\$600); **Katy Moen** was seventh in 56:04 (\$400); **Lindsay Flanagan** was eighth in 56:30 (\$300); **Amanda Marino** was ninth in 57:13 (\$200); and **Anna Farello** was tenth American in 57:28 (\$200).

In addition to Joan Benoit Samuelson's stellar record run, two other Olympic medalists ran well today. **Matthew Centrowitz**, who won Olympic Gold in the 1500 Meters in Rio in 2016, ran 50:38 as a hard training run; **Meb Keflezighi**, Silver Medalist in the Marathon in Athens in 2004, ran 58:01 to pace a large group of runners hoping to break 60-minutes.

Ben Beach, running his 46th Cherry Blossom Ten Mile, and looking forward to running his 52nd consecutive Boston Marathon in just eight days, finished in a time of 1:50:03.

In the Credit Union Cherry Blossom 5k Run-Walk, presented by Hood Cottage Cheese, **Logan Yu** ran 16:05 to win, **Hibah Abuhamdieh** won the women's race in 20:24, and 93-year-old **Dixon Hemphill** ran 1:06:44 to finish a Cherry Blossom event for the 30th time since 1984, and up his total miles run at the race to 245.

In the male push-rim wheelchair race, **John Payne** won in a time of 1:08:06. There were no women push-

rim wheelchair competitors.

Over 27,000 runners submitted applications to participate in the 2018 Credit Union Cherry Blossom 10 Mile and 5K Run-Walk, and the list of accepted runners represented all 50 states and 14 foreign countries. There were 16,661 official finishers in the Ten Mile and 2,529 in the 5K Run-Walk.

The 2018 event marked the 17th year of title sponsorship by Credit Union Miracle Day. Since 2002, over \$8 million has been raised for the Children's Miracle Network Hospitals, including \$380,000 from this year's race.

About the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile:

The Credit Union Cherry Blossom, 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.

The event is a proud member of the **PRRO Circuit** (PRRO.org), a series of non-marathon prize money road races in Tampa, FL; Washington, DC; Spokane, WA; Utica, NY; and Pittsburgh, PA, with the 2018 PRRO Championships to be hosted by the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile on April 8. The circuit is committed to a drug-free sport and funds Clearidium to conduct 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.

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. Hood Cottage Cheese is the presenting sponsor of the 5K Run-Walk. Supporting sponsors include Barody Camps, E-Trade, Garmin, Gatorade, GEICO, Gold's Gym, Mamma Lucia, MedStar Sports Medicine, Navy Federal Credit Union, Old Ox Brewery, Potomac River Running, Suburban Solutions, and Under Armour.

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 113 million Americans do their banking at one of America's 5,800 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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