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Defending Champions Return to Run 50th Anniversary Credit Union Cherry Blossom 10 Mile

Winners and top-five finishers from years past also headline what is shaping up to be a huge celebration of 50 years of world-class running in Washington, DC.

March 22, 2023, Washington, DC: Organizers of the 50th annual Credit Union Cherry Blossom 10 Mile (CUCB) announced today the first of two rounds of news about this year’s invited field; look for the second announcement to come out on Wednesday, March 29. Today’s announcement features past champions and top-5 finishers expected to toe the respective men’s and women’s starting lines on Sunday, April 2. (The elite women will start first, at 7:18 a.m., followed by the men and the masses at 7:30 a.m.)

Three past champions are part of the women’s elite field: Susanna Sullivan, last year’s women’s champion from Reston, VA; 2021 champion Nell Rojas from Boulder, CO; and 2013 champion Caroline Rotich, a Kenyan who lives in Colorado Springs, CO. As part of the 50th celebration two additional former champions are entered: Colleen De Reuck from Boulder, CO, who won the race in 1998 and still holds the women’s course record of 51:16; and 1973 winner Kathrine Switzer.

Other top women finishers from past 10 Miles include: Carrie Verdon from Boulder, CO, who placed second last year; Paige (Stoner) Wood, last year’s third place finisher from Flagstaff, AZ; Sara Hall, also from Flagstaff, who placed fourth in 2014; and Flagstaff’s Diane Nukuri, who was fifth in 2018.

In the men’s race, the top-three finishers from 2022 return. All hailing from Kenya, they include champion Nicholas Kosimbei, second-place runner Wilfred Kimitei, and third-place finisher Shadrack Kimining. They’ll be joined on the starting line
Returning for the 50th running and starting a little bit farther back in the pack will be Bill Rodgers, from Boxborough, MA, who won the race four consecutive times between 1978 and 1981; placed second in 1982 and third in 1983; and has run CUCB a total of 22 times. Greg Meyer, whose American record of 46:13 still stands 40 years later, will be present for the 50th celebration, and will be holding the tape for the first American male finisher, who will be in hot pursuit of Greg’s mark — there’s a $50,000 shared bonus on the line for any American Records or World Bests set at the event.*

“It’s always a vote of confidence in the reputation of the event to see a large number of top finishers from previous years coming back. I am excited about this year’s set of repeaters, both past and present. This is another factor that will make our 50th anniversary special,” said Event Director Phil Stewart.

This year, international elite runners will be competing for $40,000 in prize money. The prize purse for Americans totals $25,000, and American runners placing in the top-10 overall are eligible to receive both open and American-only prize money. There is an additional $6,000 in RRCA RunPro Alumni Development Awards — runners eligible for the RRCA awards can also collect top-10 open and/or top-10 American payouts.

There is also a time-based set of bonus payments on offer for fast times:

- $50,000 to be shared by any runners setting a World Best or American Record*
- Time incentives of $1,000 for the 1st male to run sub-46 minutes and 1st female to run sub-52 minutes, with an additional $750 on offer should a second male and/or female achieve those same sub-46 and sub-52 minute milestones.

The 10 Mile will serve as the USATF 10 Mile Championships, the RRCA National 10 Mile Championships, and the 2022-2023 Professional Road Racing Organization (PRRO) Circuit Championship.

Winners of the individual 2022-2023 PRRO Circuit events will be eligible for the $10,000 PRRO Super Bonus by winning the PRRO Championship (the bonus is split if an eligible male and female win the Championship). Susanna Sullivan and Nicholas Kosimbei are eligible for the PRRO Super Bonus. Any non-eligible winner of the PRRO Championship Super Bonus will earn $2500.

* If World Best times and American Records for men and women are set by the winners at the event (e.g. 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. Currently, the times to beat are as follows:

- **Haile Gebreselassie’s** (ETH) World Athletics Best of 44:24, run at the Tilburg 10 Mile in Tilburg, Netherlands, September 4, 2005;
- **Keira D’Amato’s** World Athletics Best in a women’s only race of 51:23, run at the UpDawg 10 Mile in Washington, DC, November 24, 2020;
- **Greg Meyer’s** American Record of 46:13, run at the Cherry Blossom 10 Mile in Washington, DC, March 27, 1983; and
- **Keira D’Amato’s** previously mentioned World Best 51:23, which is also the American Record for a women’s only race.

For reference, the fastest CUCB time among the men’s field announced today is Kosimbei’s 45:15, which tied the event record set by Kenya’s Allan Kiprono in 2012. Among the elite women, Nell Rojas’s 52:13 from 2021 is the best CUCB finish time among this year’s elite entrants. Abbabiya Simbassa’s 46:18 from 2021 is the best CUCB mark among the American men, while Nell’s 52:13 is, of course, the leading mark among the American women.

The inaugural Cherry Blossom Ten Mile in 1973 was won by **Sam Bair**, in a time of 51:22; the women’s winner was **Kathrine Switzer**, in a time of 1:11:19; 127 men and 12 women ran that first race. **Bill Rodgers** holds the honor of most victories, with four consecutive wins between 1978 and 1981. Three women have each won the race three times: **Julie Shea** (1975-77), **Lisa Weidenbach** (1985, ’89 and ’90) and **Lineth Chepkurui** (2008-10). **Ben Beach** leads all Cherry Blossom finishers with an active streak of 49 years. A comprehensive media guide detailing a wide variety of statistics from the first 49 CUCB races is available [here](#).

Thanks to Credit Union Miracle Day’s 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 in 2022.

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**About the Credit Union Cherry Blossom 10 Mile:**

The Credit Union Cherry Blossom races, organized by Cherry Blossom, Inc., a 501c(3) chapter of the Road Runners Club of America, are known as “The Runner’s Rite of Spring®” in the Nation’s Capital. The staging area for Sunday’s 10 Mile is on the Washington Monument Grounds, and the course passes in sight of all of the major Washington, DC Memorials. In 2023, the re-imagined Saturday 5K will stage on Freedom Plaza and traverse the route of Presidential Inaugurations down Pennsylvania Avenue before crossing the National Mall in the shadow of the Capitol Building and returning by the same route. The Kids Run is staged at 9:30 a.m. Saturday on the grounds of the National Building Museum. All events serve 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 10 Mile, 5K, Kids Run and Virtual Run. Current presenting sponsors include ASICS, REI Co-op and Wegmans; supporting sponsors include CACI, Co-op Solutions, CUNA Mutual Group, Outside+, Gatorade Endurance, Guayaki, MedStar Health, PSCU, Potomac River Running, Suburban Solutions, The MO Apartments and UPS.

The 10 Mile is a proud member of the PRRO Circuit (PRRO.org), a series of this country’s classic non-marathon prize money road races with circuit stops in Washington, DC; Spokane, WA; and Utica, NY. The 2023 10 Mile will serve as the 2022-2023 PRRO Championship.

In addition to being sanctioned by USA Track & Field and the Road Runners Club of America, the Credit Union Cherry Blossom races have 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 #CUCB2023.

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 races, 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, and low or no-fee products and services. The credit union philosophy of placing members’ needs first is why more than 131 million Americans do their banking at a credit union.

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