

# WINGFOOT

FEBRUARY 2022

**PUBLIX  
ATLANTA  
MARATHON  
WEEKEND  
COMES BACK HOME**







# PUBLIX ATLANTA MARATHON WEEKEND

Marathon | Half Marathon | 5K | Kids Races

February 26 - 27, 2022 - Downtown Atlanta

*Here's your motivation right here:*



## KIDS RACES!

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26

5K (ages 8 and up)

3K (ages 7 to 14)

100M Dash (ages 14 and under)

50M Dash (ages 14 and under)

*Learn more & register:*  
[atlantatrackclub.org](http://atlantatrackclub.org)







Photos: Paul McPherson, Courtesy of Atlanta Track Club Elite and Danielle Friedman

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**On the Cover:** Marcos Huarcaya, Philadelphia, runs the 2020 Publix Half Marathon. Photo by Paul McPherson



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Smoothie Bowl





**Each month, we're asking a staff member to ponder their relationship with running.**

**Kristin Lide-Hall**  
*Manager, Volunteer Services*



My relationship with running is tumultuous, least to say, but the official Stockholm Syndrome has kicked in and I've really learned to enjoy

it. Atlanta Track Club has played a large influence on how I view the running community as a whole. I have newly found awareness and respect for those who invest in this form of health, and I'm proud to say I am now an avid runner.

## Word from the CEO

As a competitive athlete, I spent decades getting my adrenaline fix at the start lines of races as I chased the competition – both athlete and clock. For the last eight years, I've satisfied my adrenaline addiction as a staffer at Club's start and finish lines. No joke. Producing events where others are challenged to make themselves a little faster, a little stronger, a little fitter delivers the same rush I used to get – and that so many of you feel now as participants when you cross these same start and finish lines.

As I key in my thoughts for this issue's Word from the CEO, I am sitting at the Club's offices on a Saturday afternoon. I've just returned from the Jerome Scales Southside 5K, the Club's first Grand Prix event of 2022. My alarm went off at 3:30 a.m.

Admittedly, I did not jump out of bed bright-eyed and bushy-tailed on this January day. In fact, I may have hit the snooze button as I embraced a warm bed over the cold and dark hours of set-up ahead. But once I arrived onsite and found myself surrounded by staff and volunteers as we loaded in our tents, start line, finish line and fluid stations at Westlake High School, I felt that same familiar feeling of anticipation and excitement for the hours ahead that I've lived for since I was 6 years old.

And the race lived up to my expectations. Seeing our most committed members taking their first steps of the 2022 season was just what I needed as we prepare for many months of racing ahead. The icing on the cake? Seeing Richie, Jerome Scales' wife, tackling the hills of South Fulton with a bright smile and humble words of encouragement for those nearby, just as Jerome was known to have for so many here in Running City USA before he lost his battle with cancer in 2019. I couldn't help but think of him and quietly thank Richie and her family for keeping Jerome's spirit alive at the Club and in the running community at large.

As you register for your next Club event, know that you, our members, deliver high heart rates, welcome challenges and as much adrenaline to us as our races do to you.

One Mile at a Time ...


Rich Kenah

CEO - Atlanta Track Club



# 2022 EVENTS CALENDAR

## JANUARY

- 1 – Resolution Run 5K – Georgia Tech
-  22 – Jerome Scales Southside 5K – South Fulton


## FEBRUARY

-  5 – Hearts & Soles 10K – Smyrna
- 26 – Publix Atlanta 5K/Publix Atlanta Kids Marathon – Centennial Olympic Park
- 27 – Publix Atlanta Marathon & Half Marathon – Centennial Olympic Park

## MARCH

- 26 – Northside Hospital Atlanta Women's 5K – Cheney Stadium


## APRIL

- 2 – Atlanta Hawks Fast Break 5K presented by Sharecare – State Farm Arena
-  9 – Spring Track Meet (Elite/Masters) & Grand Prix 400m
- 23 – Northside BeltLine 3K - 5K – Atlanta
- 23 – Spring Track Meet (Elite/Masters)

## MAY

- 3 – All Comers Track & Field Meet\*
- 7 – adidas Running City Mile – Summerhill
-  10 – All Comers Track & Field Meet (Grand Prix Shot Put)\*
- 17 – All Comers Track & Field Meet\*
- 24 – All Comers Track & Field Meet\*
- 31 – All Comers Track & Field Meet\*


## JUNE

-  7 – All Comers Track & Field Meet (Grand Prix Shot Put)\*
- 11 – Braves Country 5K & Dash – Truist Park
- 14 – All Comers Track & Field Meet\*

## JULY

- 3 – Peachtree Junior – Piedmont Park
- 4 – Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race – Piedmont Park
- 16 – Westside BeltLine 3K - 8K – Atlanta

## AUGUST

-  6 – Decatur DeKalb 4 Miler – Decatur High School
- 20 – Atlanta's Finest 5K – Pemberton Place

## SEPTEMBER

-  TBD – Grand Prix XC 5K
- 23/24 – Wingfoot XC Classic

## OCTOBER

- 16 – PNC Atlanta 10 Miler & 5K – Atlantic Station
- TBD – Mercedes-Benz Stadium 5K, Mile & Dash|Walk Like MADD – Mercedes-Benz Stadium

## NOVEMBER

- 12 – Eastside BeltLine 3K - 10K – Atlanta
- 24 – Invesco QQQ Thanksgiving Day Events – Center Parc Stadium

## DECEMBER

-  3 – Singleton 20K Relay – Grand Prix Finale & Volunteer Awards Banquet – Piedmont Park

-  Grand Prix Series FREE to Atlanta Track Club members

\* Free and open to the general public





## UPCOMING EVENTS

**26/27** SATURDAY,  
SUNDAY  
FEBRUARY

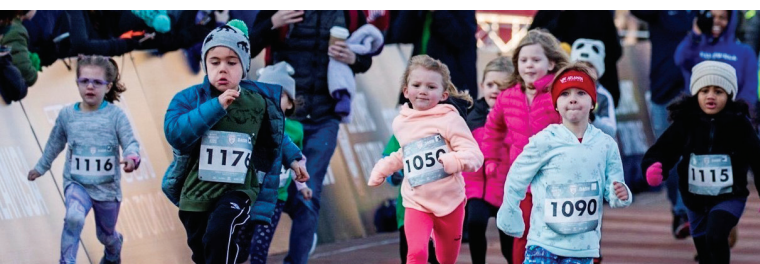


### PUBLIX ATLANTA MARATHON WEEKEND

Saturday, 7:30 a.m. 5K Start

Sunday, 6:50 a.m. Marathon & Half Marathon Start  
Centennial Olympic Park

- Publix Atlanta Marathon Weekend returns to the city
- Start and finish in Centennial Olympic Park
- Marathon, half marathon and 5K participants receive an adidas participant shirt and a medal



**26** SATURDAY  
FEBRUARY



### PUBLIX ATLANTA KIDS MARATHON

7:30 a.m.-9:30 a.m. start, depending on distance  
Centennial Olympic Park

- Gives kids the chance to be part of a big city marathon
- Kids can tackle more than one event if they choose:
  - 5K (ages 8+)
  - 3K (ages 7-14)
  - 100m Dash (ages 14 and under)
  - 50m Dash (ages 14 and under)
- Have fun in the Track & Field Zone, including an obstacle course
- All participants receive an adidas participant shirt and a medal

Photos: Joaquin Lara, Lauren Kania

**15-31** MARCH



### ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION PEACHTREE ROAD RACE MEMBER REGISTRATION & LOTTERY REGISTRATION

Race returns to just one day: July 4

- Members of Atlanta Track Club must register during this period for guaranteed entry
- Lottery registrants must also register during this period. Entrants will be randomly selected and notified by April 3
- Virtual registration open March 15 through May 31
- Registration available at [AJC.com/peachtree](http://AJC.com/peachtree)

**16** WEDNESDAY  
MARCH



### MIDWEEK MILE & DASH

5:30 p.m., Meadow of Piedmont Park

- First of three spring Midweek Mile & Dashes
- FREE for kids 14 and under; ages 6 to 14 run the Mile and ages 6 and under run the Dash
- Track & Field Zone with Atlanta Track Club's elite athletes for the kids while parents learn more about youth events and youth programming in the information tent

**26** SATURDAY  
MARCH



### NORTHSIDE HOSPITAL ATLANTA WOMEN'S 5K

8:00 a.m., Cheney Stadium

- All registrations include an adidas women's-cut short-sleeve participant shirt, race medal and flower at the finish line



Register for all events online at [atlantatrackclub.org](http://atlantatrackclub.org).

A background graphic featuring a repeating pattern of silhouettes of runners in various stages of a stride, moving from left to right. The runners are depicted in dark blue and light grey, creating a sense of motion and energy.

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# Get Social

## This month:

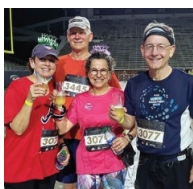
The Resolution Run 5K is always a great way to kick off a new year. It might be even better at midnight!



**@k8str\_runz:** New Year, New 5K PR! When the clock struck midnight, we ran. The 2022 @atlantatrackclub New Year's Resolution Run. My 1st time running a race seconds into the New Year & I managed to pull out a new 5K PR!



**@gustasbabygirl:** And so it begins!!! Come join me for the next race!! ATC Virtual 5K Resolution Race 2022



**@joant4:** Happy New Year!! Great way to start the year off on the right foot!



**@mattbcallaway:** Happy New Year! Check "5k" off the resolution list... what a fun new @atlantatrackclub event!



**@ddadosixhg:** Running friends are the best. Running friends that'll run a 5k after midnight to ring in the new year are next level. #resolutionrun2022



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# PUBLIX ATLANTA MARATHON WEEKEND



## WELCOME HOME!

By Jay Holder

The Publix Atlanta Marathon Weekend returns to Atlanta this month after a one-year hiatus due to COVID-19. And while last year's reimagined event at Atlanta Motor Speedway made for its own unique memories, the homecoming is both embraced and essential: The race was designed to show off the city of Atlanta, with its diverse, character-filled neighborhoods, its college campuses and its bustling downtown.

"Having a marathon, half marathon and 5K that utilize as much of the city as possible is something we are all very proud of at Atlanta Track Club," said Rich Kenah, the Club's CEO. "Since last February, we have watched running events slowly return to normalcy, and this year's Publix Atlanta Marathon Weekend will be a continuation and celebration of that."

With more than 8,000 runners expected to participate over Saturday and Sunday, race weekend will approach the number of participants in 2019, when just under 10,000 lined up. The 2022 numbers match the trend of other major city marathons as they gradually return to pre-COVID operations. (In 2020, the Publix races were part of America's Marathon Weekend, with out-of-towners here to watch the U.S. Olympic Team Trials – Marathon swelling the ranks to almost 12,000).

The 2022 races will once again bring a mix of runners to the start line on Marietta Street, in front of the College Football Hall of Fame – first-timers, veterans, 5K runners and marathoners. We talked to three of them.



### Madison McClellan – 5K

Madison McClellan of Atlanta spends her weekdays getting school kids into the Georgia Aquarium. As the aquarium's education sales manager, McClellan's job is to recruit, plan and organize field trips for Title 1 schools in the metro-Atlanta area. By her estimate, she's brought about 75,000 school-aged children through the aquarium's doors since she started in 2018.

In the evening, McClellan is out running in her Kirkwood neighborhood. "I'm at a desk nine hours a day," she said. "When I run, I'm outside and in the 'now.'" A cross country runner and soccer player in high school outside Dallas, McClellan started running when she was in elementary school. Coincidentally, the school's running club was called "Run with the Dolphins," named for the school's mascot. Since then, she said, running has been her favorite physical activity and obviously she's still into marine life.

McClellan, 27, is returning to racing in a big way after a long hiatus. "It's hard to get motivated when your times aren't what they were when you were 16," she said. To prepare for the 5K, which she hopes to complete in about 28 minutes, she's been running 2-to-3 miles a night. She plans to tackle the Georgia Aquarium 5K the weekend after the Publix Atlanta 5K. After that, she has her sights set on the Twilight Zone Tower of Terror 10-Miler at Disney World in April.

Photos: Joaquin Lara, Paul McPherson





### Shakil Macchiwalla – Half Marathon

Like McClellan, Shakil Macchiwalla runs after work. But that's because he gets up too early to run before. A retail improvement specialist for Publix bakeries, Macchiwalla oversees 38 bakeries in the Atlanta-area, and the bread ovens fire up well before dawn.

Macchiwalla, a baker by trade, was a track and field athlete in high school. He picked up running again in 2015 at the age of 42, joining a group of friends in Smyrna most evenings. He got talked into signing up for the Publix Atlanta Half Marathon the following year. "My co-workers said, 'you keep talking about running. Why don't you come and join us?'" said Macchiwalla. He's done either the half marathon or marathon every year since. Along the way, he's completed the Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race several times, as well as the Triple Peach Series in 2021 (the Peachtree, PNC Atlanta 10 Miler and Invesco QQQ Thanksgiving Day Half Marathon).

Macchiwalla, who describes himself as a "pastry person," said his favorite part of the race is finishing among the sea of Publix employees who serve as volunteers handing out medals. "When I finish, I get to see familiar faces," he said. "It's like a Publix family."

Macchiwalla will run the half marathon this year and is hoping to break his personal best time on the course of 1:56:16, set back in 2018.



### Bob Brenner – Marathon

For most of his life, Bob Brenner had no desire to run. "I was one of these people that looked at runners and thought 'why on earth would you spend hours just running?'" he said. Now 60 years old and the director of sales and marketing at an Atlanta-area senior living center, Brenner is training to run the

Publix Atlanta Marathon and then the Boston Marathon just seven weeks later.

It's all because of his wife, he said, who encouraged him to join a neighborhood workout group 12 years ago. At first, running was a small part of the routine. But eventually Brenner found himself running a 5K. "I remember thinking, 'Oh my gosh, I just ran a road race. Could I do a 10K?'"

Brenner moved on to the Peachtree and by 2011 was running Atlanta Track Club's half marathon on Thanksgiving Day. Brenner said he was content topping out at that distance, running

Continues on Page 11

## PUBLIX ATLANTA MARATHON EXPO

Participants in the 2022 Publix Atlanta Marathon Weekend will get to visit Atlanta's most-popular attraction when they pick up their race numbers and shirts.

For the first time, the Publix Atlanta Marathon Expo will be held in the Ocean's Ballroom at the Georgia Aquarium. Participants can browse the latest Atlanta Track Club/adidas merchandise while viewing Ocean Voyager, one of the world's largest aquatic exhibits. They'll also get to see the beloved beluga whales as they check out this year's vendors. The expo is free and open to the public. Participants will be emailed an exclusive link for discounted parking and tickets into all the aquarium attractions.

**Friday, February 25 – Saturday, February 26**

10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

225 Baker St NW, Atlanta, GA 30313

Masks required indoors

- Watch marine life in the Window of Wow looking into the Ocean Voyager exhibit
- See the aquarium's famed beluga whales
- Shop the latest Atlanta Track Club and Publix Atlanta Marathon Weekend gear from adidas
- Pick up a commemorative gift from Publix
- Sample the latest brews from Monday Night Brewing (21 and older)
- Check out a state-of-the-art electric vehicle from Mercedes-Benz of Buckhead
- Sign up for a half marathon or marathon pace team
- Meet the Atlanta Hawks dancers
- Win prizes from Atlanta United



## CHEPTOO HOPES TO FOLLOW IN BROTHER'S FOOTSTEPS

By Jay Holder

Viola Cheptoo did not make a quiet entrance into the world of marathoning. In her debut at the distance, at the 2021 TCS New York City Marathon, the 32-year-old came within five seconds of defeating the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Marathon gold medalist, Peres Jepchirchir.

And, in securing second place, her time of 2:22:44 was third-fastest finishing time in the race's 50-year history.

"I almost have to wake up and pinch myself every day," she said on a podcast that aired five weeks after New York.

Cheptoo's next stop will be Atlanta, where she will hit the city's hills in the Publix Atlanta Half Marathon as part of her buildup for the Boston Marathon in April.

Since her race in New York last November, Cheptoo – whose older brother is five-time Olympian Bernard Lagat, winner of the 2018 Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race – has stayed in the U.S., spending time with family in Arizona and getting some "much-needed time to reflect, calm the spirit and plan for the next chapter."

Refreshed, she said, she's ready to race again. "It took me several weeks to recover," said Cheptoo, who competed for Florida State and was a 2016 Olympian at 1500 meters. "My legs got stiff, some niggles came back. Normal stuff."

The adidas-sponsored athlete said she's looking forward to her first trip to Atlanta. While in town, the self-described foodie hopes to visit Ponce City Market for good local eats and then tour the Georgia Aquarium.

As part of its partnership with adidas, Atlanta Track Club has expanded its elite race calendar in 2022. This year, elite prize purses will be offered at the Publix Atlanta Half Marathon and Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race as well as the Northside Hospital Atlanta Women's 5K and adidas Running City Mile.

Even with a half marathon personal best of 1:06:47, Cheptoo might not be alone up front: Ethiopia's Hawi Feysa (1:05:41) and Kenya's Dorcas Tuitoek (1:06:41) are also planning to



### PUBLIX ATLANTA HALF MARATHON PRIZE MONEY

\$17,000 total prize purse

1st	\$3,000
2nd	\$2,000
3rd	\$1,000
4th	\$750
5th	\$650
6th	\$500
7th	\$350
8th	\$250

\$2,500 race winner's bonus for the fastest half marathon on Georgia soil (men - sub 1:03:59 and women - sub 1:08:29)

\$1,000 bonus for the top Georgia resident for the fastest half marathon on Georgia soil by a Georgia resident (men - sub 1:06:15 and women - sub 1:15:36)

race. All will be chasing additional prize money for breaking Molly Seidel's Georgia-soil record of 1:08:29, set last year at Atlanta Motor Speedway. Additional prize money is also available for finishing times under 1:07:00.

In the men's field, Kenyans Bernard Ngeno (59:07) and Geoffrey Koech (59:36) top the list of competitors.

Full elite fields will be announced soon.



# 5K TO HOST USATF MASTERS CHAMPIONSHIPS

By Jay Holder

For the third time in five years, Publix Atlanta Marathon Weekend will host the USATF Masters 5km Championships. The race will be held on Saturday, February 26, as part of the Publix Atlanta 5K, and will feature some of the best masters runners in the country.

“Atlanta is where runners come to win championships,” said Rich Kenah, CEO of Atlanta Track Club. “Bringing the USATF Masters 5km Championships here allows us to build on that tradition and continue to establish one of the city’s biggest running weekends as one that shows off Atlanta to runners from all over the United States.”

Just two years ago, the Club hosted the 2020 U.S. Olympic Team Trials – Marathon, in which six athletes were chosen to compete for Team USA in the Tokyo Olympics at the same finish line the 5K runners will cross.

“It’s all the obvious things: innovation, ingenuity and determination,” said Paul Carlin, masters long distance running coordinator for USATF and author of the popular blog “The Running Professor” of Atlanta’s selection as host for the championships. “Atlanta Track Club does a great job organizing and delivering an event. In that sense it was a no-brainer.”

Carlin expects about 200 athletes to make the trip. Among them will be Fiona Bayly, 54, of New York City. “When a 5K comes up that’s as attractive as the USATF Championships, there is very little that would keep me from being there,” said



Bayly, who won the 50-54 age group at this championship in 2018 and 2019 and is a top contender to win again.

The Club this year moved the date of the championships from August to February, both to align with Publix Atlanta Marathon Weekend and to give runners a break from the August heat and humidity. “For a lot of people from the north, going down to Atlanta in February to run a 5K looks pretty good,” said Carlin.

For the competitors, races also offer a chance to get out and explore the host city. Bayly said she plans to get in a long run the day after the race on a route that will include several Atlanta neighborhoods and a visit to the Georgia Tech campus, where some of her friends work. “Atlanta is not only the hotbed of the civil rights movement, but also a home of the Olympics,” she said. “It’s another place to learn about American history and meet great runners at the same time.”

Continued from Page 9

## PUBLIX ATLANTA MARATHON WEEKEND: WELCOME HOME!

dozens of races each year between 5K and 13.1 miles. But in 2018, he decided he had to check the marathon off his list. So, the Navy veteran signed up and ran the Marine Corp Marathon.

“I wanted to be able to put that 26.2 sticker on my car,” he said. “Then the bug kind of went away.”

Until Brenner turned 60 this year, that is, and wanted to do “something big” to mark the occasion. Since he had already completed the races in the Triple Peach, the Ultimate Peach seemed like the next logical step. And as a Boston native, he had long been interested in the Boston Marathon. Why not both?

So, Brenner is planning to run the Publix Atlanta Marathon

on February 27 and he’s training and fundraising for the Boston Marathon on April 18. For the latter, he got a spot on the Michael J. Fox Foundation’s Charity Team, for which he’ll need to raise \$15,000 for Parkinson’s research. After watching his mother-in-law battle the disease, it’s a cause that’s close to his heart – much like the race he grew up watching.

“My big recollection was Bill Rodgers,” he said. “He was just this average guy from the Boston area that was killing it.”

He’s hoping to finish both races in around 4:30, but said, “As my wife tells me, ‘just be happy you finished!’”



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– Yolanda Ngarambe, Atlanta Track Club Elite  
Swedish Record Holder (Indoor Mile)  
and 4:03 1500m Runner



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# ANYTIME ANYWHERE





## BRALEY PUTS A NEW CHALLENGE ON THE MENU

By Barbara Huebner

For Atlanta Track Club masters star Jill Braley, the “home cooking” of having the USATF Masters 5km Championships here is as close to perfect as it gets.

“I don’t enjoy flying at all,” said Braley. “Sleeping in my own bed the night before, that’s a huge advantage for me. Plus, I always love Publix Atlanta Marathon Weekend. I always take part, and for it to be the masters championships is even better.”

Then there’s her ultimate goal: to eventually win the masters division of all three Publix Atlanta Marathon Weekend races – the marathon, half marathon and 5K – to duplicate her feat as an open competitor. She won the marathon in 2012 and 2013, the half marathon in 2011 and the 5K in 2018 before she turned 40, and last year won the 5K as a masters.

“Two left to go,” said Braley, now 43. “Anyone who knows me knows I’ll still be at this when I’m 80 years old if I have to.”

She hopes to cut that down to one on Publix weekend, with plans to chase the half marathon masters win the day after the 5K – where the No. 1 goal is to win the age 40-44 team championship.

Braley turned 40 on September 23, 2018, and wasted no time in launching her masters career: She finished second that day to Sandra Friend-Uhl (“the best role model ever”) at the USATF National Masters Cross Country Championships. More recently, she finished fifth at the USATF Masters Cross Country Championships last October and followed that up with a sixth in the masters 6K at the USATF Club Cross Country Championships in December.

“I hope to do as well on the roads as in cross country,” said Braley, who does most of her training on trails and even her workouts along the Chattahoochee, since she lives about a mile from Cochran Shoals.

At least, she lives there half the week, working at a customer service job remotely. The other half is spent carrying trays and dashing from kitchen to tables at the Iron Horse Grill in Pine Mountain.

The dual existence began in March 2020, when the pandemic forced an end to indoor dining at the restaurant and the owner – her boyfriend – asked if she could help him on weekends with the takeout-only service.



“Now I’m engaged and part-owner of a restaurant,” she said. “It’s not conducive to good training, that’s for sure.” On Fridays and Saturdays, Braley puts in 12-hour days, logging 6 miles a day in the restaurant alone, not counting her runs.

“I’m pretty trashed by Saturday night,” she said. “There’s no sitting, no lunch break. I live on chocolate milk.” Plus, it limits her ability to race on weekends.

There are upsides, however. Braley said she enjoys the challenge of learning something new and making things work, and that from a training and racing perspective “you learn how to endure some tough days.”

Plus, a condition of employment was that she could bring her adored rescue Chihuahua, Peanut, along to work every day.

“It’s awesome,” she said of the unconventional regimen. “I wouldn’t trade a thing.”



HIGH PERFORMANCE

# STAYING ON TRACK, FROM PAJAMAS TO “JEOPARDY!”

By Olivia Baker



In early January, the first of about 20 athletes and coaches of Atlanta Track Club's Elite and Development teams descended on three rental houses near Clermont, Florida.

“It’s an opportunity to jumpstart the indoor season with no distractions, where they can just focus on training,” said Eric Heintz, the Club’s director of high performance. “But it also gives us the ability to impart the Club’s values and culture of our program to new athletes. For them to get to a higher level, it’s important for the athletes to get the chance to see the sacrifices and practices of others. And it’s especially important for them to see that they’re part of a team, that they represent something bigger than themselves.”

And of course, there’s the weather: On January 16, when it snowed in Atlanta, it was 67 degrees at training camp.

Most of the middle-distance athletes spend the entire month of January at the camp, perhaps traveling on weekends to indoor competitions but then returning. Other athletes spend shorter stints in Florida, depending on job obligations or racing schedules. But all share the crucial experience of creating friendships, which is especially important for the newcomers.

“Even though they aren’t in Atlanta,” said Heintz, “it makes Atlanta feel like home.”

A look at a day in the life at camp, featuring the athletes living on Bay Leaf Lane.





**7 a.m.** – The alarms start to go off in Bay Leaf House as everyone begins their individual preparations for the practice day ahead. The slow shuffle of feet echo throughout the house as the athletes get out of bed, brush their teeth and put on their outfits for practice.

**7:45 a.m.** – Olivia Baker, Abbas Abbkar, Sadi Henderson and Daniel Nixon meet at the dining room table down the stairs. Some of them have been downstairs for the last 15-25 minutes to make breakfast. Abbas has a bowl of cold cereal with milk. Olivia chooses a bowl of oatmeal. Sadi enjoys a bowl of “Can’t Beet Chocolate” Picky oats. Daniel meets them at the table with his track bag and yoga mat, ready to leave for the track.

**7:53 a.m.** – Everyone piles into Olivia’s red 2018 Ford Fusion to take the 37-minute drive to the track. The quiet sound of a local radio station plays in the background between bouts of intermittent small talk on the way. They are getting into their respective zones—shaking off the grogginess of the morning and looking toward the hard workout ahead. This group is punctual and arrives not one minute early or late.

**8:30 a.m.** – The air is a humid and warm 75 degrees on the track at the Orlando Health National Training Center as the athletes set up their yoga mats in pods, and socially distance based on COVID-19 exposure risks. Over the next hour, the runners complete their respective warm-up routines to the sound of Allie Wilson’s Big Booty Remix 3 playing over her speaker. Everyone does a 2-mile jog. Some stay on the track; others pair off and hit the roads around the complex. As the hour goes on, the routines become more and more individualized.

**9:30 a.m.** – Water bottles, shoes, and warm-up clothes line the inside and outside of the track as coaches Amy and Andrew Begley give each training group final instructions before the workout. Today everyone has some variation of 3-4 x mile, 3x400m, 4x200m with 4-5 minutes rest between the sets, a tough workout in this heat. The longer-distance athletes take turns leading the “pain train” around the track, clicking off the splits like a metronome during the mile reps. As some of the more speed-based athletes fall off the pace, their teammates encourage them in passing: “Keep going!”

“You’ve got this!” “Hang with me!” The athletes who are better at the faster reps have the opportunity to lead and return the favor through the later 400- and 200-meter repeats. In the end, the team leaves the track utterly exhausted but stronger and faster than before.

**Noon** – After cooling down and completing hurdle mobility, some team members grab smoothies while others head straight into the gym for a supplemental lifting session. At the gym, the runners file into their designated lifting spaces and rotate through a series of plyometric and muscular strength exercises in addition to their unique physical therapy exercises.

**2:30 p.m.** – Bay Leaf House athletes arrive home from practice exhausted and are greeted by Joanna Stephens, who arrived at camp from the airport while the team was at the track. Some head straight to the shower, others eat first. All collapse onto their beds for naps of varying length shortly afterwards.

**7 p.m.** – Power Hour Part 1. Olivia, Joanna and Abbas gather in the living room to watch an episode of Jeopardy!. They’re determined to get as many answers as they can together. None of them is very good at trivia so each correct answer is met with fist pumps of joy. Over the commercials, they Google some of the outrageous answers that were missed. What is an *infanta* anyway and how would someone know that? Collectively they get about 12 answers correct out of

61 possible opportunities including Final Jeopardy (a pretty solid night for this group) as Amy Schneider wins her 27th game in a row by a landslide.

**7:30 p.m.** – Power Hour Part 2. Olivia, Joanna, and Abbas move to the dining room to complete a set of core work. It’s Olivia’s night to set the tone and she puts on a playlist filled with a range of music from Drake to Linkin Park and Taylor Swift while the group cranks out their planks, crunches and push-ups. Singing and laughing animate the house as the group enjoys the music and playfully pushes each other through the exercises.

**8 p.m.** – A hush settles over the public space as the athletes at Bay Leaf House begin to wind down for the evening. Olivia makes herself dinner and sits at the dining room table with her laptop up, responding to emails and organizing next week’s “Runners Who Read” book club blog. Her housemates occasionally pass through the dining area to get snacks or water, or just to say goodnight as they retire to their rooms to start their evening routines.

**10 p.m.** – Olivia turns off the lights in the common areas as all get ready for bed.

*Olivia Baker, an 800-meter specialist, joined Atlanta Track Club Elite last summer. In addition to competing, she serves at the Club’s coordinator of marketing and membership engagement.*



## ENJOYING VOLUNTEER LIFE IN THE CONE ZONE

By Barbara Huebner



Most people think of orange traffic cones as utilitarian, if they think of them at all.

Bob DeLorme thinks of them as things of beauty.

“Part of it is the symmetry,” said DeLorme, beginning his 32nd year as an Atlanta Track Club volunteer, of his satisfaction in watching a race course emerge behind the truck he’s driving. “I’m looking in the rearview mirror and see a nice long row of cones and there’s no one else on the road that early in the morning.” Multiple trucks setting up various parts of the course simultaneously to both direct and protect participants “is kind of a like a puzzle for us.”

For his success at cone choreography, as well as his many other volunteer efforts in Atlanta and beyond, DeLorme was named the 2021 Clarence May Jr. Community Service Award winner.

“In the early morning darkness of race weekends, well before the first runners and walkers arrive, Bob DeLorme delivers an invaluable service to the Club that few adequately understand or appreciate,” said Rich Kenah, CEO of Atlanta Track Club. “By coning the courses at our events, Bob quite literally creates safe passage for the participants from start to finish. His work is more art than science, and he’s honed his craft for years. All of us in Running City USA owe him for the time and talent

that he offers.”

Among his other volunteer activities, DeLorme is or has recently been active in Intown Community Church, serving as a deacon and working in one of the ministries it supports, the Toco Hills Community Alliance food bank, twice a week; teaching ESL classes; and helping at the Mitsubishi Electric Classic, part of the PGA TOUR Champions. A respiratory therapist from Stone Mountain, DeLorme retired in 2015 but is still an adjunct faculty member at Gwinnett Technical College, where he teaches classes twice a week.

His desire to serve has even crossed state lines. In 2016, he worked on a South Carolina project to help save loggerhead sea turtles by relocating their eggs to areas where they wouldn’t be washed away by high tides, and he hopes to return after the pandemic.

DeLorme quipped: “My friends say, ‘you work now more than you did when you were working.’”

Back in 1990, when the participant cap for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race jumped from 25,000 to 40,000, DeLorme saw a notice in Creative Loafing about the growing race looking for more volunteers. Knowing that his family would be away over July 4 that year, DeLorme signed





## 2021 ATLANTA TRACK CLUB AWARD WINNERS

In addition to Bob DeLorme receiving the Clarence W. May Jr. Community Service award, a number of other Club members were honored in December at the annual Grand Prix Finale & Volunteer Awards Banquet.

Ambassador of the Year: **Bob Wells**

Youth Volunteer of the Year: **Chris Thomas**

Track & Field Volunteer of the Year: **Tim Parker**

Road Race Volunteers of the Year: **Jeanette Arroyo & Marylyn Key**

Run Lead of the Year: **Chrystal Akor**

- 149 All-Star Volunteers (volunteered at 10+ events)

### Overall Grand Prix Male Awards

1st: **Michael Strickland**

2nd: **Justin Runac**

3rd: **Jared Bell**

### Overall Grand Prix Female Awards

1st: **Patricia Coppel**

2nd: **Ashlyn Moore**

3rd: **Becki White**

- 122 David Jordan Award winners (completed all 8 Grand Prix events)



up. His inaugural task was that of “people mover” just past the finish line, keeping the runners flowing and watching for anyone who seemed in need of medical attention. Since then, he’s become a crew chief in The Meadow, in the area right after runners and walkers receive their T-shirts.

“It’s the only race I don’t cone,” he said of the Peachtree, which relies more on fencing.

His role as a self-proclaimed “conehead” began in the late ‘90s when a colleague asked if he would help set up the Thanksgiving races. “What’s coning?” he asked, but said he was on board as long as his wife didn’t mind his absence on Thanksgiving morning. She didn’t. It’s become his favorite event, and one at which all four of his now-grown sons (he has two grandchildren as well) have helped at one time or another – Corey for 22 years.

Near the Thanksgiving finish line a few years ago, DeLorme’s medical background suddenly became more valuable than his coning expertise: a participant had gone down. Dashing over, he snapped a photo of the man’s race number, called for more help and began assisting with CPR.

“We were able to get him back quickly,” said DeLorme. “Respiratory therapists in a hospital might see codes a lot, but you don’t see people come back like that. EMTs might, but therapists don’t. It was amazing.”

Thankfully, DeLorme “was in the right place at the right time,” said Kenah.

Over the years, DeLorme has assumed responsibility for helping to plan the coning scheme for some races, under the guidance of Brantley Sherrer, Atlanta Track Club’s senior manager for event operations.

“He’s very much a detail guy who goes above and beyond,” said Sherrer. “For big races, he has notebooks on how he sets cones every mile. He makes sure no stone is left unturned.”

Plus, said Sherrer: “He’s just a good guy to be around.”

He’s a handy guy to have around, too, if you have some extra T-shirts you’d like to distribute: DeLorme’s church connections have helped put them on the backs of people at clothing closets and food banks, as well as those being aided by the Presbyterian Church of North America’s Disaster

Assistance program.

“I feel blessed that the Club is willing to be so generous, to give the shirts to people who can use them,” he said.

It’s just one more of the logistical puzzles that he delights in solving for the Club. Something is always going to go wrong, he said; trying to anticipate a situation beforehand or work through a problem that rears its head during an event is a challenge he welcomes.

As DeLorme sees it, the No. 1 responsibility of the “coneheads” is to keep race participants safe, and No. 2 is to see if traffic issues can be alleviated. Hopefully, he said, their work goes unnoticed.

“When Rich Kenah and all the other race people are down at the finish line or up at the start line and they don’t hear anything about coning,” he said, “I know we’ve had a good day.”



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# AUTHOR'S STORY BEGINS IN ATLANTA

By Barbara Huebner

Journalist Danielle Friedman grew up watching her father run the Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race, eventually joining him on the start line after aging out of Peachtree Junior. And although the East Cobb native has lived in New York City since 2003, she calls Cochran Shoals “almost like an anchor for me, so peaceful and meaningful. I try to return whenever I can.”

“The foundation of my love for running,” she said, “began in Atlanta.”

Cochrane Shoals eventually led Friedman to another path: that of author. The former senior editor for NBC News Digital and The Daily Beast last month saw her first book, *Let's Get Physical: How Women Discovered Exercise and Reshaped the World*, hit the shelves. In it, Friedman traces the history of the women's fitness movement. Think ThighMaster, Jazzercise and Jane Fonda, but also women's empowerment and the evolving understanding of body image.

Chapter 3, “Run,” looks at the early days of women's running, in the 1960s.

“I was pretty shocked to learn that women weren't allowed to run Boston until 1972 and that there was no Olympic marathon for women until 1984,” she said of her research. “I was fascinated by the fact that for younger women, it's just taken for granted that we can do these things.”

As an author who runs – and a runner who writes – Friedman took personally the stories she read about Kathrine Switzer, the first woman to officially run the Boston Marathon, and Nina Kuscsik, the first woman to officially win there. She saw dots, and set out to connect them: “How did the work of these elite athletes make it possible for me to enter the New York City Marathon, to create opportunity for everyday athletes?”

Friedman's book will be the March selection of the “Runners Who Read” book club. Information on joining the virtual group, which tackles a running-related book each month, is available at [atlantatrackclub.org/runners-who-read](http://atlantatrackclub.org/runners-who-read). Future selections will include *How Bad Do You Want It?* by Matt Fitzgerald, and *Let Your Mind Run*, by Deena Kastor.

The genesis of “Let's Get Physical” began about five years



ago when Friedman first walked into a barre studio and became curious about the workout's origins. Soon, she was pitching a story about barre's founder, the colorful Lotte Berk, to “New York” magazine and learning about how there were “these

Lotte Berk-like figures in other movements.” When Friedman sought out a book on the history of fitness to learn more, she realized that none existed.

“I was curious to find out how we went from women being discouraged from testing their strength to where we are today,” she said.

Although Friedman ran a season of track for Walton High School in Marietta, she realized that she preferred something less competitive, finding joy in running when she could run at her own pace.

Especially when it's with her father, Richard, a 73-year-old retired physician and longtime Atlanta Track Club member who has run almost every Peachtree since 1978. They ran New York in 2016, and most recently did the Peachtree together in 2019, celebrating its 50th Running.

“It's so wonderful to share that with her,” he said of their running history. “I remember going downtown when she was little for Peachtree Junior; I'd see Danielle and she'd be so excited.”

To see the book come together, he said, is “just magnificent. I'm so proud of her. I have three amazing daughters, and everything was always possible in our household. It blows my mind that women weren't allowed to participate and had to fight for what should come naturally. She told so many wonderful stories. It will affect so many people.”



By Alissa Palladino MS,  
RDN, LD, ACSM-CPT

## ADVICE YOU CAN TAKE TO HEART

When it comes to keeping your heart healthy, running and walking on a regular basis are two of the best things you can do. Your food choices play a big role, too. In honor of National Heart Health month, not to mention Valentine's Day, I'm sharing some of my top nutrition tips and recipes to optimize heart health. Whether you're celebrating Valentine's Day with a partner or just want to show yourself some love, read on.

### Focus on Fiber

Dietary fiber, especially the soluble type, reduces risk for heart disease and stroke by lowering LDL cholesterol (the bad kind). Adults should aim to consume 25 to 38 grams per day. Fiber can be found in a variety of plant foods, including runner-friendly staples like oatmeal, as well as other whole grains, beans, nuts, fruit and vegetables.

### Swap Out Saturated Fats

Replacing saturated fat, typically found in animal foods, with unsaturated fats, typically found in plants, helps lower LDL cholesterol while boosting cardio-protective HDL cholesterol (the good kind.) To reap the benefits of this swap, try cooking with olive and other plant-based oils instead of butter, snacking on nuts instead of chips or cookies, and spreading mashed avocado onto your sandwiches instead of mayo.

### Eat your Omega-3s

This type of polyunsaturated fat is especially beneficial for heart health due to its anti-inflammatory impact. The best food sources of omega-3s include oily fish such as salmon and mackerel, as well as fortified eggs and dairy products. It can also be found in chia seeds, ground flax and walnuts, although the plant form is not as well-utilized by the body.

### Reduce Sodium

Outside of endurance exercise, when it's important to replenish this important electrolyte lost in sweat, consuming too much sodium can raise blood pressure and put additional stress on the heart and blood vessels. It might surprise you to learn that most of the sodium in our diets comes not from the salt shaker, but rather from processed foods and dining out. To easily lower your sodium intake, prepare more meals at home so you can control the ingredients and add flavor

with herbs, spices, onion and garlic. When selecting packaged and canned items, such as soups, sauces, breads, snack foods and deli meats, read nutrition labels and choose low sodium versions when possible.

### Prioritize Potassium

Another key electrolyte, potassium actually works against sodium to reduce blood pressure and provide other heart health benefits. Potassium-rich foods include most fruits and vegetables, as well as beans, legumes and dairy. Bananas and potatoes, widely favored by runners as easily digestible sources of carbs, are especially high in potassium. Maximize your potassium intake by including veggies at your main meals, and aiming for at least two servings of fruit daily.

### Amplify Your Antioxidants

Antioxidants are plant compounds that promote health and protect against disease by reducing free radical damage and fighting inflammation. They're naturally found in colorful fruits and vegetables, especially berries, dark leafy greens like broccoli and kale, and orange/red pigmented produce such as carrots and tomatoes. Coffee, tea, red wine and yes even dark chocolate (the higher the cocoa content, the better!) also contain a class of antioxidants called polyphenols, so enjoy!





## Sample Day of Heart-Healthy Eating

*A day of meals that are low in sodium and saturated fat, high in potassium, antioxidants omega-3s and fiber, and packed with flavor! Recipes are designed to serve two adults.*

### Breakfast: Oatmeal with Walnuts and Blueberries

#### Ingredients:

- 1 ½ cups old fashioned oats
- 1 ½ cups milk (or liquid of choice)
- ½ cup walnuts, chopped
- 1 cup blueberries (or your favorite berry)
- 1 Tbsp. honey or maple syrup
- Ground cinnamon to taste

#### Instructions:

- Prepare oats on stove top or in microwave with milk or liquid of choice. Divide into two bowls and top with walnuts, berries, cinnamon and a drizzle of honey or maple syrup. Enjoy with coffee or tea, if desired.

### Lunch: Sweet Potato and Black Bean Bowl

#### Ingredients:

- 2 medium sweet potatoes, cubed and roasted
- 1 cup black beans, rinsed and drained (look for low sodium if canned)
- 1 cup brown rice, cooked
- 1 medium avocado, sliced
- 1 large tomato, diced
- ¼ red onion, diced
- 2 cup leafy greens, such as spinach, kale or romaine lettuce
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil, plus more for roasting
- 1 tsp. lime juice
- Fresh cilantro or parsley, to taste

#### Instructions:

- Cut sweet potatoes into cubes, coat lightly with olive oil, and roast on sheet pan in oven at 425 degrees until browning occurs (about 20 minutes.) Prepare brown rice according to package directions (or purchase pre-cooked.) Rinse and drain black beans from can. Use a



sharp knife to slice avocado, tomato and red onion. Wash and chop herbs. Place 1 cup of greens in each of 2 bowls, and top with equal amounts of above ingredients. Drizzle with lime juice and olive oil. Optionally, add protein such as shrimp, grilled chicken or tofu.

### Dinner: Balsamic Maple Glazed Salmon with Vegetables and Quinoa

#### Ingredients:

- 2 filets of fresh salmon, about 5 ounces each
- 1 lb. asparagus, string beans, carrots, brussels sprouts, or your favorite fresh vegetables
- 1 cup quinoa, dry (about 2 cups cooked)
- 1 Tbsp. Olive oil
- ¼ cup balsamic vinegar
- ¼ cup maple syrup
- 2 Tbsp. orange juice
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 Tbsp. mustard
- Ground black pepper and salt to taste

#### Instructions:

- Heat water on stove top and prepare quinoa according to package directions (or purchase pre-cooked.) Pre-heat oven to 400 degrees and coat a sheet pan with non-stick spray or line with parchment paper. Wash and prepare vegetables. Whisk together balsamic vinegar, maple syrup, orange juice, minced garlic, and mustard in a saucepan or microwave-safe bowl to make marinade. Brush both salmon filets and vegetables with olive oil, and coat with about half of the marinade. Arrange salmon and vegetables on the sheet pan and roast in oven about 10-15 minutes. In the meantime, heat the remaining marinade on stove top or in microwave. Remove salmon from oven. Continue to cook vegetables until desired browning occurs, which may require an additional few minutes depending on thickness. Place 1 piece of salmon, half the quinoa and half of the cooked vegetables on each plate. Top with remaining, warmed marinade. Enjoy meal with a glass of red wine, if desired.



*Alissa is an Atlanta-based registered dietitian nutritionist and certified personal trainer dedicated to helping people optimize health and athletic performance by harnessing the power of nutrition. Alissa currently offers virtual and in-person nutrition consultations, meal planning services and metabolic testing. Learn more at [alissapalladinonutrition.squarespace.com](http://alissapalladinonutrition.squarespace.com) or contact her at [apalladinordn@gmail.com](mailto:apalladinordn@gmail.com)*



## SPRINTING INTO THE FUTURE

By Justin Gaymon

Atlanta Track Club recently added sprinters to its Elite Team and launched a Youth Team-Speed Academy program, and it's looking to O'Neil Wright to lead it down the right track as it enters a new era.

"My goal is to build a foundation for sprinters at Atlanta Track Club," said Wright, who joined Atlanta Track Club staff on January 1 as sprint coach. "The organization is known for distance running, and soon they'll know us for sprinting as well."

Hailing from Jamaica's southeastern parish of St. Catherine, Wright grew up in a community immersed in both soccer and track and field. Along with his four brothers and sister, Wright spent most of his free time running up and down the streets, breaking imaginary Olympic finish line tapes and dribbling soccer balls around anyone or anything in his path.

While there is no shortage of inspirational figures in Jamaica's storied track and field history, Wright said that one of his biggest influences was his sister Nora, who once held the country's 12-year-old 200-meter record and would regularly beat any boy in the neighborhood who challenged her.

It was Winthrop Graham who would become Wright's professional track and field idol when he won a silver medal for Jamaica at the 1992 Olympics in the 400-meter hurdles. But he didn't attempt the 400 hurdles himself until he was 15. Until then, he'd seen success at 200 and 400 meters, but when a coach pushed the reluctant teenager into giving the new discipline a try it didn't take him long to realize his calling.

"When you grow up in Jamaica you're inspired to run because it's all around you," said Wright. "I ran all throughout my youth but started to really take it seriously once I started hurdling."

During his second year as hurdler, Wright won the 1996 CARIFTA Games (U-17) 400 meters in 49.03 and the 400-meters hurdles in a meet record time of 54.07. That season he went on to win the Central American and Caribbean Junior Championships 400-meter hurdles in 54.03.

"Winning those meets felt gratifying," said Wright. "I had worked so hard all season and to win was my first real reward for those long days of training. That pushed me to work even harder"

At 17, Wright migrated to live with his uncle in Lauderdale Lakes, Florida, in search of greater educational and future career opportunities. He attended Boyd Anderson High School and continued to shine on the track, capturing Golden South and Florida state high school titles in the 300-meter hurdles during his senior year.

As a highly recruited sprinter, Wright earned a scholarship to compete at the University of Tennessee at Martin. However, he would transfer to the University of Alabama after his freshman year after the team's sprint coach resigned.

At Alabama, Wright became a two-time All-American and was a regular in SEC Championship 400-meter hurdle finals. His best finish came during the 2001 SEC Championships, where he placed fifth with a time of 51.52. Wright graduated in 2003





with a degree in Consumer Economics & Financial Planning, but he wasn't eager to jump into the financial sector. Instead, he began his professional running career while volunteer coaching the sprints and hurdles at Alabama under head coach Sidney Cartwright.

Wright saw success, winning 400-meter hurdles races around the world. During his second year on the professional circuit, Wright took the opportunity, through his then-wife, to become a dual citizen of Liberia and compete internationally for that West African country. In May 2005, he set the still-standing national record of 49.55 at the Georgia Tech Invitational right here in Atlanta.

Wright went on to qualify for the 2005 World Athletics Championships in Helsinki, but didn't advance beyond the preliminary round.

"I was running really well going into World Championships, but I was too excited," said Wright. "I got out of the blocks too fast and smashed the first hurdle. That messed up the rest of my race, and I barely missed making the semi-final."

Wright hoped to claim redemption two years later at the 2007 World Championships, for which he qualified but was unable to compete. His mother passed away just a week before his preliminary round, and a hurricane would prevent him from leaving Jamaica after attending her funeral.

"I was devastated," said Wright. "It was the lowest point of my life and career. I know I would have made the championship final, but my season and running career spiraled after that."

Wright ended his professional running career in 2008 after a severe ankle injury. Since then, he has coached sprinters at all levels, including collegians at Campbell University, Winston-Salem State University and Augsburg College.

Wright first came to Atlanta Track Club in 2018 as a part-

time sprint coach of the Youth Team, which consists of kids in grades 4-8 of all ability and experience levels. Just this past season, Wright's young sprinters captured three Top 5 finishes at Georgia Middle School Track & Field State Championships, including Paul Byrnes' thrilling 400-meter victory in 52.43.

To help youth sprinters prepare for the spring track and field season, Wright helped launch the organization's newest program, Atlanta Track Club Youth Team-Speed Academy. The winter speed and conditioning program is just wrapping up its inaugural season and has been a hit among its 32 members, which include Wright's daughter, Kimoni, and son, Shaneil. Wright's oldest brother, Keith, helps coach the Youth Team sprinters.

"I always love giving back, especially to kids and track and field because if it wasn't for the sport I wouldn't be here," said Wright. "Growing up in Jamaica wasn't easy. We had many challenges to overcome and track and field helped me through them. So, I work for Atlanta Track Club to make a positive difference in people's lives though my passion for coaching."

Wright also welcomed Atlanta Track Club's first professional sprinters to the Elite Team last fall. Samson Colebrooke is a 200-meter specialist who competed in the event for the Bahamas at the 2020 Olympics after graduating from Purdue last spring. Akeem Sirleaf, who will represent Liberia in international competition, was a part of North Carolina A&T's national title-winning 4x400 relay team and boasts a 200-meter personal best of 20.37. Developmental sprinters Karel Ziketh and Lia Tshikaya of France will also train with the inaugural sprint team.

"The best word to describe being coached by O'Neil is 'exciting,'" said Colebrooke. "He's loud, has no filter and tells it how it is when it comes to our performance, so he makes sure we push ourselves and keep getting better."



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# PRACTICE THESE 5 MAGIC TRICKS

By Abby Keenan, MS, CMPC

There is something special about the dark, early-morning start of the Publix Atlanta Marathon, Half Marathon and 5K. You can feel the excitement in the air with the buzz of runners, volunteers and spectators all getting ready for a memorable experience. For marathoners and half marathoners especially, so much can happen in the miles to come. Whether your goal is to run the entire way, cement your Ultimate Peach status, get a BQ or anything in between, we all want to enjoy our time on the course and be proud of going the distance.

By adding a little MAGIC to our preparation and race day, we can do just that – and feel ready to handle any challenges along the way.

**Mental preparation** – If you haven't already, now is a good time to start planning for your race. Map out your timeline, gear, logistics and COVID precautions. Review the course map to get familiar with the route, frequency of hydration and fuel stations and elevation profile; consider which portions of the race may be difficult or even stressful for you. Incorporate this information into your last bit of training, whether that's testing out CLIF bars during long runs, practicing mantras on hill repeats or seizing opportunities to run in all kinds of weather. Taking these steps will boost your confidence.

**Attention** – You should not, and cannot, be focused for 100 percent of the race. Sometimes you may zone out or disengage mentally. Sometimes you may pick a landmark in the distance as a target to keep you going. Sometimes you may reset your focus if someone strikes up a conversation with you. Your attention is a finite resource that can be used strategically.

**Group** – Tap into the power of your people: Simulate a pack with your training group. Ask your endurance athlete friends about their marathon experiences. Share your preparation and strategy ideas with your coach for feedback. Communicate your goals and needs for race day with your loved ones. Don't underestimate the importance of support.

**Intentions** – Before you toe the line, set your intentions. What is your goal? What do you want to do during the race? How do you want to be, particularly during any difficult moments? How will you celebrate afterwards? The answers will help you to engage in the miles ahead in a way that feels authentic and meaningful to you.

**Controllables** – Think about the experience you want to have on race day and everything that will be out of your control (e.g., weather, location of porta-johns, someone clipping your heels, feeling a cramp). These are things to let go of as much as possible rather than letting them steal your focus and energy. Instead, make a list of everything that will be within your control. Spoiler alert: it usually boils down to one thing – you. You control your attitude, effort and behavior, which you can leverage before and during the race. During tough or unexpected moments day-of, take a deep breath and ask yourself, "What do I control right now?"

Enjoy the miles!

*Abby Keenan is a Certified Mental Performance Consultant® with Intrepid Performance Consulting, where she helps athletes improve themselves and their performance through mental skills. For more information about online mental skills training or to schedule a free consultation, visit [www.intrepidperformance.com](http://www.intrepidperformance.com).*

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# GREETINGS FROM



By Barbara Huebner



For 24 years, Kyle Clay volunteered at the Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race, most recently as the start director. His wife, Jill, served as crew chief of the start tents for almost as long. They retired from the Peachtree after the 50th Running, but that doesn't mean they retired from major sporting events: On January 10, the diehard Dawg lovers traveled to Indianapolis to witness their University of Georgia football team win its first national championship since 1980. With them were their two sons, a nephew, Jill's cousin and a daughter, and Jill's 76-year-old parents. "As the saying goes, we didn't come to take part. We came to take over," quipped Kyle.



## How did you become fans?

**Kyle:** Jill's parents are both alumni, and Jill [class of 1997] was on the dance team for all four years with the band. I went to UGA for a year and a half before graduating from Kennesaw State. Jill's parents have had season tickets for over 40 years, and we got season tickets together 18 years ago when we got married, in the UGA chapel.

**Jill:** It's just what I was raised on, together with my entire family.

## What's so special to you about Georgia football?

**Kyle:** You talk to the same people around you in the stands for 18 years, it's like a family. There are 92,000 people for every home game and you feel that you know everyone in the stadium.

## Was there one moment in the championship game that really stands out for you?

**Kyle:** For me, it was the interception [by Kelee Ringo late in the game]. I had just told our son, if we get an interception here, we're going to win the game. [The reaction to the touchdown] was the loudest thing I ever heard. The crowd was 70-30 Georgia fans and it was just total jubilation.

## How did it feel to see them win their first national title in 41 years?

**Kyle:** I don't know if you have a word for that. You asked that question and we both teared up.

**Jill:** Exhilaration. Just unbelievable.

**Kyle:** I wanted so much for her parents to see that. Just one national championships, just one. After all those Saturday afternoons ...

## What was it like when the game ended?

**Kyle:** Everyone was hugging and crying and high-fiving strangers.

**Jill:** When I made it to their section, the first thing I said to my mom was "We did it! We did it!" My dad is a man of few words but he was smiling from ear to ear. I just stood there taking it in with them, the trophy ceremony and the confetti. We stayed until they kicked us out of the stadium.

**Kyle:** We brought some confetti home with us.

## What's it been like since you got home?

**Kyle:** Jill's dad bought a \$175 bottle of tequila on a cruise years ago and said he was going to save it for a national championship. When we went to Athens for the celebration there, about 16 of us toasted the Dawgs.

**Jill:** My mom told me last night they just got done watching the game for the second time, and that she was just as stressed out watching the first three quarters as she was at the game.

**Kyle:** I have that recorded, and it's one I will not delete. Whenever I have a bad day, I'll just come home and watch Georgia win a national championship again.





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By Jay Holder

## Become an Official Charity Partner

Registration for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race doesn't open until March 15, but applications to become an Official Charity Partner are open now. The Official Charity Partner Program affords eligible 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations in Georgia the ability to raise awareness and funds in support of their charitable causes. Organizations must have a local chapter in Georgia, if a national or global organization, and support work in the areas of animal welfare, environment, healthcare/medicine/research, health/fitness/wellness, homelessness or social justice/equity/access.

The non-profits will receive guaranteed entries into the Peachtree, which will take place virtually and in-person on July 4 in Atlanta. Participants will be required to raise a minimum of \$1,000 for the non-profit in exchange for their registration. Applications are available at [atlantatrackclub.org](http://atlantatrackclub.org) under the "Support" dropdown through February 15.

## New, Returning Board Members Elected; Officers Announced



Kara Finley



Dr. Tim Hynes



Lee Allan

Kara Finley is the new chair of Atlanta Track Club's board of directors, assuming the role at the Club's annual town hall and business meeting on January 11. Finley, a partner in risk assurance at PricewaterhouseCoopers, had been vice chair. Kerry Parker, the previous president, will retain his seat on the board.

The board also announced the election of two new members: Lee Allan, a sales executive for Salesforce.com and Dr. Tim Hynes, president emeritus of Clayton State University. In addition, board members Erika Jolly Brookes and Katie Kirkpatrick were re-elected to new terms. Kirkpatrick, president and CEO of the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, also serves as president of Atlanta Track Club Foundation.

Additional officers include Da'rel Patterson, secretary, and John Runnion, treasurer.

## Club Releases its Report on "Common Ground"

Atlanta Track Club has released a comprehensive report detailing its Common Ground initiative. Launched in July 2020, Common Ground was designed to educate and inform staff, leadership and members on the issues of social justice and anti-racism. Over the past two years, the Club donated dozens of benches made from recycled water bottles used at the 50th Running of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race to local non-profits, schools, parks, public institutions and partner corporations throughout the metro-Atlanta area. The benches – part of the Club's efforts on environmental stewardship – were used as a designated space for learning about the history and impact of systemic racism in the United States and listening to ways in which it might be dismantled.



Common Ground conversation with Atlanta Police Foundation.

A total of 27 conversations were conducted with various organizations. Benches were then left behind as a place for these organizations to continue to have their own conversations. The report, found on the home page of [atlantatrackclub.org](http://atlantatrackclub.org), summarizes the Club's Common Ground findings. The Club intends to apply what it has learned to the Club's own Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) work.

## Ready, Set, Go! Fund

Atlanta Track Club Foundation is offering up to \$10,000 to local youth running/walking programs, school cross county/track and field programs and health and wellness non-profit organizations in Georgia. Applications opened last month for the Foundation's first-ever Ready, Set, Go! Fund. In 2022, the Foundation is focusing its charitable giving on health and wellness, reducing childhood obesity and increasing physical activity in youth and adults.

Those interested in receiving grants can fill out a form at [atlantatrackclub.org](http://atlantatrackclub.org) under the "Support" dropdown through February 15. The Foundation board will vote on the recipients at its March meeting. Another round of grants will be given in the fall.



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