In 1972, Frank Shorter won the Munich Olympic Marathon, kick-starting America’s running boom, and the following spring came the flowering of what was then called the “Cherry Blossom Invitational Run” on April 1st, 1973. In the inaugural run, 129 runners finished. The race grew along with the sport, and the sport gained from the mushrooming of mass participation races gathering tens of millions of runners across the nation. In 50 years, the Cherry Blossom race has hosted 221,626 unique finishers, six world and five American records, and raised more than $10 million for the Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals.

As with all things running, the Cherry Blossom 10 Mile is on the move with a new look—redesigned logos and color themes—and a new event structure, with the 5K occurring as a standalone event on Saturday, rather than hitched to the main event on Sunday as in the past.

In keeping with road running’s identity as a participatory sport welcoming to all people who want to run, one of the Cherry Blossom’s most urgent initiatives is to support the efforts of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, especially women, to get engaged in the sport as leaders as well as participants. The Credit Union Cherry Blossom has partnered with the Game Changers program that empowers Women of Color in running, particularly run leadership.

The program has grown from an original group of five women into an organization of 75 coaches in 25 states. Read about the Game Changers program on page 8 of this newsletter.

A series of speakers and forums at the Health and Wellness Expo Presented by Wegmans in the National Building Museum (location of packet pickup) on Friday evening and Saturday afternoon will feature past winners of and longtime participants in the race. To reminisce about Cherry Blossom history, four-time winner Bill Rodgers will be on hand, as well as three-time winner Eleanor Simonsick, twice winner Carl Hatfield, and 1998 champion Colleen DeReuck. A provocative discussion of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion will be a major part of the lineup of presentations.

Celebrated author of Running While Black, Alison Mariella Désir, will lead the discussion along with a number of notable Black runners from the DC Area. Also leading discussions will be road running pioneer Kathrine Switzer, author of Marathon Woman, along with her husband, runner and running historian Roger Robinson (Switzer and Robinson both plan to run the 10 Mile on Saturday). Books by Désir, Switzer, Robinson, and Rodgers will be available for sale and signing at the Expo.

For more on the speakers and forums on Friday and Saturday, scroll down to page 4 of this newsletter.

Championships continued on page 2
Three Running Championships and an Abundance of Prize Money

For the first time ever, the Cherry Blossom 10 Mile will host three national championships at once: the U.S. Track and Field (USATF) 10 Mile Championships, the Road Runners Club of America (RRCA) Championships, and the Professional Road Running Organization (PRRO). The RRCA Championships are open to both international and American runners, with the winners in the open, 40+, 50+, and 60+ age groups earning the title of 2023 RRCA National Champion. The 10 Mile will serve as the 2022-2023 PRRO Championships. Winners of individual 2022-2023 Circuit events will be eligible for the $10,000 PRRO Super Bonus by winning the Cherry Blossom 10 Mile. For more information on the PRRO circuit, click on http://www.prro.org/races.html.

In addition to the guaranteed prize money (see below), the organizers of the Credit Union Cherry Blossom 10 Mile are making available a total of $50,000 in bonuses to be shared among World Best and American record setters. If World Best times and American Records for men and women are set by the winners at the event (i.e. four records set), the $50,000 record bonus would be split into four: $12,500 shares. If only one World or American record is set for either men or women, the athlete setting the record would get the full $50,000. If an American sets an American record and no other World or American records are set, he or she would receive the entire $50,000 as well.

The guaranteed prize purse in the 10 Mile race totals $65,000: $40,000 for international elite runners and $25,000 for American runners. Prizes go 10 deep in every category (international men, international women, U.S. men, U.S. women). American runners may “double dip” by placing in both the international and American prize pool. For example, an American placing fourth in the international race ($1,500) and second in the U.S. race ($2,500) would take away a total of $4,000.

There’s an additional $3,000 available in the RRCA RunPro Alumni Development program (U.S. runners only), and time bonuses offered to both international and American runners. For details on prizes and bonuses, click https://www.cherrymblossom.org/pre-race/elites-seeded/prize-money/

A Close Look at the Top Elites: the 10 Mile Distance Calls on Both Speed and Endurance

(Note: in the following “PB” refers to “Personal Best,” the more technically correct term for what many runners casually refer to as a “PR” or “Personal Record.”)

Men’s International Field

Kenyan Charles Langat comes into the 2023 Cherry Blossom 10 Mile with a string of recent performances that put him at the head of the class. Most recently he won the eDreams Half Marathon Barcelona in a time of 58:53. That was on February 19—and a month prior he posted a 10K road time of 26:57, placing second in the Valen-

cia 10K, just two seconds behind Weldon Langat. In September of last year, Langat ran 10 miles in 45:14 to win the Dam tot Damloam in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, on a flat point-to-point course, and capped his 2022 season with a win in Lisbon at the Luso Half Marathon in 1:00:44.

Langat’s strongest challenger may be 21-year-old Ethiopian Tsegay Kidanu, despite his youth. In February, he won the Publix Atlanta Half in 1:00:42, almost two minutes ahead of third place Shadrack Kimining, and ran 1:02:100 placing second in last year’s B.A.A. Half Marathon—a hilly course with many turns—where he finished 29 seconds ahead of Shadrack Kimining, andizzled to a 59:52 PB in the 2022 Copenhagen Half (11th place against a very strong international field), Kidanu also boasts a PB 27:17 in the Hengelo 10,000m in 2022.

Shadrack Kimining ran third behind Kidanu in this year’s Atlanta Half Marathon. He was third at the Cherry Blossom 10 Mile last year in PB 45:58. At 27, Kimining is entering the age bracket where men tend to hit their winning stride in road racing. In a time of 1:02:37, he placed second in the 2022 Riga Half in 1:00:38. Kimining ran his PB 59:27 for the half marathon in the Aranco Half in Houston three years ago, where he placed third, just two seconds behind winner Jemal Yimer who has run under 1:00 five times (in that race, the top four came within three seconds of each other). At Aranco in 2022, he placed fifth in 1:00:53, ten seconds ahead of American Biya Simbassa.

Americans led by Hillary Bor are also threats for the overall win. See more on Hillary Bor and other American elites below.

American Men’s Field: Hillary Bor is on a roll, but there are no guarantees

In the American 10 Mile Championships field, Hillary Bor is favored to triumph, with a good shot at overall first place—and the best chance in the entire race at winning $50,000 for an American 10 Mile record, men or women. Bor has no lock on the championship, but he’s been on fire lately. He won the 2022 USATF 10 Mile Championships in Minneapolis’s Medtronic Twin Cities 10 Miles with a time of 59:06 (although the point-to-point course was not record-eligible and the official American record still sticks at 46:13 by Greg Meyer at Cherry Blossom in 1985). A 3000m steeplechase specialist up through 2019—eighth in the 2019 World Championships in 8:09:33, the same year he won the U.S. Championships—Bor began tearing up the roads in earnest in 2022. He won this year’s Gate River 15K in 43:11, and last year placed third in the same race in 43:14, eight seconds ahead of Biya Simbassa. Last year he ran second in New York’s Abbott Dash to the Finish 5K in 13:29 (five seconds behind the winner Abdihannam Nur who set a CR 13:24). On the track, he posted a 13:10:98 time for 5000m indoors last year in Boston. Remembering everyone that he still has steeplechasing chops, Bor won the 2022 USATF Outdoor Championships in 8:16. In pursuit of Bor, Americans Abbayiba (“B”) and Simbassa and Sam Chelanga are evenly matched, despite a nine year age dif-
f erence—Simbassa is 29 and Chelanga is 38. Chelanga finished fifth in this year’s X-C U.S. Championships in 28:49, 13 seconds ahead of Simbassa, and last year placed sixth at the NYC Half Marathon in 1:09:49. Chelanga hit his stride in the summer of last year: eighth in the Peachtree Road Race 10K (28:36); third in the Boilermaker 15K (43:09); 10th in the Prefontaine Classic 10,000m (28:36); fourth in the Crazy 8s 8K U.S. Championships (22:58); third in the Quad Cities Bix 7 Mile (32:45); sixth, Falmouth Road Race 7 mile (32:53); third, New Haven Road Race 20K (59:15) in Sep-
tember, and capped it by finishing sec-
ond in the Medtronic Twin Cities 10 Mile in 46:14, just eight seconds behind winner Hillary Bor. Where! Chelanga is preparing to run this year’s Boston Marathon on April 17, and marathon training might add a few steps per mile in Sunday’s Cherry Blossom race. But as Chelanga seems to be hot for hard racing, 10 miles while tapering for a marathon might be right up his alley. He’s not likely to lose sight of Hillary Bor as they round Haines Point approaching 8 miles, and could be matching him stride for stride.

Author and running historian Roger Robinson is also a feared age-group competitor. He will be a sleep-er in the 80” division title. This year he won the men’s 80” division in the World Cross-Country Championships, running with two knee replacements.

At Cherry Blossom in 2021, Simbassa won the U.S. Championships while placing second overall in a PB 46:18. Last year, he set a PB of 1:09:37 in the Valencia Half Marathon, 23 seconds ahead of Ben Flanagan. On February 26 of this year, he placed fourth in a slowish Cowtown Half Marathon (USATF Championships) in 1:02:41, although it was just three seconds behind winner Jacob Thomson. He was ninth in this year’s U.S. X-C Championships in 29:02, 13 seconds behind Chelanga. In last year’s Falmouth Road Race, Sim-

bassa scorched seven miles in 32:32, seven seconds behind winner Ben Flanagan, and four places and 20 seconds ahead of Sam Chelanga. In the New Haven 20K, Sim-

bassa closed the margin to Chelanga down to just four seconds (59:19 to Chelanga’s 59:15), after Chelanga put in a daring surge at mile 7 that split the leaders (eventual race winner Conner Mantz reported, “According to my watch we ran 2:09 for the 800 meters from mile 7 to seven and a half. Again, it was downhill, but we were moving.”).

Jacob Thomson, age 28, could be a sleep-
er in the American 10 Mile Championships race, having won this year’s Cowtown Half Marathon in 1:02:38, passing five men inc-
cluding Biya Simbassa in the finish straight. (Simbassa was fourth in 1:02:41.) Thomson went on to run fifth in the Gate River 15K in 44:11, exactly a minute behind Hillary Bor. Thomson has one of the best mara-
thons times among all the men, having run 2:11:52 in the 2022 California International Marathon, placing second behind Futsun Zienaschléissé, who won in 2:11:01. Thom-
son appears to have a half marathon speed limit of 1:02:00—besides the 1:02:38 in this year’s Cowtown, he has run 1:02:25 in the 2022 Mesa Half Marathon (also a win) and 1:02:46 in the OneAmerica Mini-Marathon, where he placed third, 10 seconds behind
Futsum Zienasellassie. That suggests a 10 mile time of about 47:40. To break the 47-minute barrier—which is what typically divides the top five men from the rest at Cherry Blossom—he will have to slice at least four seconds off of every mile to get there.

**Women’s International Field: youth again comes to the fore**

As with the men’s race, the women’s open race finds an East African youngster Most Likely to Succeed, with 21-year-old Ugandan Sarah Chelangat boasting 10K times of 30:24, 30:31, 31:11, and 31:35, all since last April. She zipped through 3000 meters in 8:41:16 indoors in February of this year. World Athletics has ranked her 17th in the world in road running. A question hanging over Chelangat is that of experience: she has no official results at distances longer than 10K. How will she fare racing 10 miles may depend on how well she reads the competition, and at age 21 she might get out — strategized by her elders.

Chelangat’s top international challengers at the front are all age 29 and older, such as 38-year-old Caroline Rotich. Rotich could spring a big surprise in this race, having rejuvenated her career last year, starting with a win at the Dick’s Sporting Goods Half Marathon in 1:09:31, where she beat American star Aliphine Tuliamuk by 25 seconds. At the women-only NYC Mini 10K, she beat her own PB from 2014 by 11 seconds, finishing in 31:30, just one second behind U.S. record-bagger Emily Sisson, and 11 seconds ahead of one of her main rivals in this year’s Cherry Blossom, Sara Hall. In the 2021 Cherry Blossom 10 Mile, Rotich hung with the leaders until slipping off the pace a quarter mile from the finish, finishing 4th, 12 seconds behind winner Nell Rojas. Rotich won Cherry Blossom in 2013 in 52:46—a win 10 years later could cement her reputation as a very long distance Comeback Kid. Ethiopian Anna Dibaba, another youngster at age 23, had inconsistent results over the past year. At the Dick’s Sporting Goods Half Marathon won by Rotich in 1:09:31, Dibaba placed 4th in 1:14:09—almost 5 minutes behind Rotich. In the B.A.A. 5K she placed 13th in 16:05, well behind 2022 Cherry Blossom winner Susanna Sullivan, who came in 8th in 15:39. On the other hand, Dibaba beat 2021 Cherry Blossom winner Nell Rojas in the 2022 Cooper River Bridge Run 10K, placing 4th in 32:36 versus Roja’s 6th in 32:54. Come 2023, and Dibaba ran the Aramco Half Marathon in 1:09:22, placing 4th against a moderately strong field composed mostly of Americans.

Dibaba is unlikely to threaten Chelangat and Rotich, and will likely end up running with a pack of Americans—but those Americans may be hungry enough to overtake Caroline Rotich and tow Dibaba along with them.

**American Women’s Field: past champions Rojas and Sullivan prepare to duel for the U.S. title**

Nell Rojas took the measure of Caroline Rotich in 2021 and outkicked her—in fact, in that race Rojas outkicked Olympic 1500m bronze medalist Jenny Simpson by three seconds, winning the USATF National 10 Mile Championships in the process with a PB of 32:13. Rojas had a busy 2022 at national championships. She placed fourth in 52:20 at the Medtronic 10 Mile (USATF National 10 Mile Championships) in Minneapolis; second at the Great Cow Harbor 10K (U.S. 10K Championships) in 31:57; third in the New Haven Road Race (U.S.20K Championships) in a PB 1:07:02. She also ran personal bests in the Boston Marathon (10th in 2:57:25) and Gate River Run 15K (5th in 49:58). She wrapped up her season by placing 10th in the New York City Marathon (2:58:32).

For Rojas to repeat at Cherry Blossom she will have to fend off last year’s Cherry Blossom winner Susanna Sullivan, who flew to a big lead early and held on to win in 52:32—a PB for her, just 19 seconds off of Rojas’s pace in 2021. Sullivan had a strong year in 2022, setting a marathon PB of 2:26:56 for 3rd at Grandma’s Marathon, followed up with another PB four months later, placing sixth in the Chicago Marathon in 2:25:14. Sullivan claimed another PB at 10,000m in 2022, 31:57 for fifth place in the Track Meet Presented By On Running Challenge.

Challenging Rojas and Sullivan for the U.S. Championship will be Sara Hall, who at age 39 has a 2+ decades-long running resume, to which she added a top-10 half marathon in Lisbon, Portugal, on March 12—which sounds fast, being equal to Rotich’s mark last year, but Hall flew even faster at Houston’s Aramco Half Marathon in 2022, with a time of 1:07:15 (that mark stood as an American Record until Emily Sisson sizzled to a 1:06:52 at the same race a year later, leaving Hall as the second-fastest American woman at the half marathon). Hall is known mostly for her marathon prowess, having earned off a 2:20:32 PB place, The Marathon Project in Chandler, AZ and 2:22:01 (2nd place, London Marathon) in 2020, as well as three other sub-2:23:00 marathons between 2019 and 2022. Not limited to very long distances, Hall won the 2021 New York Mini 10K in 31:33, and racked up a 10,000 meter track time of 31:21.09 in Irvine, CA, also in 2021. Hall was 6th (4th U.S., 52:43) in the 2021 Cherry Blossom 10 Mile and 4th (2nd U.S., 52:54) in 2014. If the Lisbon Half Marathon on March 12 hadn’t taken the snap out of her legs, Hall can mix it up with the top five overall in the 10 Mile this year, and the top three among Americans.

Rojas, Hall, and Sullivan could find themselves stalked by Carrie Verdon, last year’s Cherry Blossom runner-up, who closed to within five seconds of Sullivan at the finish line. Verdon, now 29, finished seventh in the 2021 Cherry Blossom, running alone for most of the last four miles to finish in 52:51. Having finished second in the 2021 Valley O.N.E Half Marathon in a PB of 1:10:11, Verdon has been solid on the road but has lately taken to hammering 10,000 meters on the track in San Juan Capistrano, CA; 32:09:42 in December, 2020, 31:37:26 and 31:46:75 in May 2022, and 31:52:94 on March 4th of this year.

Paige (Stoner) Wood could be running shoulder-to-shoulder with Carrie Verdon next Sunday. Wood was second behind Verdon at the finish of last year’s Cherry Blossom 10 Mile (52:38). The two may be even more evenly matched in the women’s race than Simbassa and Chelanga in the men’s. On the track in San Juan Capistrano in March 2022 where Verdon placed 11th in 31:37.26 in the 10K, Wood was 15 seconds ahead of her (31:22.55) in seventh place. In the 2022 USATF 10000m Championships in May of 2022, Verdon placed ninth in 31:46:65, and Wood placed 12th in 31:55:12. World Athletics ranks Verdon 43rd in the world at 10,000m, and Wood 69th. Conditions could be ripe for another tight duel to the finish between these two.

Emma Grace Hurley, age 25, has the potential to break into the top five among Americans on the strength of the 53:24 10 Mile time she ran at the Medtronic 10 Mile last October, and second place in this year’s Gate River 15K in 50:04. In the Medtronic race, she placed 10th, 64 seconds behind fourth place Nell Rojas. In 2022, Hurley finished the B.A.A. 5K in 15:49, and her 11th place put her ahead of 12th place Annie Frisbie by eight seconds, and behind eighth place Susanna Sullivan by 10 seconds. The connection with Cherry Blossom? Both Frisbie and Sullivan posted PBs (although not Hurley), and Frisbie was 5th (3rd U.S.) in the 2021 Cherry Blossom, and Sullivan won the 2022 Cherry Blossom outright. Hurley’s best performance as measured by a World Athletics score is the 5:51:34 indoor 3000m she ran at the Boston University Terrier Classic on January 28 of this year, where she placed fourth. Two weeks later she posted 8:55:26 for the same distance indoors. Hurley has speed. The 2023 Cherry Blossom 10 Mile offers an opportunity for her to bolster her credentials at a seriously long distance on the road. On a good day—good conditions, and good legs—Hurley could break 53 minutes, the equivalent of 47 minutes for men.

If the 21-year-old favorite Ugandan Chelangat should falter, it’s possible that the Americans could take one, two, or more of the top spots overall, similar to the result in 2021 when Americans took three of the top five places—five places separated by a total of 13 seconds, with Rotich 4th in 52:55, 12 seconds behind winner Roja.
Speakers on running history and advocacy for women and Blacks are all on the programs at the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Health and Fitness Expo presented by Wegmans March 31-April 1

Books available for sales and signing by authors: Running While Black, Marathon Woman, Her Fearless Run, Running Throughout Time, and Marathon Man

Bonus: appearances by past Cherry Blossom winners, and running historian Roger Robinson, at panel on Saturday

The first running of the Cherry Blossom 10 Mile took place in 1973 at the beginning of the American running boom. There’s a rich history of running ever since to be discussed by speakers and panelists in presentations at the Health and Fitness Expo presented by Wegmans on March 31 and April 1. Advocacy for women and Blacks in running are key topics at the events.

The first Black American woman to break 3 hours in the marathon, Marilyn Bevans is shown here en route to winning the 1979 Maryland Marathon.

Runners/writer/organizer Alison Mariella Désir has forcefully and creatively taken on racism and sexism in the sport . . . and has a playful side too.

Cherry Blossom 10 Mile race historian George Banker will moderate the presentations on both days.

FRIDAY

Kathrin Switzer, 1973 Cherry Blossom women’s race winner, will kick off the speakers’ program at 4:00 pm on Friday March 31 at the National Building Museum, venue for the Health and Fitness Expo and packet pickup location. A pioneer in women’s distance running, Switzer will speak about the development of the women’s running movement. She won the women’s division of the first Cherry Blossom 10 Mile in 1973. She may be best known for her confrontation with Boston Marathon Director Jock Semple in 1967, when women were not allowed to officially run in the race. Switzer went on to compete Boston, and has built on her extensive running resume to champion women in the sport globally.

Switzer will have two books available for purchase and signing—her 2007 memoir Marathon Woman, and the children’s book about her first Boston Marathon Her Fearless Run by Kim Chaffee—both available from 5:00 to 6:00 pm on Friday, and noon to 1:00 and 3:00 to 4:00 pm on Saturday.

In 1983 Greg Meyer set the course and American course record of 46:13. Yes, 40 years ago!

Alison Mariella Désir will head up a panel discussion on advocacy for Black runners beginning at 5:00 pm on Friday. Désir is author of the groundbreaking book Running While Black, that has opened many white readers’ eyes to how systemic racism reaches into the purportedly egalitarian sport of running. The subtitle, “Finding Freedom in a Sport That Wasn’t Built for Us,” captures the essence of her story. It is both a moving personal account and a trenchant analysis of the wrongs experienced by Black runners and how to right them. Désir is also founder of Harlem Run, a NYC-based running movement, and Run 4 All Women, which has raised over $150,000 for Planned Parenthood and $270,000 for Black Votes Matter. It doesn’t stop there: she is also a co-founder and former chair of the Running Industry Diversity Coalition, and tv host and producer of Out & Back with Alison Mariella

Roger Robinson has worn many hats in the running world: feared age-group competitor, Olympic television commentator, stadium announcer, coach, and prolific journalist, author, and historian.

Location: National Building Museum

Four-time Cherry Blossom winner Bill Rodgers also won the Boston Marathon and NYC Marathon four times.

Inspirational speaker Lisa Bentley fought cystic fibrosis to become a world-class triathlete.

Women’s running pioneer Kathrine Switzer finished second in the 1975 Boston Marathon, and won the NYC Marathon in 1974. Switzer was inducted into the National Women’s Hall of Fame in 2011 for empowering women throughout the world through running.

Women’s running pioneer Kathrine Switzer, 1973 Cherry Blossom race winner, will kick off the speakers’ program at 4:00 pm on Friday, March 31 in Washington, D.C. Switzer will speak about the development of the women’s running movement. She won the women’s division of the first Cherry Blossom 10 Mile in 1973 and has built on her extensive running resume to champion women in the sport globally.

Switzer will have two books available for purchase and signing—her 2007 memoir Marathon Woman, and the children’s book about her first Boston Marathon Her Fearless Run by Kim Chaffee—both available from 5:00 to 6:00 pm on Friday, and noon to 1:00 and 3:00 to 4:00 pm on Saturday.

Alison Mariella Désir will head up a panel discussion on advocacy for Black runners beginning at 5:00 pm on Friday. Désir is author of the groundbreaking book Running While Black, that has opened many white readers’ eyes to how systemic racism reaches into the purportedly egalitarian sport of running. The subtitle, “Finding Freedom in a Sport That Wasn’t Built for Us,” captures the essence of her story. It is both a moving personal account and a trenchant analysis of the wrongs experienced by Black runners and how to right them. Désir is also founder of Harlem Run, a NYC-based running movement, and Run 4 All Women, which has raised over $150,000 for Planned Parenthood and $270,000 for Black Votes Matter. It doesn’t stop there: she is also a co-founder and former chair of the Running Industry Diversity Coalition, and tv host and producer of Out & Back with Alison Mariella.

Location: National Building Museum

Four-time Cherry Blossom winner Bill Rodgers also won the Boston Marathon and NYC Marathon four times.

Inspirational speaker Lisa Bentley fought cystic fibrosis to become a world-class triathlete.

Women’s running pioneer Kathrine Switzer finished second in the 1975 Boston Marathon, and won the NYC Marathon in 1974. Switzer was inducted into the National Women’s Hall of Fame in 2011 for empowering women throughout the world through running.
Désir (now streaming).

Désir’s book Running While Black will be available for sales and signing at the Expo from 6:20 to 7:30 pm on Friday, and 1:30 to 2:50 pm on Saturday.

Joining Désir in a discussion of advocacy and the Black running experience will be notable Black runners from the DC area: Alisa Harvey, formerly world-class 1500m runner; Bill Sollers, who ran the Cherry Blossom 10 Mile 35 times (winning the 75-79 age group division at age 78); Delabian Thurston, who ran the 10 Mile eight times between 1974-1986; and Marilyn Bevans, the first Black woman to break three hours in the marathon, accomplished in Boston in 1977, where she ran 2:51:12 to place second in the women’s division. Now age 73, Bevans has run 13 sub-3 hour marathons with a personal best of 2:49:56 in Boston in 1979.

Wrapping up Friday’s activities, world-class triathlete Lisa Bentley will reprise her talk from 2019 on Running Your Best Credit Union Cherry Blossom 10 Mile or 5K—how to use your mind and body to achieve a personal best.

**SATURDAY**

Commencing at 11:00 a.m., there will be a repeat of Friday’s session with Kathrine Switzer, and at noon Alison Mariella Désir and her fellow Black runners will conduct another lively discussion.

At 1:30 pm on Saturday a cast of Cherry Blossom luminaries will join 1973 winner Kathrine Switzer to share 50 years of Cherry Blossom memories. All but one have run Cherry Blossom at least once: four-time Cherry Blossom 10 Mile champion Bill Rodgers (1978-1981); three-time winner Lisa Rainsberger, who won the race in 1985, ’89 and ’90 as Lisa Weidenbach; 1983 victor and still American Record holder (46:13) Greg Meyer; 1998 winner Colleen De Reuck; former Cherry Blossom race directors Ed Murray and Jeff Darman; and noted age group ace and running historian Roger Robinson.

Bill Rodgers’s book Marathon Man will be available for sale and signing on Friday from 5:00 to 6:00 pm and Saturday from 3:00 to 4:00 pm.

Roger Robinson is the only panelist who has never run in the Cherry Blossom 10 Mile, but his credentials as a competitor and running historian make for a rare combination. As a competitor his most recent world-class accomplishment is a win in the 80+ division in the 2023 World Cross Country Championship. Last July he ran 1:24:50 for 15K in winning the 80+ division at the Utica Boilermaker Road Race. Looking 42 years back we find his marathon best as 2:18:45 in Vancouver, BC, in 1981—the marathon time reflects similar feats in his heyday in the 1980s. Yet Robinson’s fame as a writer and running historian eclipses even his running accomplishments. His most recent critically-acclaimed book, Running Throughout Time: the Greatest Running Stories Ever Told, published in 2022, will be available for sale and signing at the Expo from 5:00 to 6:00 pm on Friday evening, and from noon to 1:00 and 3:00 to 4:00 pm on Saturday.

Always one to rise to a running challenge, Robinson plans to run the 10 Mile on Sunday.

As on Friday, Lisa Bentley will close the speakers’ program at 4:00 pm with Running Your Best Credit Union Cherry Blossom 10 Mile or 5K—how to use your mind and body to achieve a personal best. Despite suffering from cystic fibrosis, triathlete Bentley has won 11 IRONMAN races and placed in the top 10 in the IRONMAN World Championships six times between 1997 and 2006.

Books available for sales and signing at the HEALTH and FITNESS EXPO
Event Director’s Greeting

Fifty years is not a trifling amount of time. To put it in perspective, over 82% of the entrants in this year’s race were not even born on April 1, 1973, when 129 runners, mostly members of the DC Road Runners Club, finished the 1st edition of the “Cherry Blossom Invitational Run.” A lot has happened in the subsequent 50 years — 221,626 unique finishers, six world and five American records and over $10 million raised for charity — which the organizing committee feels is worth celebrating. So welcome to our Gala 50th Anniversary Celebration. With not counting the 2020 Virtual Run as an actual edition of the event, our 50th anniversary aligns neatly with our 50th running as well. Through Watergate, gas crises, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the invention of the internet, the first and second Iraq Wars, the 2008 financial crisis, America’s first Black President, two impeachments, an insurrection and the War in Ukraine, runners have returned each spring for what is known as the “Runners Rite of Spring.” We will be celebrating this year with 11 past champions on hand race weekend from 2022’s winner Susanna Sullivan all the way back to 1973 women’s winner Kathrine Switzer and 1975 and 1976 men’s winner Carl Hatfield. We will be providing all entrants with 50th anniversary commemorative magnetic race “pins” and a history lesson throughout the weekend. We hope you enjoy it.

We couldn’t celebrate our 50th without bringing in some new touches, most notably a new look featuring new logos thanks to our nearly-year long rebranding project, and the moving of our 5K to a standalone event on Saturday designed to showcase the thousands of runners for whom running 3.1 miles is a fitness goal.

We also are calling 2023 our “Championship” year as the event is hosting the championships of all three major U.S. road running organizations — USA Track & Field, the Road Runners Club of America and the PRRO Circuit. This is the first time ever all three Championships have been held simultaneously. Just to spur our elite athletes on, we are offering a $50,000 shared bonus split among winners who break the World or American records. There will be plenty of fast running to go along with the celebrating over the weekend.

We take great pride that the event has served another cause as well — helping sick children receive medical care through the Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals. Since the Credit Unions became the title sponsor, the event has raised over $10 million dollars for the Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals. We will be announcing this 2023 fundraising total on Saturday and Sunday mornings. Stay tuned for some impressive numbers and thank you to the runners and credit unions who made this possible.

I would, on behalf of myself, Deputy Director Becky Lambros, the Cherry Blossom Inc. Board of Directors, the 90 member organizing committee and our 2,000 volunteers, like to welcome everyone to the 50th running of the Credit Union Cherry Blossom 10 Mile and 5K.

We would be unable to conduct this event without the full cooperation of the National Park Service and the United States Park Police. We thank both organizations for the opportunity to stage the event on our Nation’s front doorstep.

And finally, a huge thank you goes to our tireless 100-member organizing committee. Quite frankly, they are the true superstars of the weekend.

Sincerely,
Phil Stewart
Event Director
Together our voices are STRONG!

Thanks for Making a Difference with Us!

The Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile and 5K Run effectively showcases credit unions’ core belief that doing good in, and for, our communities improves the financial well-being of the people we serve.

Over 5,000 runners in this year’s race are members of a credit union.

A very special THANK YOU to all the runners who generously donated over $86,000 to Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals when registering for the Run this year! Your contributions are helping us raise funds so that millions of kids across the U.S. can have access to advanced and affordable healthcare through CMN Hospitals.

Since becoming the title sponsor in 2002, credit union sponsorship of this race has raised over $10.6 Million for Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals.
Changing the Game to Empower Women of Color in Running

by Vanessa C. Peralta-Mitchell

The number of people choosing running as a way to stay fit and active is growing rapidly on both roads and trails. Participation is increasing not only in recreational running but also in running events. So who's leading this mass of runners to the finish line? Some runners look to leaders in the industry, some look to experts online and others look to coaches who can support and train them. These leaders, experts and coaches signify who's important, relevant and valued. But what happens when this group of industry leaders is made up of predominantly the same gender and the same race: namely, white men? What message does this send to others, particularly women in the Black, Indigenous and People of Color running community. It says that we don't belong at the expert table. It says that being an expert in this industry is for somebody else and that our expertise, both lived and learned, isn't seen, heard or valued.

Well, it's time to change the game. The Game Changers program brings in more Women of Color as certified run coaches on a national scale so we can redefine who people see as the experts and leaders in the running industry. Created in 2020 by Vanessa C. Peralta-Mitchell, owner of VCPM, Inc., this program empowers Women of Color to make the leap from community runner to industry leader. The program provides resources and funds for run coach certification, mentorship by a fellow Women of Color coach, and business strategizing to support each Game Changer’s unique vision about coaching. What started as a goal to support five women has now grown into 75 coaches in 25 states including mentees, mentors and current coaches. Groundbreaking data collected by the program and analyzed by Dr. Courtney Boucher of the Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport, show that 89.5% of Game Changers gained confidence as a run coach as a result of the program. This positive impact drives a message of accessibility not only to the sport of running but to run leadership. The result is strong confident Women of Color who are propelling industry-wide change and exponentially growing the running community.

Presenting sponsor Brooks has supported Game Changers’ most recent cohort to amplify the message of diversifying running leadership. Game Changers has also partnered with the Credit Union Cherry Blossom as a supporting sponsor to propel the shared mission in making impactful changes within the sport of running. Additionally, the Road Runners Club of America (RRCA) has supported the program through RRCA Level 1 scholarships and has worked with the program since 2020.

A unique aspect of the partnership between Game Changers and the Credit Union Cherry Blossom has been the collaboration of coaches. Cherry Blossom’s long-time Coach Kirt West has mentored and provided additional education to Game Changers' most recent cohort to amplify the message of diversifying running leadership. Game Changers’ unique vision about coaching. What started as a goal to support five women has now grown into 75 coaches in 25 states including mentees, mentors and current coaches. Groundbreaking data collected by the program and analyzed by Dr. Courtney Boucher of the Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport, show that 89.5% of Game Changers gained confidence as a run coach as a result of the program. This positive impact drives a message of accessibility not only to the sport of running but to run leadership. The result is strong confident Women of Color who are propelling industry-wide change and exponentially growing the running community.

Meet Coach Kimela

Kimela West is a certified run coach, certified group fitness instructor, an attorney, wife and a mom to two amazing boys, ages 6 and 9. She has been running for over 30 years, having competed in track and field in high school and then competed at Kansas State University in the sprints and jumps. About 10 years ago, she switched over to running longer distances anywhere from the 5K to the half marathon.

She wanted to become a certified run coach because of a passion for fitness. As a coach she can assist runners in developing skills, protecting their bodies from injury, and meeting their personal goals.

Being a Certified RRCA Coach she can use her passion for helping moms and busy women fit running and working out into their busy schedules.

Meet Coach Carlamae

Carlamae Aguinaldo is a certified RRCA run coach, a data analyst, wife, and mom to two very active little boys, ages 6 and 9. It wasn’t until later in life that she discovered her passion for running. But when she did, she literally hit the ground running.

Carlamae has run the gamut from 5Ks to marathons, from a duathlon to Ragnar trail races. As her love for running grew, so did her passion to share it with others. In fact, running became her outlet for reconnecting with friends during the pandemic. She organized Turkey Trots so her boys could engage in a safe and healthy activity with friends. She assembled a group of runners, some who had never met before, from across the United States to encourage and support one another through a ‘12 days of running’ challenge.

Running has brought Carlamae a great sense of challenge and accomplishment for herself. As a coach, she hopes to help moms and youth find this same potential within themselves, while enjoying the many physical and mental benefits of running.

To learn more about the Game Changers program, visit [www.vcpm.com/game-changers](http://www.vcpm.com/game-changers) or email Vanessa at vanessa@vcpm.com.
2023 Credit Union Cherry Blossom - Elite Men (3/27/23)

#03
Langat, Charles (26)
DOB: 4/28/96
Residence: Citizen of: Kenya
Team: Asics
Lifetime PRs: 26:57 / 1:04:13/5:34:26/20 mi.
2023 Times:

#09
Kiningm, Shadrack (27)
DOB: 2/10/96
Residence: Citizen of: KEN
Team: Nike
Lifetime PRs: 28:08 / 1:45:00/5:59/10 mi.
2023 Times:
4/30/21 (2:15:02); 1st, 2023 USATF Cross Country Championships 10k (29:02); 4/3, 2023 Fort Worth Cowtown Half-Marathon (USATF Half-Marathon Championships) (1:02:41).

#11
Kidanu, Tsegay (21)
DOB: 12/26/01
Residence: Citizen of: ETH
Team: Asics
Lifetime PRs: 27:14 / 59:20/hmar
2023 Times:
3/13/23 (1:00:58); 1st, 2023 Publix Atlanta Half-Marathon (1:02:10).

#13
Bor, Hillary (33)
DOB: 11/22/89
Residence: Citizen of: USA
Team: Hoka
Lifetime PRs: / / 46:00:10/10 mi.
2023 Times:
1/1/23 (2:16:00); 1st, 2023 Elite Men River City Half-Marathon (USATF Half-Marathon Championships) (1:03:45).

#15
Chelanga, Samuel (38)
DOB: 2/23/85
Residence: Citizen of: USA
Team: Colorado Springs, CO
Lifetime PRs: 28:11 / 2:15:02/46:14:00/10 mi.
2023 Times:
3/12/23 (2:15:17); 1st, 2023 Elite Men New Balance Indoor Grand Prix 3000m (7:45 PB).

#17
Sambisa, Abubia (29)
DOB: 6/30/93
Residence: Citizen of: AZ
Team: Under Armour
Lifetime PRs: 28:39 / 1:46:10/10 mi.
2023 Times:
5/19/23 (2:15:17); 1st, 2023 Elite Men New Balance Indoor Grand Prix 3000m (7:45 PB).

#19
Pennel, Tyler (35)
DOB: 12/21/87
Residence: Citizen of: USA
Team: Running Rock, NC
Lifetime PRs: 28:30 / 2:12:16/46:48:00/10 mi.
2023 Times:
1/16/23 (2:16:00); 1st, 2023 Elite Men New Balance Indoor Grand Prix 3000m (7:45 PB).

#23
Flanagan, Ben (28)
DOB: 11/29/94
Residence: Citizen of: USA
Team: On Running
Lifetime PRs: / / 1:01:00/hmar
2023 Times:
5/3/23 (1:00:58); 1st, 2023 Elite Men New Balance Indoor Grand Prix 3000m (7:44 PB).

#27
Thomson, Jacob (28)
DOB: 11/29/94
Residence: Citizen of: USA
Team: Under Armour
Lifetime PRs: 29:00 / 2:11:52/47:23:00/10 mi.
2023 Times:
1/13/23 (2:16:00); 1st, 2023 Elite Men New Balance Indoor Grand Prix 3000m (7:45 PB).

#29
Ferro, Biaise (25)
DOB: 10/9/79
Residence: Citizen of: CHI
Team: Puma Elite
Lifetime PRs: 27:56 / / -
2023 Times:
5/20/23 (2:15:17); 1st, 2023 Elite Men New Balance Indoor Grand Prix 3000m (7:45 PB).
#02
Sullivan, Susanna (32)
Residence: Boston, VA
DOB: 5/13/90
Citizen of: USA
Lifeline PRs: 33:09 / 2:19:14 / 52:32:00/10 mi.
USA Half Marathon Championships (1:09:25/2:22:54/7:28:00)

#04
Rojas, Nell (35)
Residence: Boulder, CO
DOB: 11/27/87
Citizen of: USA
USA Half Marathon Championships (1:09:25/2:22:54/7:28:00)

#06
Rotich, Caroline (38)
Residence: Colorado Springs, CO
DOB: 5/13/84
Citizen of: Kenya
Lifeline PRs: 31:30 / 2:23:22 / 52:25:00/10 mi.
USA Half Marathon Championships (1:09:25/2:22:54/7:28:00)

#16
Verdon, Carrie (30)
Residence: Boulder, CO
DOB: 3/8/94
Citizen of: USA
Lifeline PRs: 36:36 / 2:31:51 / 52:37:00/10 mi.
Career: 9th, 2023 Prefontaine Classic 10,000m (31:47); 1st, 2022 Bank of America Chicago Marathon (3:13:15); 5th, 2022 Boilermaker Half Marathon (1:09:49); 7th, 2022 Virgin Money London Marathon (2:21:01); 7th, 2022 USA Olympic Trials Marathon (2:23:40)
USA Half Marathon Championships (1:09:25/2:22:54/7:28:00)

#18
Wood, Paige (27)
Residence: Flagstaff, AZ
DOB: 1/31/96
Citizen of: USA
Lifeline PRs: 33:30 / 2:26:02 / 52:38:00/10 mi.
Career: 20th, 2023 Fort Worth Cowtown Half-Marathon (USA Half Marathon Championships (1:11:32))
USA Half Marathon Championships (1:09:25/2:22:54/7:28:00)

#20
Hall, Sara (39)
Residence: Flagstaff, AZ
DOB: 4/15/83
Citizen of: USA
Lifeline PRs: 31:31 / 2:20:32 / 1:09:31
Career: 2nd, 2023 Aramco Half Marathon (1:07:15 AR); 8th, 2022 Tokyo Marathon (2:26:52); 16th, 2022 United Airlines NYC Half-Marathon (1:10:54); 5th, 2021 Great Manchester Run (1:03:50); 9th, 2021 New York City Marathon (2:23:40); 9th, 2021 USA Olympic Trials Marathon (2:20:48); 1st, 2020 USA Olympic Trials 10,000m (31:55); 1st, 2020 Chicago Marathon (2:22:19)
USA Half Marathon Championships (1:09:25/2:22:54/7:28:00)

#24
Hagans, Lauren (36)
Residence: Flagstaff, AZ
DOB: 6/27/86
Citizen of: USA
Career: 10th, 2023 Prefontaine Classic 10,000m (31:50); 7th, 2022 Great Cow Harbor 10k (USA 10k Championships (32:57))
USA Half Marathon Championships (1:09:25/2:22:54/7:28:00)

#26
Grabbil, Molly (30)
Residence: Flagstaff, AZ
DOB: 8/31/92
Citizen of: USA
Career: 13th, 2022 Running 5K R-Race (30:56); 3rd, 2022 Monterey Bay Half Marathon (1:13:08); 10th, 2021 Great Manchester Run (1:03:50); 1st, 2021 USA Olympic Trials Marathon (2:23:40)
USA Half Marathon Championships (1:09:25/2:22:54/7:28:00)

#28
Nukuri, Diane (38)
Residence: Flagstaff, AZ
DOB: 12/1/84
Citizen of: USA
Career: 10th, 2023 Prefontaine Classic 10,000m (31:49); 7th, 2022 Great Cow Harbor 10k (USA 10k Championships (32:57))
USA Half Marathon Championships (1:09:25/2:22:54/7:28:00)

#30
Hurley, Emma Grace (25)
Residence: Roswell, GA
DOB: 12/9/97
Citizen of: USA
Lifeline PRs: 31:31 / 2:20:32 / 1:09:31
Career: 2nd, 2023 Aramco Half Marathon (1:07:15 AR); 8th, 2022 Tokyo Marathon (2:26:52); 1st, 2020 USA Olympic Trials Marathon (2:20:48)
USA Half Marathon Championships (1:09:25/2:22:54/7:28:00)