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Kenyan Nicholas Kosimbei Ties Course Record, Fifth Grade Teacher Susanna Sullivan Becomes First Local to Win Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile Since 1982

Ninety year-old George Yannakakis sets an American 90-94 age group record by over two minutes, running 2:33:04.

April 3, 2022, Washington, DC: On a picture-perfect day for running in our Nation's Capital, the *Runners' Rite of Spring®* returned to the Washington Monument Grounds in full force, and so did a massive crowd of spectators. With temperatures in the high 40s, overcast skies and virtually no wind, nearly 15,000 runners were led by a very fast field of elite runners. The top-three men hailed from Kenya and the rest of the men's top-10 were American, while all 10 of the prize-money winning women were American.

In an occurrence rarely heard of in long-distance events, men's winner **Nicholas Kosimbei** tied the course record of 45:15 set by fellow Kenyan Alan Kiprono a decade earlier in 2012. It was Kosimbei's first time running here in Washington, DC. **Susanna Sullivan**, a fifth-grade teacher from Reston, VA, had run the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile (CUCB) six times before, with her eighth



Susanna Sullivan, fifth-grade teacher from Reston, VA, wins the 2022 Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile Run

place finish in 2014 being her previous best. Sullivan's time today was 52:32, beating her personal best for 10 miles of 54:22 by nearly two minutes, which she ran at the November 2020 Up Dawg Ten Miler — a small, women-only, Covid-safe pop-up race organized in Anacostia Park by Credit Union Cherry Blossom race officials and Richmond, VA, runner **Keira D'Amato**.

With much respect for all the fast young whippersnappers up front, however, ninety-year-old **George Yannakakis**, from Towson, MD, deserves major props for finishing CUCB for the 29th time since 1984 in record-setting time. While quite a bit off the CUCB personal best of 1:05:18 he ran as a fifty-five-year-old in 1987, and the CUCB 85-89 age group record of 1:44:08 he set in 2017 at age 85, his 2:33:04 time today is truly remarkable! It was his eleventh consecutive age group title. Yannakakis attributed his long and successful career to “being at peace with yourself.”

“We went from a tornado warning on Thursday night to perfect running conditions on Sunday morning and the runners responded with very fast times,” said Race Director Phil Stewart. “And what a day for local runners, with Susannah Sullivan notching an overall victory and two local runners from Georgetown Running Club earning prize money. Watch out Mammoth Lakes and Santa Fe, Washington, DC is on the rise.”

In his post-race remarks, men's winner Kosimbei simply said: “My style is to take the lead early and never look back.” Well, he certainly did that, running the first 5K in 13:58, by which time he was running all alone, leaving countrymen **Wilfred Kimetei** and **Shadrack Kimining** to fight it out for second place. They ran 45:43 and 45:48 respectively. It was the first time since 2014 that the top three men ran sub-46:00 times. Kosimebi and Kimetei each earned \$750 bonus awarded to the top two men running sub46:00 times.

Understandably, women's victor Sullivan had a lot to say about her race today: “My training has been going really well. I've set personal records twice in the last month in the 5K. And I PRed quite a bit in the 10K recently, so I knew that if the conditions were right — and they were— and if I had the motivation of a lot of fast women chasing me, that it could happen. This was the first time I really believed I could, so it's exciting that it panned out.”

Sullivan added comments about what Cherry Blossom means to local runners: “I mean, it's huge. Everybody knows what Cherry Blossom is. I'm a 5th-grade teacher so, you know, a lot of the time my running means nothing to them, or not nothing but they don't really get it. But a lot of their parents run this race and I saw some of them out on the course, and so if I tell them I won Cherry Blossom that will mean something, whereas telling them I ran 32:03 in a 10K, they'll be like, great I run too.”

Also of note about Sullivan's performance today: She was the first DC area runner to win the race since Eleanor Simonsick, from Washington, DC, ran 58:16 to win in 1982; and she was the first American woman to win the race outright against an *international field* since Joan Nesbit ran 53:35 in 1996.

Two other local elite runners joined Sullivan in their respective top-10s, and both run for the Pacers Running/GRC New Balance Team. **Elena Hayday** ran 54:32 for 10th place among women, and **Zach Herriott** ran a huge personal best of 48:49 to place 10th among the men. The team's website doesn't list a personal 10-mile best for Hayday; Harriott ran 51:42 in last September's edition of CUCB. Interestingly, Herriott "won" the 2020 CUCB Virtual Run, posting a time of 50:49 on an unknown course.

Here's a compilation of times, place, and prize money earned by the elite runners today.

Top Women:

- **Susanna Sullivan** (52:32) Reston, VA — \$8,000 for the victory, \$5,000 as top American, and \$1,500 for winning the RRCA Roads Scholar-RunPro Camp Development Award competition. Total earnings: \$14,500.
- **Carrie Verdon** (52:37) Boulder, CO — \$4,000 for placing second overall, and \$2,500 for being the second American. Total earnings: \$6,500.
- **Paige Stoner** (52:38) Charlottesville, VA— \$2,000 for third place overall, and \$1,500 as third American. Total earnings: \$3,500.
- **Sarah Pagano** (52:46) Boston, MA — \$1,500 for fourth place overall, and \$1,000 as fourth American. Total earnings: \$2,500.
- **Kim Conley** (53:40) Flagstaff, AZ — \$1,000 for fifth place overall, and \$800 as fifth American. Total earnings: \$1,800.
- **Molly Bookmyer** (53:55) Columbus, OH — \$900 for sixth place overall, and \$600 as sixth American. Total earnings: \$1,500.
- **Katja Goldring** (54:11) Flagstaff, AZ — \$800 for seventh place overall, \$400 as seventh American, and \$1,000 for placing second in the RRCA Roads Scholar-RunPro Camp Development Award competition. Total earnings: \$2,200.
- **Taylor Tuttle** (54:20) Boulder, CO — \$700 for eighth place overall, and \$300 as eighth American. Total earnings: \$1,000.
- **Elaina Tabb** (54:23) Boston, MA — \$600 for ninth place overall, and \$200 as ninth American. Total earnings: \$800.
- **Elena Hayday** (54:32) Bethesda, MD — \$500 for tenth place overall, and \$200 as tenth American. Total earnings: \$700
- **Lexi Zeis** (55:42) Boulder, CO — \$500 for placing third in the RRCA Roads Scholar-RunPro Camp Development Award competition. Total earnings: \$500.

Top Men:

- **Nicholas Kosimbei** (45:15) Kenya — \$8,000 for winning the race, and \$1,000 for being the first runner to run faster than 46 minutes. Total earnings: \$9,000.
- **Wilfred Kimiti** (45:43) Kenya — \$4,000 for second place, and \$750 for being the second runner to run sub-46 minutes. Total earnings: \$4,750.
- **Shadrack Kimini** (45:58) Kenya — \$2,000 for third place. Total earnings: \$2,000.
- **Futsum Zienasellassie** (46:53) Flagstaff, AZ — \$1,500 for placing fourth overall, \$5,000 for being the top American, and \$1,500 for being first in the RRCA Roads Scholar-RunPro Camp Development Award competition. Total earnings: \$8,000.
- **Reid Buchanan** (46:57) San Diego, CA — \$1,000 for fifth place overall, \$2,500 as second American, and \$1,000 for placing second in the RRCA Roads Scholar-RunPro Camp Development Award competition. Total earnings: \$4,500.
- **Lawi Lalang** (47:29) Colorado Springs, CO — \$900 for placing sixth overall, and \$1,500 as third American. Total earnings: \$2,400.
- **Brogan Austin** (47:32) Longmont, CO — \$800 for seventh place overall, \$1,000 as fourth American, and \$500 for placing third in the RRCA Roads Scholar-RunPro Camp Development Award competition. Total earnings: \$2,300.
- **Diego Estrada** (47:41) Flagstaff, AZ — \$700 for placing eighth overall, and \$800 as fifth American. Total earnings: \$1,500.
- **Joel Reichow** (48:11) White Bear Lake, MN — \$600 for ninth place overall, and \$600 as sixth American. Total earnings: \$1,200.
- **Zach Herriott** (48:47) Washington, DC — \$500 for tenth place overall, and \$400 as seventh American. Total earnings: \$900.
- **Tom Slattery** (48:58) Alexandria, VA — \$300 as eighth American. Total earnings: \$300.
- **Max McNeil** (49:01) Arlington, VA — \$200 as ninth American. Total earnings: \$200.
- **Cody Baele** (49:07) Des Moines, IA — \$200 as tenth American. Total earnings: \$200.

Other notable performances:

- **Evan Fallor** won the 5k Run-Walk in 16:05;
- **Christina Burbach** was the first woman to finish the 5K Run-Walk in 21:08;
- U.S. Secretary of Veteran Affairs, **Denis McDonough**, ran 1:30:06 in the Ten Mile;

- U.S. Secretary of the Interior, **Deb Haaland**, finished the Ten Mile in 1:58:37;
- Senator **Kirsten Gillibrand** (NY) finished the 5K Run-Walk in 26:41.

The credit union-sponsored Capitol Hill Competition had 61 teams with over 500 staffers competing (team results will be announced at a later date). And 195 members of Congress were Honorary Race Chairs (137 Representatives and 58 Senators).

Throughout the National Cherry Blossom Festival (March 20 – April 17), of which CUCB is an official partner event, runners are able to participate in the complementary Credit Union Cherry Blossom Virtual Run Presented by MedStar Health. Registration closes on April 10, and the last day to run is April 17th, although runners have until April 30 to submit times and photos. More information about the Virtual Run can be found [here](#).

Thanks to credit union title sponsorship since 2002, the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Run has raised over \$10.2 million for the Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals, including \$323,000 this year.

And finally, mark your calendars for April 2, 2023, for the running and gala celebration of the 50th running of the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Run!

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 the Road Runners Club of America’s “Roads Scholar” program designed to support up-and-coming U.S. distance running talent.

Credit Union Miracle Day, Inc., a consortium of credit unions and credit union suppliers, is the title sponsor of the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile Run, 5K Run-Walk and Kids’ Run. Presenting sponsors include ASICS, Discovery, Garmin, MedStar Health and Wegmans; supporting sponsors include CO-OP Financial Service, CUNA Mutual Group, PSCU, Potomac River Running, Gatorade Endurance, Suburban Solutions and UPS.

The event is a proud member of the PRRO Circuit (PRRO.org), a series of major non-marathon prize money road races in 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 and follow the event on social media @CUCB and #CUCB2022.

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 are financial cooperatives that 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 a credit union.

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