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PEACHTREE









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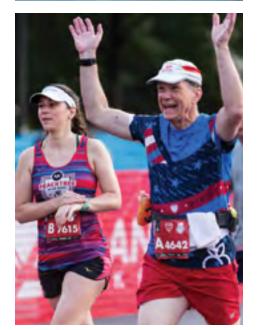
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WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

Welcome back to your future, Peachtree Faithful!

I can confidently say that after two years of adjustments made because of COVID-19, our majestic event has returned as we all remember it.

For you Peachtree veterans, the sights and sounds of your journey from Lenox Square to Piedmont Park will deliver nostalgia and return some normalcy to your July 4th holiday. From the National Anthem to the Air Force jet flyover and from course entertainment to finisher's shirts, the 53rd Running of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race will feel, if nothing else, very normal.

And for you first-timers, more than 12,000 strong, I hope your initial Peachtree experience will fill you with pride, excitement and fulfillment as you join in to celebrate Independence Day the only way Atlanta knows how.

To everyone involved in this year's race, thank you for keeping this special event alive and well.

See you at the start line.

Rich Kenah

Race Director and CEO of Atlanta Track Club

AJC PEACHTREE ROAD RACE





ONE DAY, ONE CITY, FOR EVERYONE

By Barbara Huebner

After three years of waiting, two days of racing, one all-virtual event and no small amount of hope and hard work, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race has returned in all its traditional glory.

"On July 4th we will celebrate the true return to a 'new normal,' a one-day Peachtree with no COVID-19 requirements," said Rich Kenah, CEO of Atlanta Track Club and the Peachtree race director. "It took longer than we ever thought it would, but the wait will make our 2022 race all the more special."

After the 2020 Peachtree was forced to become a virtual-only edition, the in-person race resumed last year over two days, July 3 and 4, to allow for safety in social distancing and to better accommodate pandemic-related logistics. A slimmed-down Peachtree Health & Fitness Expo presented by Publix was by appointment only, with COVID-detecting dogs; there was no official entertainment along the course and no post-race festivities in The Meadow at Piedmont Park. About 36,000 registered to run over the holiday weekend, with another 8,000 participating virtually.

"It was a totally different feeling this year, but an enjoyable experience nonetheless," wrote Aprille Blair Moore after last year's race on her Facebook page.

"Different day, same race!" posted Alexus Murray on hers.

And now, it's back to same day, same race: one day that has been beloved in Atlanta for 53 years, uniting the people of this city toward a common goal – the Piedmont Park finish line – with energy, delight and an unmatched spirit of camaraderie.



With 46,000 people set to make their way from Lenox Square, the event is starting to close in on its pre-pandemic numbers.

But that's not to say that race organizers haven't tweaked a few things since 2019, the last time they put on an in-person, oneday Peachtree for its historic 50th Running.

Perhaps the biggest change was the re-opening of registration from May 20-June 4, one month out from race day.

"The difference between Peachtree and all the other major iconic road races and marathons is that the Peachtree really was built on and grew out of the desire for inclusion," said Kenah. "We come together to celebrate everyone from the fastest runners and wheelchair athletes in the world to the thousands of participants who run or walk only one race a year. The March lottery, which started in 2011, facilitated that, with entry no longer a first-come, first-served frenzy but a process that allowed for everyone, regardless of schedule and life circumstances, to have an equal chance to participate."

With COVID-19 changing the way people live their lives and making them hesitant to plan too far ahead, he said, the Club received many more inquiries in April than it has in past years about how to enter the race.

"We recognized that to deliver on our longstanding commitment to bring the Peachtree to as many people as possible and let them keep their tradition alive, especially as we get back to the Independence Day celebration everyone knows and loves, we needed to expand access to entry."

Some of the additional changes:

- An option remains to run the Peachtree virtually, whether locally or anywhere in the world, but T-shirts won't be mailed to virtual participants until after they show proof that they've finished their 6.2 miles. Also, for the first time, finisher's shirts will contain no virgin plastics and will be offered in gender-cut sizes. (Story, Page 32)
- Masks will not be required anywhere in connection with the race, but Kenah asks that participants who choose to wear masks be "honored, celebrated and respected" the same as participants who choose not to wear them.
- The Peachtree Health & Fitness Expo presented by Publix will feature fewer than the 100+ exhibitors it had three years ago, instead focusing on more-specific activities and engagement between Expo visitors and vendors. (Story, Page 37)
- Poured water will return to the course, but participants who have concerns will be allowed to wear fuel belts or shoulder-carried containers of water. Chilled bottles of Dasani water will be available at the finish line.
- Live musical entertainment will return to the course, at 10 locations.
- A new Partner Village at the finish line for employees of event sponsors at Midtown High School will offer more space and more shade.
- Post-race activity returns to The Meadow. In addition to offering a new shoe, new race partner adidas will have significant space for participants to purchase race merchandise, relax, and get something to eat or drink.

But above all, the biggest change is no change at all. Asked on a recent Peachtree Podcast if it was important to him for the race to resume its traditional one-day celebration on July 4, Kenah said: "It's important to me, but I think it's more important to everyone else: all of the participants, the volunteers, all the people from the city, all of our partners and sponsors. They're all longing to get back to what they know as the traditional Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race – one day, July 4, with tens of thousands of your best friends at the world's largest running party."

THROUGH THE YEARS

- The first race, in 1970, had 110 participants. Jeff Galloway and Gayle Barron won.
- T-shirts made their debut in 1971, going to the first 125 finishers only meaning that 73 runners went home empty-handed.
- Mary Decker, 19 years old, wins in the first 10K of her career, in 1977.
- Craig Virgin shatters the course record in 1981 when he wins in 28:03, which remains the fastest time ever run here by an American.
- In 1982, prize money is awarded for the first time, and the Shepherd Center Wheelchair Division is added.
- The first Peachtree Junior is held in 1987.
- In 1993, Bill Thorn became the only runner from the Original 110 to complete every race. His streak continues to this day.
- Joseph Kimani runs the fastest 10K ever on U.S. soil, 27:04, when he wins in 1996.
- In 2009, for the first time, every participant is electronically timed via disposable tracking tags.
- In 2017, Tatyana McFadden wins the Shepherd Center Wheelchair Division for the seventh time, giving her the most wins of any athlete here in history. Her victory last year gives her eight.
- To celebrate its 50th Running in 2019, \$50,000 bonuses were offered for a course record in any elite division: men's and women's open and men's and women's wheelchair. All four winners took home the unprecedented prize, with Rhonex Kipruto's 27:01 now the fastest 10K ever on U.S. soil.



AJC PEACHTREE ROAD RACE

FAST ELITE FIELDS WILL BE CHASING \$53,000 BONUS

By Jay Holder

Sam Chelanga is still beaming over his victory at Peachtree last year. The U.S. Army first lieutenant, who said he will soon be promoted to captain, will return to defend his title against a stacked international field.

"After that race I felt so ready to do anything," recalled Chelanga, who broke the tape in 28:45. "It meant a lot to me."

Victory is icing – albeit really good icing – on the cake. "Atlanta is just one of those places I want to come to," said Chelanga, who has family in Atlanta and in Buford. "For the race, for the great people and for the Fourth of July."

When Chelanga won in 2021, the race served as the USATF 10km Championships, so his victory brought him the U.S. title. This year, a victory could bring a big payday. With the focus of Peachtree on fast times in 2022, bonuses are being offered for event records – \$53,000 (for the 53rd Running) to winners of the men's and women's open divisions and men's and women's

Shepherd Center Wheelchair divisions. If only one athlete sets a record, he or she will take home the full amount; if more than one does so, the bonus will be divided equally.

The women's race will likely include a battle between the world record-holder in the marathon and the world record-holder in the 5K. Brigid Kosgei of Kenya, the 2019 Peachtree Champion, returns to Atlanta to protect – or maybe lower – the course record of 30:22 she set that year. Just months later, she ran 2:14:19 at the Bank of America Chicago Marathon to shatter the world record for 26.2 miles. Since she last visited Piedmont Park, Kosgei has also won back-to-back Virgin Money London Marathons and a silver medal in the Tokyo Olympic Marathon.

The Peachtree will be Kosgei's first time facing off against Ethiopian Senbere Teferi, who ran the world record for a women-only 5K, 14:29, at last year's adidas Adizero Roads to Records in Germany. Teferi, who won the Mastercard New York Mini 10K on June 11 in 30:43, says she is training specifically to break the event record at Peachtree.

But with one of the strongest women's fields in Peachtree history, victory isn't guaranteed for either Kosgei or Teferi. Also expected to compete are Kenyans Sheila Chepkurui, who has run 29:46 for 10K, as well as Rosemary Wanjiru, who has



Men's Open Rhonex Kipruto, Kenya, 27:01, 2019

Women's Open Brigid Kosgei, Kenya, 30:22, 2019

Men's Wheelchair Daniel Romanchuk, USA 18:11 2019

Women's Wheelchair Manuela Schär, Switzerland, 21:28, 2019







1st	\$7,500
2nd	\$5,000
3rd	\$2,500
4th	\$1,500
5th	\$1,000
6th	\$750
7th	\$600
8th	\$500
9th	\$400
10th	\$250

A \$53,000 event record bonus will be divided among race winners in the footrace and the wheelchair race who se the event record. For example, if winners in two divisions break the record, each will get \$26,500.

run 29:50. Dorcas Tuitoek, winner of the 2022 Publix Atlanta Half Marathon, is also in the field.

A pair of former Peachtree runners-up are among the top Americans, with Sarah Pagano (2016) and Emily Durgin (2021) returning. They will be joined by Nell Rojas, the top American in the last two Boston Marathons, and Annie Frisbie, who was a surprise third here last year and then ran the third-fastest marathon debut ever by an American woman (2:26:18) when she placed 7th at the TCS New York City Marathon last fall.

The men's field is led by Jemal Yimer, the Ethiopian record holder in the half marathon. He is likely to face stiff competition from Kenyan Geoffrey Koech, who has a 10K personal best of 27:02.

The race will also feature 2022 Publix Atlanta Half Marathon champion Nicholas Kosimbei of Kenya and 2019 Peachtree runner-up Bravin Kiptoo. Kiptoo took second that year to his brother, Rhonex Kipruto, who holds the course record.

After Chelanga, the American field is led by the reigning USA Half Marathon Champion, Conner Mantz; Olympian and reigning USA Cross Country Champion Shadrack Kipchirchir; and 2017 Peachtree Champion Leonard Korir, who won the Bolder Boulder 10K in May. In addition, five-time Olympian Abdi Abdirahman, 45, will return to Atlanta to compete in his ninth Peachtree.

All fields as of June 13, when Peachtree Magazine went to press.

THIS TIME AROUND, D'AMATO STANDS OUT FROM THE CROWD

By Jay Holder



At the 2019 Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race in 2019, Keira D'Amato finished 16th and, unrecognized as an elite athlete, was sent through the regular finish chute to go collect her T-shirt, just like the rest of the 60,000 participants.

Three years later, D'Amato, 37, returns to Peachtree as one of the brightest stars in the sport, and she's here to win.

The new American recordholder in the marathon (2:19:12, Houston 2022)

carries no grudge over the faux pas. Far from it. Despite all that has happened in her career over the past three years— the marathon triumph, a U.S. record for 10 miles, two national titles – the episode remains one of her favorite race memories.

"It was one of the coolest moments of my life," she said. "I went into the huge field and, since every other person that beat me went to the elite tent, I'm literally the first runner into the field. Now, there are thousands of volunteers there, and they thought I won the race and everyone started cheering for me and like hollering. So, I rolled with it, raising the roof and running around high-fiving people. I didn't correct anybody, but people were going nuts for me."

Fans of American distance running have been going nuts for D'Amato ever since. You may have heard her story. A college runner at American University, thanks to injuries she walked away from the sport in 2009, became a real estate agent

and started a family. She started training again in 2017 and qualified for the 2020 U.S. Olympic Team Trials-Marathon in Atlanta, where she placed 15th in a then-personal best of 2:34:24. Months later, D'Amato set the U.S. record for a women's-only 10-mile race running 51:23 in Washington D.C. And in January of this year at the Chevron Houston Marathon, she took down Deena Kastor's 16-year-old American record.

"It's definitely been my 'hashtag' best year ever," she said. And while her life as the American record-holder has remained largely the same, D'Amato says she isn't selling as many houses as she used to, having started working with only family and close friends this past May. And she is taking a more aggressive approach to the roads. Fans will get to see it at Peachtree, where D'Amato says her race plan looks very different than it did last time, when her finishing time was 33:38.

"I remember in 2019, I planned to go out conservative and then crush the hill," she said. "And I did that, but there was only so much that I could make up on the hill. This time I'm going to take it out real hard."

D'Amato ran 31:50 for 10,000 meters on the track in April, but says she's in much better shape now and hopes to run faster at Peachtree. That would put her among the top three fastest Americans ever in the event. In fact, no American woman has broken 32:00 since Anne-Marie Lauck in 1994.

It won't be all business when D'Amato comes to Atlanta. On July 3, her kids (ages 5 and 7) will take part in the Microsoft Peachtree Junior. Afterward, she'll send the family to explore the city while she prepares for her role as one of the top runners on the start line the next day.

But that doesn't mean she wants to be treated any differently than she was in 2019. "I'm really hoping I can go that way again and get that kind of recognition," she said. "It was really cool."

"I AM SO AMAZED THAT I'M ALIVE"

By Barbara Huebner

Nineteen days. That's all it took for Susannah Scaroni to go from the mountaintop to the valley.

On August 28, the 31-year-old American won a gold medal at 5000 meters in the Paralympics, the first medal for the three-time Paralympian. "I feel so blessed," she said afterward.

Then: "This is a hard post but I just wanted everyone to know that I was involved in an accident during training yesterday [September 16] – the sunrise was so bright that a driver was unable to see me, or my flag, and hit me from behind at full speed."

The speed limit on the stretch of Illinois road where she was hit is 45 miles per hour, and Scaroni remembers feeling her chair suddenly being pushed hard from behind. Then she was on the ground and the driver, who had stopped, was coming toward her.

"The first thing I thought was 'holy cow, I am so amazed that I'm alive," she said.

Still, it was not good: a burst fracture of her T8 vertebrae – meaning the bone broke in multiple directions. In the hospital, "I was thinking how I was just the best I'd ever been, and that [at least] I got to experience it regardless of what the future holds."

The immediate future held four months in a back brace. After about six weeks, she was allowed to use an arm bike, and soon she started wading through a swimming pool ("I spent a lot of time in those four months trying to dry the brace off," she said.) On January 3, she got back in her racing chair. Her return to racing was set for the United Airlines NYC Half in mid-March, but she had to withdraw after testing positive for COVID-19, so her first race was the Boston Marathon on April 18. Her back was hurting by Mile 10, but she crossed the line second to Manuela Schär.

Her journey back to the mountaintop was under way. Little did she know it would take only another six weeks to get there.

The 2018 winner of the Shepherd Center Wheelchair Division, Scaroni will return to compete in this year's Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race for the ninth time.





She first raced the Peachtree when she was just 11, so coming back always stirs up a lot of memories.

One of the fondest is of that victory, and the lessons she learned from it.

"I was competing against people I knew were very strong, so I decided to maximize my own strengths – I took a better corner at the end [onto 10th Street]," she said, giving her the edge over Tatyana McFadden, who had won the previous four editions. "It helped me understand that there are a lot of variables in

every race, and how to be the best athlete you can be" while maximizing the opportunities those variables provide.

In her gold medal race at the Olympics, before her accident, Scaroni had encountered one of those unexpected variables. She hadn't planned to take an early lead, but about a third of the way into the race found herself well ahead of the pack. Nonplussed, she began to race conservatively so that when she was caught she wouldn't be too embarrassed. Not only did she not get caught, but she came within one second of breaking the world record in her victory.

"I could have easily gotten that," she said, of what would have been her first world record. For a while, she wondered if she would ever get the chance again.

So, on May 29, in a 5000-meter race in Switzerland, Scaroni went all out from the gun. By the second lap, she realized that no one was with her. She decided to go for it, and her winning time of 10:38.41 shattered the previous world record for the T54 classification by 13 seconds. "I wanted to set the bar high for the next person to beat it," she said.

Poignantly, her ultimate comeback came in a memorial event for Daniela Jutzeler, a Swiss wheelchair racer killed by a car



when she was hit while training in 1994. "That could have been me," she thought that morning, as she lay in bed in tears. "I really wanted to honor the fact that I was given a second chance to be training and racing again."

Which brings us to Peachtree. Asked what she's most looking forward to about coming back, Scaroni cited the annual post-race gathering at the Shepherd Center, where the elite field embodies to the patients what is still possible for them even after a monumental setback.

She'll have plenty to talk about this year.



ATHLETES TO WATCH

In addition to Scaroni, the open wheelchair field features:

- Daniel Romanchuk, 23, USA. Four-time winner of Peachtree and its defending champion. Also won the Junior Peachtree in 2016. Two-time winner of both the Boston and New York City marathons. 2020 Paralympic gold medalist at 400 meters.
- Tatyana McFadden, 33, USA. Her eight wins at Peachtree are the most of any athlete in any division; is the defending champion. 20-time Paralympic medalist, five-time winner of both the Boston and New York City marathons.
- Marcel Hug, 33, Switzerland. Five-time Paralympian, in 2020 he won gold at every event he entered in Tokyo: 800m, 1500m 5000m and the marathon. Five-time winner of the Boston Marathon. World record-holder (1:17:47) at that distance. Competing in his fifth Peachtree.
- **Josh Cassidy**, 35, Canada. Won the Peachtree in 2010 and 2013. Won 2012 Boston Marathon in 1:18:25, at the time the fastest ever recorded. This will be his 10th Peachtree.

PEACHTREE MAGAZINE

TAKE OFF ON ATLANTA'S OTHER RUNWAY.

Proud to be the Official Airline of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race.



SHEPHERD CENTER WHEELCHAIR DIVISION





Julia Beckley, far right, with sister Emily, second from right, and best friend Katie Richardson, far left.

HAPPY TO BE JUST A FACE IN THE CROWD

By Rita Giordano

In the three years Julia Beckley has been competing as a pushrim wheelchair athlete, the 28-year-old Coloradoan has blazed many a trail and paved many a way for others.

But Beckley has been especially looking forward to a race in which she won't be a pioneer – the Peachtree.

"This is a big one for all the chair athletes," said Beckley, who has kept her competitive drive while managing a complex array of health conditions. "The coolest part is getting to be with everyone else who are chair athletes."

One very important person starting behind Beckley in the open field will be Atlanta native Katie Richardson, Beckley's best friend. It was Richardson who suggested to Beckley a few years ago that a wheelchair wasn't an admission of defeat, but a tool to help her to keep doing the things she loved.

"Every time I go through something big, Katie's go-to pep talk for me is, 'You're competent, you're capable, you will be wildly successful, and it's OK if that looks different," Beckley said.

Beckley was always an athletic kid who loved to compete, so when she broke her first bone at age 8 skiing it was no big deal. She went on to play volleyball, soccer and basketball and in high school focused on swimming and tennis. But bones just kept breaking.

In high school, she was diagnosed with a genetic bone disorder called hypophosphatasia, which explained the breaks. But that wasn't all. Beckley also developed extreme allergic reactions to all sorts of stimuli. Her throat would close. She struggled with asthma. In her early 20s she was diagnosed with osteonecrosis – her joints were dying.

The young woman who was such a dedicated athlete quit Colorado State University, where she was a microbiology major, and left her job as a resident adviser because walking around campus was just too painful.

Even so, Beckley continued to try to compete in races,

sometimes getting injured. For someone like her, it was heartbreaking.

But about five years ago, Beckley made an important friend at the young persons' group of her Timberline Church in Fort Collins. That was Richardson, a biomedical engineer from Atlanta who was also a runner and at the time was living in Colorado.

Richardson saw her friend's physical struggles and suggested a wheelchair, even part-time for getting around, and then one for racing.

"I put the bug in her ear, but it was her decision," Richardson said.

Since then, Beckley has advocated on her own and partnered with others like Achilles International to increase access for wheelchair athletes in track events across several states. In May, Colorado's Colfax Marathon allowed her to conduct a pilot program that enabled her to complete a full marathon in her home state, opening the possibility for others.

Beckley is now program director for the BASE Performance International Adaptive Team and advocates for athletes of all abilities to have access and opportunity while being part of a larger team of triathletes, runners and cyclists.

"You go from 'I'm alone because the doctor says they've never seen this' to 'oh, there's like 600 of us and we're going to meet up every year," she told a Denver TV station.

And now, finally, there will be the Peachtree. She's heard that patients from the Shepherd Center always come outside to watch the runners.

"The part that means the most to my heart," she said, "is seeing adaptive athletes, especially wheelchair, come together for the same start lines and getting to be a sponge and learn so much just from a short time."



By Barbara Huebner

Frankie DeFore hadn't been feeling well, even visiting the emergency room a couple of times with shortness of breath only to be sent home after tests turned up nothing alarming. But on July 13, 2020, things took a turn so troubling that he felt a need to be with his people. He went to his grandmother's house nearby. A cousin called 911.

The last thing he remembers after arriving at Navicent Hospital in Macon, Georgia, is lying on a gurney, moaning loudly. "Ma'm, I'm not going to die quietly," he told a nurse.

"And then I was out."

James F. "Frankie" DeFore III had gone into cardiogenic shock from heart failure. He was 34 years old, the single father of a 5-year-old boy. Family was summoned to say their goodbyes.

Then DeFore began to stabilize, and a Navicent doctor who had worked with Piedmont Hospital in Atlanta came on shift and decided that he should be helicoptered there for one last try. At Piedmont, DeFore was asked how he felt about surgery to implant a left ventricular assist device (LVAD), which helps pump blood from the lower left heart chamber to the rest of the body. A control unit and battery pack remain outside the body and are connected to the LVAD through a port in the skin. He would be tethered to external hardware for the foreseeable future, perhaps for the rest of his life.

"I want to live," he remembers telling them. "Whatever it's going to take, let's do that."

On July 30, 2020, DeFore underwent the surgery. Because of COVID-19, he was allowed no visitors as he recovered. The pain was intense. While in the ICU for 45 days, he suffered delirium so acute that for a while he believed his medical team was conspiring against him. But slowly he mended, and on September 3 he was released to convalesce at the home of his sister, Miranda, a former physician's assistant. Their Zoom chats had not prepared her.

"When they wheeled him out, I said 'wow," she recalled. "He'd lost so much weight and looked so fragile."

Down to about 100 pounds, DeFore couldn't climb the stairs to the bedrooms of her house, so he slept on a reclining sofa. He was too weak to push the recliner down by himself, so for the first week Miranda slept on the other half of the couch in case he needed her to push it down for him so that he could get up in the night.

His goal was to be home in Milledgeville by Christmas, and he was. An LVAD is often a bridge to a heart transplant, and as DeFore started to feel better his doctors began to consider getting him on the waiting list for one. He went in for tests and more tests and still more, which eventually led his medical team to believe his heart was actually healing to the point where he could just get the LVAD removed – or "explanted," a privilege accorded to a mere 1-2 percent of LVAD patients – without a transplant.

So, 16 months after the implant, DeFore had an explant. He

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was free – free of batteries, free of cables and free to live a new kind of life.

It was his sister who suggested they run a race together. In 2013, Miranda had run a half marathon with their older brother; a year later she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. Now in remission, she resumed running a few years ago after finally deciding that it's OK if she isn't as fast as she used to be, and ran the 2021 Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race. The course goes right past Piedmont Hospital at the top of Cardiac Hill, which made it a "perfect" goal for them in 2022.

And once Frankie DeFore has a goal, stand back. Miranda said it best: He's been given a second chance at life, and he's trying to make the most of it.

"I'm doing fan-TAS-tic," he said one morning in late May. He'd been running three days a week and planned to run every day in June. He's been meditating, and has become a salt, oil, sugar-free vegan. He's says he's in the best shape of his life, both mentally and physically.

"Heart failure," he insisted, "is the best thing that ever happened to me, absolutely. I love my life now. Everything is just so much more fulfilling. If it hadn't happened to me, I would never have slowed down to appreciate what's important. I'm trying to be the very best person I can be and help as many people as I can."

To that end, he started a YouTube channel to fill the void he found when he started searching for information on LVAD explants. He did a lengthy video interview on the YouTube channel "LVAD Talk." He makes himself available to anyone with questions about living with – and maybe eventually living without – an LVAD, and he said he hears from someone almost every day.

"Everyone who can't come as far as I did can come close," he said. "Some things might slow you down, but there isn't anything that can stop you."

One of his Piedmont cardiologists, Dr. Arun Krishnamoorthy, said his patient "has been through a lot. He was incredibly sick when he arrived," on an ECMO life-support machine that replaces the function of the heart and lungs. "I think he recognizes how sick he was. To be at the point where he is now is amazing, and he's grateful."

DeFore has his eye on doing a marathon in the not-too-distant future, but first comes the race he calls a great way to start his distance running journey. Less than two years since the LVAD surgery he thought might constrain him for life, he'll be on the Peachtree start line this Independence Day.

"Oh man, I can't even imagine," he said when asked how it will feel to run past Piedmont Hospital. "I am so grateful to those people. For them to see me do this, that means the world to me. I'm glad to be that miracle that shows them everything they've done is worth it."



WORKING FOR CHANGE "ONE SOLE AT A TIME"

By Natalie Cabañas

Having grown up in poverty, Bobby Johnson knows what it's like to go without shoes. So, it was easy for him to give up his own to a homeless man he saw on the side of the road one day while training for his first Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race back in 2001.

At the crest of the mile-long incline of Cardiac Hill, he had stopped to watch the sunrise. Johnson calls it "destiny" that he and this man shared an uncommon size 15 shoe. "Instinctively," said Johnson, "I knew something special had happened."

Which isn't to say that EcoSneakers, a social enterprise that provides gently used shoes to people in need in Atlanta

and around the world, was born overnight. It took a decade for Johnson to figure out how to combine his passion with his livelihood, and the Peachtree played a pivotal role: in 2011, the fledgling operation was invited to become part of the Peachtree Health & Fitness Expo. It's been back every year since.



"There was a natural connection between what Bobby was doing and the Club," said Holly Ortlund, then-manager of the Expo. "And people loved it. Participants would save their shoes up all year long just to bring them to the Expo and donate them to EcoSneakers."

In 2012, Johnson quit his corporate job and officially made EcoSneakers an LLC. At first, he collected shoes from neighbors, friends, schools and gyms. Eventually he added the Merrell Down & Dirty Mud Run, and that's when things started to take off. In 2015, donation bins started popping up in stores such as Phidippides and West Stride.

Two years later, Lynn McCray became his business partner. "He showed me what he was doing, and I told him I wanted to help," said McCray, who serves as community liaison. "We are both incredibly hard workers and our energy just meshed. It was a labor of love from the start, and I knew I was hooked."

14 🔀 PEACHTREE MAGAZINE



In the past 10 years, EcoSneakers has collected more than 400,000 pairs of shoes. The endeavor has created jobs in at least 14 countries, with a goal to change communities "one sole at a time."

Here's how it works: After the sneakers are collected and sorted, shoes that aren't needed in Atlanta are sent to vetted exporters of developing nations, who purchase them for a nominal fee. Small business owners in those nations create microenterprises by hiring people to sort, clean and repair the shoes. So, jobs are created and people in need are given access to affordable shoes.

"I just did it without a plan," said Johnson, laughing. "I did it because it was the right thing to do, and I knew I was supposed to. We've touched so many people's lives and changed my life and theirs."

Growing up in domestic violence and extreme poverty in Kentucky, Johnson was bullied for wearing old clothes and tattered shoes. For many, this kind of childhood could serve to harden one's heart. For Johnson, it motivated him to make positive change. "I made a choice – I'm going to be somebody," he said. "I wanted to be somebody that made a difference in the lives of others."

Over the years, the reach of EcoSneakers has grown. McCray has connected it with companies such as Georgia Power, Coca-Cola and Chick-Fil-A, as well as businesses, government agencies, hospitals and schools. Friendly competitions are sometimes held to see which organization can collect the most shoes.

EcoSneakers even collaborated in 2019 with the Ludacris Foundation and Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms in "The Sole of Atlanta" campaign to collect shoes for distribution to underserved Atlantans during the Super Bowl, which was played that year in Mercedes-Benz Stadium.

"When I met Lynn, I had no idea she could work the way she does, there aren't too many people that can work like that," said Johnson. "She and I match up very well because of her work ethic and passion."

Even when shoes that are donated cannot be re-used, they can still be recycled. Until recently, EcoSneakers outsourced their shoe recycling, but recently it bought its own grinder. Longterm, Johnson said he would like to make original, sustainable products – such as stuffed animals, backing for carpets, and beanbags – out of some of the shoes that are collected.

McCray is grateful that Johnson and EcoSneakers introduced her to the Peachtree "It's our favorite event to attend all year," she said. "I fell in love immediately with the community Atlanta Track Club has built through the Peachtree. The Expo gave me the opportunity to meet and talk with some many passionate people – it's something I always want to be around."

Ironically, when Johnson started running before that first Peachtree 21 years ago, he didn't much like it. But the more he ran, the more time he had to think, pray and envision the future. The more he ran, "the more it changed my life and taught me life lessons – the greatest lesson was serving others." He has run the race at least 10 times since then.

McCray has also participated in the Peachtree and has become an Atlanta Track Club member. "The Peachtree has changed my life because of what it represents for me but also for so many people," she said. "It's been a way to change people's lives through repurposing so many shoes."

The partnership with Atlanta Track Club has blossomed, with EcoSneakers attending events throughout the year – just since 2019, more than 2,329 pairs of shoes have been collected, and the Club's headquarters is now an official drop-off site for shoes.

"Atlanta Track Club gave us an exposure in the community like we'd never had before," said Johnson. "We work with people from Florida and Alabama now simply because we met them at the Peachtree."

HOW TO HELP

If you have gently worn or unused running shoes you no longer want, be sure to bring them to the Peachtree Health & Fitness Expo presented by Publix on July 2-3 at the Georgia World Congress Center in Hall C4. There, you will find EcoSneakers collecting shoes in the adidas booth.

For a complete list of drop-off locations or to partner with EcoSneakers, visit ecosneakers.org



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MARIA TAYLOR SETS DOWN THE MIC TO RUN ON HOME TURF

By Jay Holder

Maria Taylor has a front row seat for some of the biggest sporting events in the world. As an anchor for NBC Sports, she has led coverage of the Tokyo and Beijing Olympics, the French Open and, starting this fall, will be the host of Sunday Night Football. But when it comes to the world's largest 10K, instead of being behind the microphone Taylor will be one of the participants.

As a Roswell, Georgia, native and graduate of Centennial High School and the University of Georgia, Taylor has always viewed the Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race as a family tradition. She says her parents started running it 10 years ago and that about five years ago, she joined in. "It just so happens that the road race happens at a time when I can actually always be home and be there," said Taylor.

Race morning begins on MARTA for Taylor and her parents. Sometimes siblings join in for the race. Her husband is there, too, but as a member of the Atlanta Police Department he usually runs or walks alongside the mayor. Taylor says her dad, 63, is usually the first to the finish line.

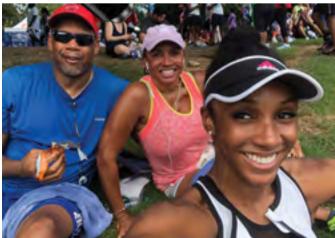
Taylor prefers to take it all in, curating an Atlanta-centric playlist each year and putting in one ear pod for her music and leaving one ear open to hear the crowds, especially as the runners make the turn onto 10th Street and go through the intersection of 10th and Piedmont with the finish line in sight.

She sometimes has to walk the hills in the second half of the course but said her training as a volleyball player at UGA helps her push through the pain. She also includes the hills around Atlanta's Chastain Park as part of her regular running route to prepare.

After the race, the family meets up in Piedmont Park, collects their shirts, enjoys a fresh peach and then heads to Macon to spend the rest of the holiday with family. "You know, you kind of just don't feel your legs for the rest of the day," she said. "But you feel like you've accomplished something."

Taylor said she is not a year-round runner: the Peachtree is it. She proudly collects finisher's shirts and family photos and





has friends on the lookout for vintage Peachtree shirts at thrift stores in the Atlanta area.

"I love the road race. I love the 60,000 people that show up, just a big group, everyone is so happy, it's so positive, with people cheering for you all along the road," she said. "It doesn't matter who you're voting for, it doesn't matter what school you went to, there's just a big sense of unity that comes from everyone coming together and it happens on the Fourth and that makes it really special."

Taylor said that's because Atlanta means "everything" to her. In fact, maintaining Atlanta as her home base is something Taylor is not willing to negotiate despite the demands of her job. "I feel like Atlanta is just where I recharge, where I feel most at home and where I feel as though I can be the most myself," she said. "Anything that you say that is very 'Georgia,' I know, I've done it, I do it. That's who I am."



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FROM BOTSWANA TO ATLANTA, DREAMBIB FOUNDER IS DREAMING BIG

PEOPLE OF PEACHTREE

By Jay Holder

As an avid runner, Lehlohonolo Makaja knew that his first trip to the United States wouldn't be complete without running a race. But not just any race. From the minute the 30-year-old entrepreneur from Botswana learned he would be coming this summer as part of a program run by the U.S. Department of State, he's had his sights set on the Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race.

That's because one of the businesses that's bringing Makaja to study for two weeks at Atlanta's Clark University to is the running business. He's coming to the U.S. as part of the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders, in part thanks to his role as the founder of DreamBib.

Over the past four years Makaja, who also works to export African goods, has worked with both recreational and aspiring competitive runners in Botswana to provide racing and training in other African countries, especially those – such as South Africa and Ethiopia – known for a strong running culture.

The idea was born during his first visit to Ethiopia in 2014, when he met his favorite runner, Haile Gebreselassie. "I found out that not only was he Ethiopia's greatest athlete but also one of the most prominent entrepreneurs in the country after investing his prize money in different ventures," Makaja told the Tempo Journal in 2019. "It gave me affirmation that sports can indeed be a channel for development and a door to more great things."

While Botswana has had success in the 400 meters and 800 meters internationally – its men's 4x400-meter relay won the bronze medal in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Nijel Amos won silver at 800 meters at the 2012 London Olympics – it's Makaja's hope that by the time Paris 2024 draws near, Botswana's longer-distance runners will also be seen as medal contenders. He's working on that vision by not only bringing athletes to proven training grounds, but also by creating opportunities to race in his own country. Just this



spring, Makaja served as race director for a 1,500-person 15K race and Makaja has been an integral part of the Gaborone Marathon in Botswana's capital city. Since 2012, the race has grown from 2,000 to nearly 10,000 participants.

"I think we are now becoming accustomed to adopting running as a fitness activity over going to the gym," said Makaja. "Maybe 10 years ago there was only one running club in Botswana, but now we have so many. I think we have more than 20 actively involved."

Makaja attributes that continued momentum in part to Botswana's COVID-19 response, which kept races running while many countries were still on lockdown. The country's quick vaccine rollout and preparation has been used as an example for other African nations.

Makaja arrived in Atlanta on June 8 and has started taking classes at Clark. He'll be here through the middle of July. The learning experience he is most looking forward to is the one he'll participate in on July 4. Makaja said he's been training to break 40 minutes, but a fast time isn't his primary goal.

"We want to bring international participants to your races," he said, especially runners from Botswana. "We want to see the world coming to Peachtree. Because it is more than just running, it's cross-cultural experiences. These races play a role in connecting the world."



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Photos: Courtesy of Gloria Cuarezma

FIRST RACE IN HER NEW HOMETOWN - AND NEW COUNTRY

By Stephanie Hoppe

Gloria Cuarezma is getting acquainted with her new hometown by training for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race

"Now that I'm here I want it to be my first race. Everyone keeps telling me about it, and I'm so excited," said Cuarezma, 42, who moved to Atlanta from Chile just this past April.

Originally from Nicaragua, Cuarezma said she never imagined she would live in the United States. But a new opportunity with Delta Air Lines, where she has worked for nine years, brought her to America.

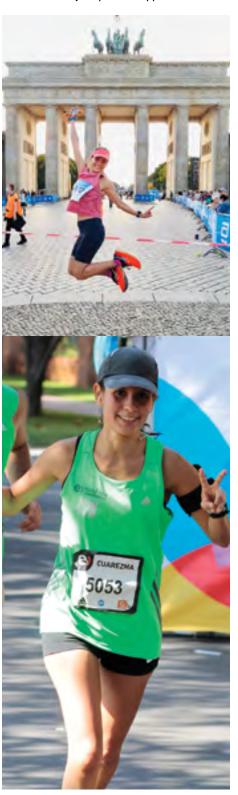
"I can't wait to celebrate Independence Day and my move to Atlanta. I want to do a good time, even though it's for fun. I want to do my best," said Cuarezma, who aims to finish the race in 45 minutes. "I know it's going to be hot. People keep telling me to be ready! My body is getting used to the humidity and the heat, so I think I should be good."

Cuarezma said she expected Atlanta to be only "cement and concrete" and was pleasantly surprised that she was incorrect. With her apartment less than a mile from Piedmont Park and the Beltline, she said she enjoys running through both.

"I love that there's a lot of nature. I love that there's a lot of parks and there's a lot of trees. That makes it very attractive to me," Cuarezma said. "When I think about Atlanta, I see it in a different way now. I feel like this can be home."

And although new to the city, Cuarezma said she is already making friends and mentioning Peachtree to people she meets

"I'm making sure that every person that I talk to goes to that race. I want to see a lot of familiar faces," said Cuarezma, whose French Bulldog, Joy, will be waiting for her at the finish line.



And she hopes to get more involved with Atlanta Track Club, too, because "training with other people will keep you going. It will inspire you to keep moving."

Running groups have been a pivotal part of her running journey. In 2011, Cuarezma moved to Chile to pursue her MBA. Stressed out with classes, she saw a flyer for a training group.

"I didn't have shoes, I didn't have my watch, I had nothing," Cuarezma said.

But she didn't let that deter her. She said she attended the first training run, a 5K, and was hooked. She was soon inspired to tackle longer distances. In 2013, she completed her first 26.2 mile-race, the Santiago Marathon, and has since finished many others, including three of the six Abbott World Marathon Majors.

Cuarezma said she aims to complete a marathon every year – her next is Philadelphia in November – and to qualify for Boston. Through consistent training and a focus on nutrition, Cuarezma is moving closer to her goal and has taken her marathon personal best time from 4:48 to 3:55.

"When you run it's just like you as a whole, not just your body but mentally and emotionally, you feel like wow, I can do everything," Cuarezma said. "You suffer sometimes during the training, but it's all worth it when you run."

But finding time to train isn't always easy. Cuarezma frequently travels for work, which means early morning runs before flights and running on treadmills in new cities. She hopes her dedication to training encourages others to stay active.

"When people tell me they are inspired ... that's what I want to do in my life. Inspire people to be better," said Cuarezma, who plans to keep running until she is 80. Or maybe 90.



The Year Of The ALL STAR



BROTHERLY LOVE BUOYS VOLUNTEER-TURNED-RUNNER

By Stephanie Hoppe

LaToya Thompson, 38, remembers how she discovered the Peachtree. She was riding MARTA to join friends for brunch when she saw people wearing race bibs and recalls thinking: "I'll never be caught running in the streets."

A few years later, one of her co-workers at the Cumberland Mall Apple Store, where she works as a Genius, was preparing for the 2019 race. This time Thompson was intrigued and decided to volunteer – a decision that would change her life.

Thompson enjoyed the experience so much that she kept volunteering. Then while serving as a course monitor at the 2020 Public Atlanta Marathon, she felt a surge of inspiration as she witnessed the runners' commitment to finish as spectators cheered them on. She recalls thinking, 'I want to know what that feels like.'"

So, Thompson joined Atlanta Track Club. Last year, she completed her first in-person Peachtree.

"That feeling by far was one of the best feelings. You're running down Peachtree and you have complete strangers ... just cheering you on because you signed up to do this race, and they want to see you cross that finish line," said Thompson, who plans to run again on July 4.

"I also want to help in any way that I can," she said of volunteering. "I get this weird feeling the day before the race, like I'm super excited, like a kid in a candy store or the night before Christmas. And I just can't sleep. I'm pumped up. I'm ready to volunteer. I'm ready to go run."

The 2021 Road to Gold brought an unanticipated bonus. Heading to the start line, Thompson asked another runner to take a picture of her. That interaction, along with subsequent unplanned meetings at other races, helped her develop a friendship with Corey and his friends Julian and Jo. The group has since completed eight races together, celebrating each with breakfast at the Flying Biscuit Café.

"It's crazy to see how by me just asking them to take a picture



of me, it turned into this friendship, this bond we have," Thompson said. "We always look to find ways to encourage and uplift each other."

She said she recently leaned on them after the unexpected passing of her 34-year-old brother in December. Kenneth, called Maurice (his middle name) by family, was an avid runner.

"Running was a part of my brother's life in a way that most people don't think of," the kind of person who would run to and from the store toting groceries. "The next day [after his death], the training schedule alert went off, and I'm like 'I can't do this race," said Thompson, who had been planning to start training for her first 13.1-miler, the 2022 Publix Atlanta Half Marathon.

But Corey, Julian and Jo encouraged her – just as Maurice has always done – and she ran in her brother's honor.

"When I crossed the finish line, I went down and cried," Thompson said. "I knew he was with me through the race. Maurice's legacy has officially been bestowed upon me, and I accept. Every race that I do moving forward will be in honor of him."

As a visual reminder of her brother, Thompson bought running shoes that feature his favorite colors: blue and orange.

"If I get tired or I'm ready to stop, the first thing I'm going to do is I'm going to look down at my feet. And I'm going to see those colors and those colors are going to remind me of why I started running and why I'm going to continue to run and not let anything get in my way," Thompson said.

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FACES OF THE RACE L.E.A.D. AMBASSADORS IN A RACE FOR THEIR FUTURE

By Barbara Huebner

At the 2020 Virtual Peachtree Road Race, C.J. Stewart got real: he and six of his L.E.A.D. ambassadors would run the race for the first time.

L.E.A.D. (Launch, Expose, Advise and Direct) is a program cofounded by C. J. and Kelli Stewart, his wife, with a mission of empowering at-risk black boys to lead and transform the city of Atlanta. Using baseball as the vehicle, the Stewarts help hundreds of yearly participants avoid crime and poverty and acquire tools to fight racism.

"We all finished," he said, "but they were humbled by the distance."

A group ran in 2021, too, and this year eight L.E.A.D. ambassadors, along with Stewart, plan to toe the line in person on July 4. Along the way, Stewart – a running newbie in 2020 – learned a few things himself.

When he was little, he said, he thought running was for white kids. Even as he got a little older, "I didn't know many black people who had the leisure time for jogging." Running, he thought, was "a country club thing."

Then came Ahmaud Arbery, murdered while on a run in Brunswick, Georgia, on February

23, 2020. Stewart wanted to run in his honor. Weeks later, COVID-19 hit, and as the world came to a halt Stewart – a





retired pro baseball player – got moving. Two years later, he's musing about whether he can call himself an avid runner yet.

He's certainly an avid fan of the Peachtree. Beyond the pride he personally has felt ("When I came around that corner and I saw my wife and daughter, it was the best feeling ever"), he values the role the race plays in how his L.E.A.D. runners see themselves and how they fit into the community.

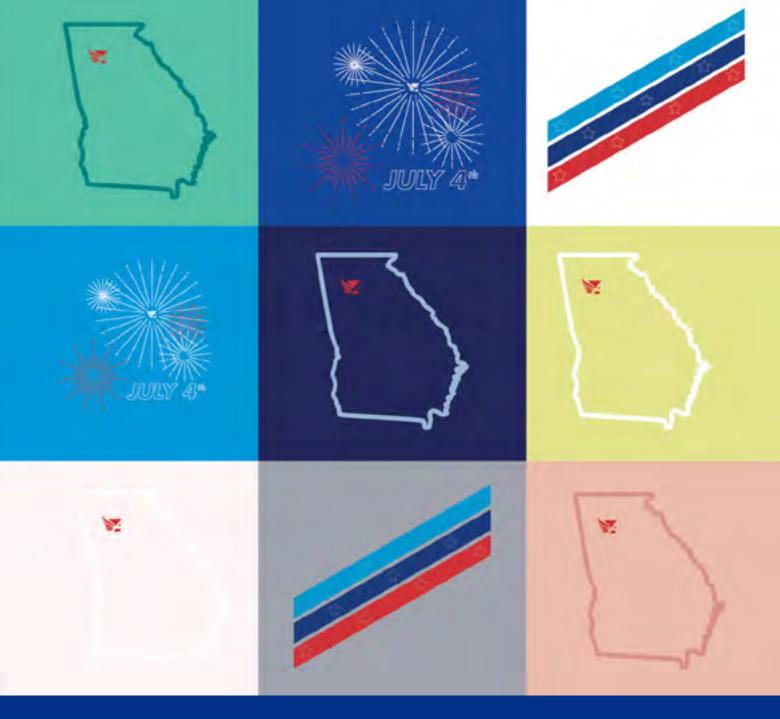
"Being an African-American boy anywhere in the U.S., in Atlanta, you are running a race,"

Stewart said. "You are trying to win and there are obstacles everywhere. To be part of something that's a tradition, it's the removal of barriers."

For the past 10 years, L.E.A.D. has been supported by adidas through such things as job fairs and funding through its Honoring Black Excellence program. Three L.E.A.D. ambassadors have even helped design adidas baseball cleats, featuring L.E.A.D. on the tongue and other Atlanta touches; three players wore them in the MLB All-Star Game last year.

Is a running shoe in honor of Rhonex Kipruto, Peachtree course record-

holder and adidas athlete, up next as a project?



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FACES OF THE RACE

By Barbara Huebner

VOLUNTEERING HAS STARTED A NEW CHAPTER



The pandemic prompted Yash Patel to contemplate what he most loved doing in life.

One was reading. Working from home had eliminated his commute, so he figured he might as well spend those two hours with a good book. In 2020, he read 59 of them.

Then it was time to think again: "What makes me happy besides reading?"

Running.

Patel, 28, enjoyed running while at Tucker Middle School but hadn't run much since, so he started looking around for current opportunities. Just before Thanksgiving last year, he discovered the Invesco QQQ Thanksgiving Day Half Marathon.

Wisely, he doubted he could get in shape for a half marathon in just a week, so he contacted Atlanta Track Club and offered to volunteer instead. He ended up handing out post-race refreshments.

"That's the way I got back into running," he said. "I promised myself I would be running the Triple Peach or Ultimate Peach."

Since then, the Norcross IT consultant has volunteered for and run in five Club races, with five more – including Peachtree – on the docket for 2022. And that's not counting other events for which he's volunteered. He's even talked his 26-year-old brother, Raj, into volunteering as well.

"Yash is such a humble and servant-hearted guy," said Kristin Lide-Hall, the Club's manager of volunteer services. "He has such an innate disposition to show kindness and consideration to all people. He's an amazing addition to our volunteer team."

Of the almost five dozen books he read in 2020, one of his favorites was "Make Your Bed," by Admiral William H. McRaven. Its subtitle is "Little Things That Can Change Your Life ... And Maybe the World".

"I ended up making my bed every day," said Patel. "If you're going to do something, you might as well put your heart into it."

GOLDEN MEMORIES FOR SILVER ANNIVERSARY

"I never thought the quarter century mark would come so quick," said Krige Schabort, a six-time Paralympian and five-time champion of the Shepherd Center Wheelchair Division who will be competing here for the 25th consecutive year. "Twenty-five is a big number for me."

Schabort and his wife, Caron, left his native South Africa for Atlanta after visiting for the 1996 Olympic Games, relocating first to Atlanta before settling a few years later in Cedartown. He did his first Peachtree in 1998 and hasn't missed one since.

"There is no other race I want to keep doing as much as the Peachtree, my home event," he said, recalling the drive from



Cedartown with their three children, dinner every year at an Italian restaurant in Peachtree Battle, lining up at the start line with "the warm Atlanta air on your skin and butterflies in your stomach Those are the memories I want to keep forever."

Of all his races here, the 58-year-old Schabort says, 2002 ranks at the top. Caron was pregnant with their first child and in France with her family while he raced, but she and their unborn son were very much with him on the course.

"I remember so well saying his name 'Daniel, it's for you,' pushing my heart out on the last climb just before the 10th Street crossing," he reminisced. "Saul Mendoza was still leading, but I just could not give up. He was pretty far ahead. I had the hope there was a chance to catch him, but it was a longshot. On the last downhill before the finish was my only chance, as I was faster than Saul coasting downhill. I could not believe it – it happened. I caught Saul about 100 meters before the finish line, passed him and I knew it was over."

Having finished as runner-up three of the four years prior, his first Peachtree victory left him "over-the moon-excited and happy. That night I traveled to France to join Caron at her brother's wedding in Europe. I remember so well watching the fireworks from the plane as we took off. I felt on top of the world ... and I was."

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FACES OF THE RACE

BILL THORN GETS READY FOR 53RD PEACHTREE

By Jay Holder

Bill Thorn, the "Ironman of Peachtree," says he's feeling the best he has in years.

The 91-year-old retired coach will run his 53rd consecutive Peachtree this year. A member of the Original 110 finishers, Thorn is the only person to complete every edition of the race. For the third year in a row, he plans to run virtually; a son, daughter and son-in-law will be on the start line to carry on his legacy from Lenox Square to Piedmont Park.

Thorn says that a new exercise routine, prescribed by his physical therapist to help his posture, has him feeling limber and ready to run. Although he said he's ready



to compete without the walker he used last year for his virtual race, he's still not quite ready for the crowds, potential potholes and unknowns of the Peachtree course. Instead, he's created a carefully measured 10K course in his Tyrone, Georgia, neighborhood that avoids crossing major roads and straying too far from his home.

The Peachtree icon will be joined by friends who live nearby, and he said he's made sure all of them are registered so their race will be official. And for the first time in five decades, Thorn will run on either July 2 or July 3 so he can be at Lenox Square on July 4 to serve as one of the official starters.

THE SPIRIT OF ATLANTA NEVER LEFT HER

By Rita Giordano

Looking back, the five years Jennifer Delanty spent in Atlanta after she graduated college in the 1980s were among the most momentous of her life.

Sent to Atlanta as a service project volunteer for her church in the Pacific Northwest, Delanty served with APPLE (Atlanta Parents & Public Linked for Education) Corps, an education advocacy agency, and then went on to teach at Inman Middle School. The native Oregonian keeps in touch with some of her students and other friends she made in Atlanta to this day. Among the people she met here was the man who became her husband, Gregory Stovall. The couple have four children they raised in Seattle.

Now Delanty is coming back to run her first Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race – the day before she turns 60.

"Participating in this race on the last day of my 50s is a wonderful gift I hope to give myself," she said.

Over the years. Delanty kept busy raising her children and with a career in insurance. But now she works out with kettle weights, too – after taking them up to prepare for a fund-



raising climb of the Space Needle – and she recently started walking in 5Ks and 10Ks.

"Then I got this wild idea: 'Wait a minute. It would be so cool to go and do Peachtree."

"Atlanta's never really left my heart," Delanty said.

Delanty has family in Georgia, and she kept ties to her old Atlanta friends, including those whose service-oriented natures continue to inspire her. They includes her old boss, former APPLE Corps executive director Marcia Klenbort, and Dana Lupton, founder of the nonprofit Moving in the Spirit.

In fact, with a landmark birthday coming up, Delanty is thinking about her next chapter. She said she's always loved Atlanta's diversity, its spirit. "I never had in Seattle what I had in Atlanta," she said. "I've missed being involved to the extent I was there."

So, she is thinking about moving back, doing "a lot of praying and discerning."

But first she is doing the Peachtree.

"It feels like the best thing I could do on the last day of my 50s," Delanty said.

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PEOPLE OF PEACHTREE

FACES OF THE RACE

AT 78, RUNNING IS STILL KEY FOR THIS PIANO TEACHER

By Rita Giordano

This year will mark the 42nd consecutive Peachtree for Nancy Stokes, and she hopes to follow it with many more.

"I'm 78 at present and hope I can at least walk for exercise and may even still be doing the Peachtree as long as I live," said the piano instructor – she's still teaching, too – and Brookhaven resident.

Out of deference to COVID-19, this will be the third virtual Peachtree for Stokes, where she and her husband, Lane, will again stick to their neighborhood. Given a pesky soft tissue problem and some arthritis, she'll be walking the distance, as she has the last two years. But Stokes still hopes to work her way back to at least a jogging pace, and she's definitely looking forward to doing the Peachtree on its official course in the future.

"It's so much of a thrill even after all these races," Stokes said. "I get the chills just thinking about it."

Stokes didn't get involved in sports or fitness until around 1977, when she was entering her mid-30s and an uncle who jogged gave her Ken Cooper's "Aerobics." The book, which would go on to become a classic, prompted her to start running.

"It made me feel athletic when I never had been before," she said. "It made me feel very healthy."

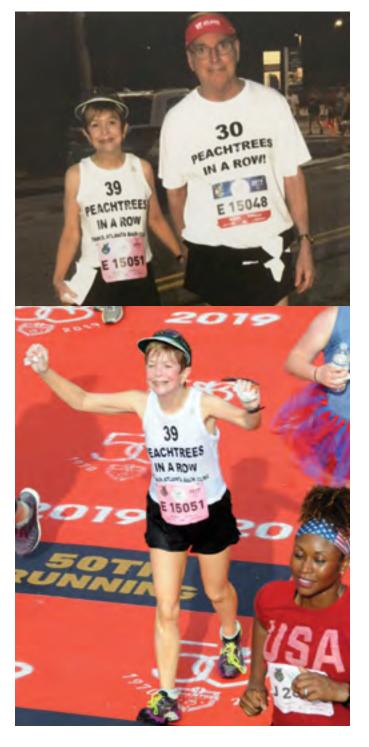
In 1981, she ran her first Peachtree. "My family was sort of aghast," she said. "Back then, the Peachtree was relatively new. And whoever heard of running 6 miles? And it was the middle of the summer. They said, 'You're just crazy."

But since then, running and all its health- and strength-bestowing properties has helped her through all sorts of challenges – among them divorce, injuries and cancer, with which she was diagnosed in 2007 and from which she is now in remission. Chemotherapy made her take a break from running for six months. But then she was back.

"It feels like running has just gotten me through my life, you know?"

A few months ago, a nurse in her oncologist's office commented to a colleague about Stokes' low heart rate. The second nurse simply said, "'Oh, don't worry about that. She's an athlete." Stokes was delighted.

"I think it's one of the nicest things anyone ever said to me and I'm still basking in that compliment!" she said.





Best-selling author Emily Griffin worked with her three children to design the winning entry in 2019

T-SHIRT CONTEST RETURN OF THE REVEAL

By Jay Holder

A past winner and a double entrant are among the finalists in the 2022 Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race T-shirt contest, with the winning artist's design destined to be worn proudly across Atlanta and around the world beginning just days from now.

More than 100 designs were submitted for this year's contest, with a panel of judges from Atlanta Track Club and the Atlanta Journal-Constitution narrowing the field to five finalists. The winning design, chosen by the public, will appear on the shirt given to every finisher of the Peachtree after they cross the line on July 4. The victorious designer will receive a \$1,000 prize.

Until that first finisher crosses, the winning design and color of the shirt will remain a closely guarded secret – returning to a long-standing Peachtree tradition that was disrupted by COVID-19 and the logistics of conducting the virtual races in 2020 and 2021.

"There is only one Peachtree," said Rich Kenah, race director of the Peachtree and CEO of Atlanta Track Club. "And there is only one shirt. Nothing matches what this race means to the city of Atlanta, and I look forward to seeing which of these great designs has gotten runners and walkers most excited for the Fourth of July."

During the process of determining the five finalists, the identity of the artists is not known to the panel. This year marks a Peachtree first: One artist, Russ Vann of Atlanta, had two submissions selected. Additionally, Shay Harbaugh, who won the contest in 2016, was also selected.

The T-shirt contest has been a Peachtree tradition since 1995. This year, for the first time, the Club and its footwear and apparel partner, adidas, have committed to creating a shirt with no virgin materials as both organizations work to make the Peachtree a more sustainable event. Also for the first time, gender-cut T-shirts will be offered.











Design Name: Burst of Energy

Artist: Shay Harbaugh
Hometown: Cumming, GA

Inspiration: "I've attended the Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race as a spectator and the energy the runners bring and how the crowd amplifies that energy inspired my design. From the fun costumes worn by some runners to the roars and cheers of the spectators, the Peachtree is an exciting and exhilarating experience. With bright colors and fun, bold fonts – along with the ribbon and geometric shapes to add movement – this design captures the energy and excitement of race day."

Design Name: Sweet Americana

Artist: Tony Lombardo

Hometown: Tallahassee, FL (Johns Creek, GA transplant)

Inspiration: "My design was inspired by the return of in-person races. A lot of us have been cooped up for the past two years, and the AJC Peachtree Road Race is our coming out party. This event has always been an opportunity to build community and celebrate our unique city on our nation's birthday. This year, we will also be celebrating our return to normalcy. And we get to finish the day with a new shirt!"

Design Name: Peachtree Road Race 2022

Artist: Kara Moreno
Hometown: Monroe, GA

Inspiration: "Almost everything is named Peachtree. I wanted something different

than having your average peach."

Design Name: Peachscape

Artist: Russ Vann

Hometown: Atlanta, GA

Inspiration: "I wanted to focus this design on all the fun aspects that showcase the personality of the race. From the participants to the iconic peach in the Atlanta

skyline this 6.2-mile adventure is a beloved tradition for Atlanta."

Design Name: Peachtree Stars

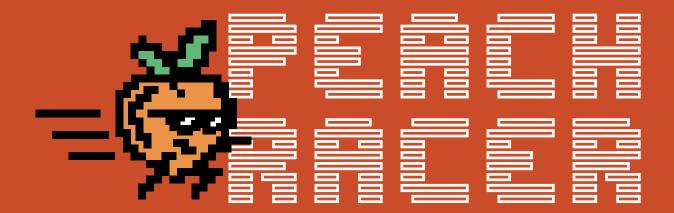
Artist: Russ Vann

Hometown: Atlanta, GA

Inspiration: "I wanted to create a design that included the essential elements of the

race focusing on keeping it simple with traditional Fourth of July colors."

PEACHTREE MAGAZINE № 33



EVERY STEP LEADS TO A SOLUTION

Microsoft is partnering with the Atlanta Track Club to teach kids how physical fitness and technology can help them on and off the track.







NEW PARTNERSHIP KEEPS KIDS' HANDS AS BUSY AS THEIR FEET

By Angelin Miller

On July 3, kids will take center stage in the Microsoft Peachtree Junior, featuring a Dash for ages 6 and under and a Mile for ages 6-14 that crosses the same finish line as the iconic Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race the next day.

Celebrating its 35th anniversary, the race began in 1987 as a 3K for children 8-14 and has only grown over the decades. This year, Atlanta Track Club and Microsoft have formed a groundbreaking new partnership that will emphasize

the relationship between physical fitness and STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) by giving participants the chance to actually develop their own step counter and arcade game.

"If we can bring STEM to where the kids are, it just makes it a little bit more fun," said Monica Robbins, Microsoft director of sports partnerships. "Hopefully, it inspires them to see what other things they can do with STEM."

The event will also feature the return of a Track & Field Zone with mini hurdles, the standing broad jump, agility ladders and more. Other activities include a photo op wall, where kids can "pose with the peaches" and commemorate their morning. And for the first time this year, kids who participate in the Mile can head over to The Meadow afterward and test their

MICROSOFT PEACHTREE JUNIOR

- July 3
- 8:00 a.m.
- · Piedmont Park
- Mile (ages 6 -14)
- Dash (6 & under)
- Short-sleeve adidas T-shirt, medal,
- \$25 through July 2, \$30 on event day
- Register at atlantatrackclub.org/2022peachtree-junior

speed at 50 meters, as well.

"We've created a total experience for the participants and families this year," said Caryn Lamphier, event manager. "It's sure to be a lasting memory for the kids."

As part of the new Microsoft collaboration, participants will get the chance to delve into two STEM activities on race morning, offered at the Microsoft tent in The Meadow.

• In **Step Counter 3000**, participants, divided into two

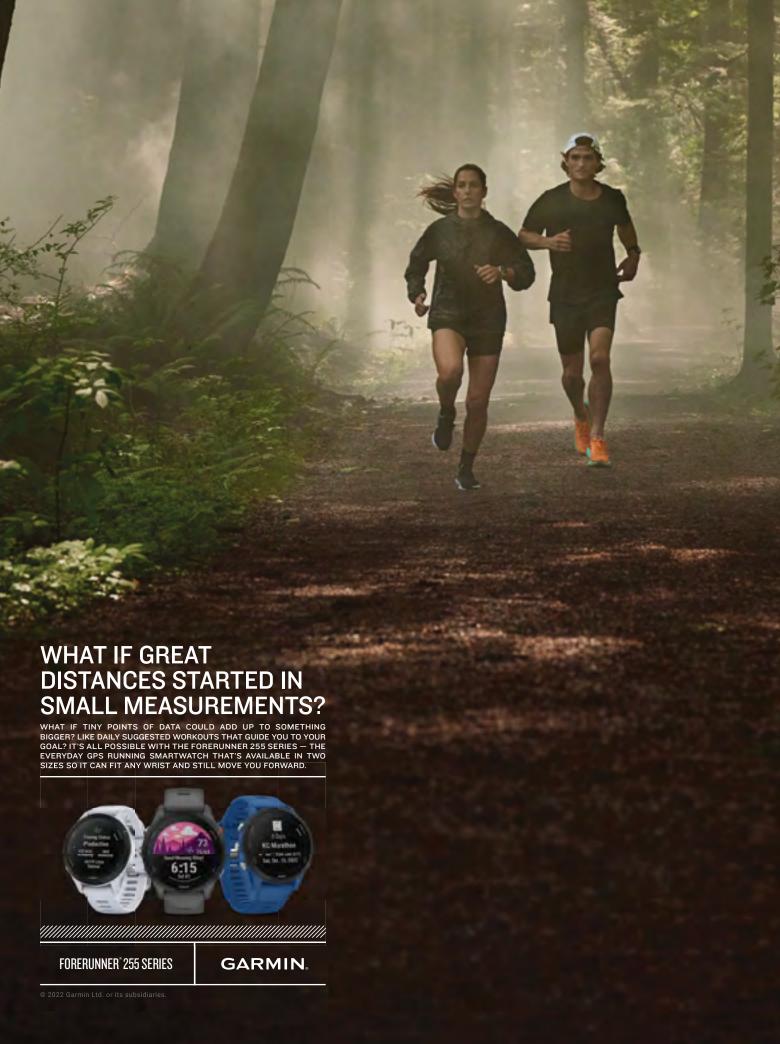
groups, will develop their own step counter. Beginners will build or modify and test a step counter, while intermediate participants will write code from scratch, test it and customize it as they see fit.

• In **Peach Racer**, participants will create and then play a running-themed arcade game featuring Atlanta Track Club's own Pete the Peach.

As a mother of twin girls and a runner herself, Sara Dewitt knows that the connection between physical and mental fitness is vital to a child's life, and she said that her twins, Audrey and Eva, are excited about everything that will be happening on race morning.

"Learning is not just throwing a book at them; they need a chance to be hands on," she said.





RACE DAY READY

WE'LL SEE YOU AT THE EXPO!

Pick up your race number and get your MARTA Breeze card. Test drive a BMW and sample some beer at Monday Night Brewing, the first local craft brewery ever to sponsor the race. Shop the adidas pavilion for the largest assortment of Peachtree gear you've ever seen, featuring the Peachtree Adistars. Visit Atlanta Track Club's booth to guess the number of foam peaches on the wall for the chance to win a \$1,500 prize pack.

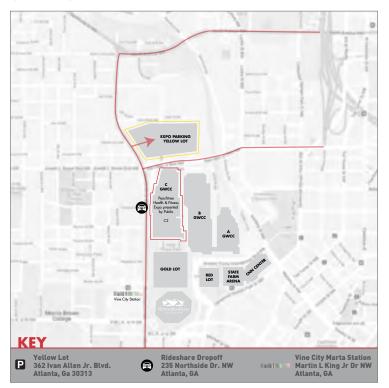
It's all at the Peachtree Health & Fitness Expo presented by Publix at the Georgia World Congress Center, Hall C4, July 2 and 3 from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Our exhibitors:

- adidas
- Publix (001)
- Atlanta Journal-Constitution (101)
- Microsoft (12)
- Monday Night Brewing (11)
- Coke (002)
- Delta (100)
- Waffle House (104)
- BMW (008)
- Atlanta United (013)
- Atlanta Hawks (014)
- Atlanta Falcons (015)
- Garmin (003)
- OrangeTheory (004)
- NCR (005)
- Northside Hospital (007)
- Shepherd Center (512)
- Clix Therapy (311)
- AAA (305)
- LifeLink Foundation (705)

- Six Minute Mile (706)
- Good Foods (106)
- Aspire Nutrition (306)
- StretchLab (304)
- RaceDots (309)
- Turtle Towel (308)
- Kaiser Permanente (411)
- Cooper River Bridge Run (410)
- Savannah Sports Council (701)
- Run Social (510)
- LIFETIME (703)
- Hawaii Moon (310)
- · Avanza Skin (609)
- Bath Planet (611)
- Five Diamond Botanicals (704)
- 11 Alive (720)
- Big Peach on Wheels (302)

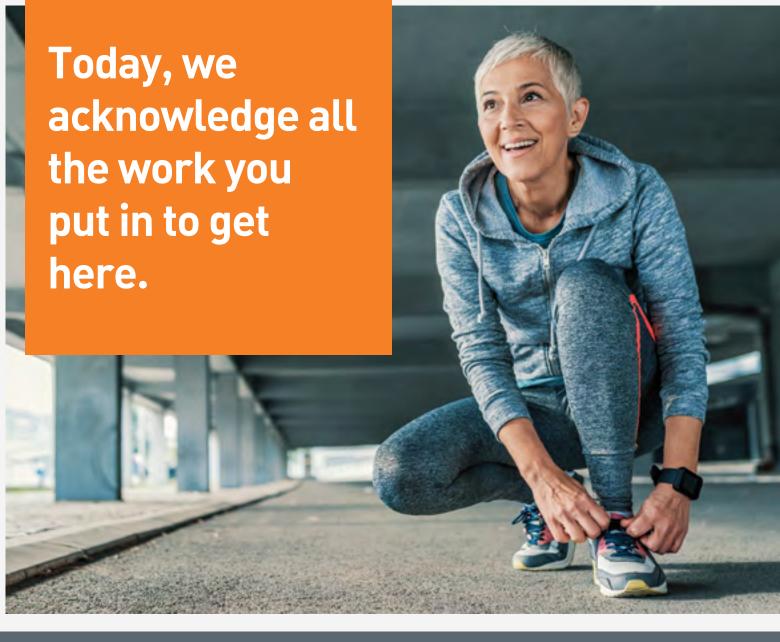


GETTING THERE



EXPO MAP



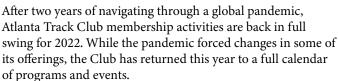


PNC is proud to be the Official Bank of Atlanta Track Club. Good luck to all AJC Peachtree Road Race participants!

pnc.com



By Meaghan Leon



One of the biggest comebacks in 2022 is the return of not only the Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race to its traditional one-day format, but also the return of the Post-Race Member Party at Park Tavern. Member Socials are back, too; keep an eye on membership newsletters for details.

While guaranteed entry into the Peachtree is a huge benefit for Atlanta Track Club members, it's important to note that it's not the only benefit. As an Atlanta Track Club member, you will also receive:

- Free entry into Atlanta Track Club community events
- · Discounts on all Atlanta Track Club events and programs
- Exclusive member gift (2022 adidas technical tank)
- Discounts at local Atlanta Track Club retail partners
- Subscription to Wingfoot Magazine, Atlanta Track Club's monthly magazine
- Two guest passes for Atlanta Track Club community events
- Group runs and walks across the city hosted by Atlanta Track Club's Ambassador team

Membership is what you make of it! Just ask first-time member Erin McGerald. She and her husband, Chris, were introduced to Atlanta Track Club at one of the free weekly BeltLine Group Runs.

"Chris and I started coming to the weekly BeltLine run club last summer," said McGerald. "Before that, neither of us had run a mile or more since high school. We really enjoyed the



camaraderie of the group and being around like-minded people. The Club seemed to give so much to the group that we wanted to join so we could give a little back. We also wanted to work towards a goal of running in the Peachtree Road Race, and becoming members ensured that we didn't stray from that goal."

Since becoming members, the McGeralds have taken full advantage of their member benefits. The couple are regulars at the weekly BeltLine group runs, have participated in all of the Grand Prix Series events (free for members), and are registered for the Peachtree. They have even registered to volunteer.

"I love being a part of the running community in Atlanta! It's so neat to be out on a trail or a road and see someone with an Atlanta Track Club shirt and know that we have something in common," said McGerald. "The Grand Prix Series is also really cool. I've participated in all events so far and just signed up for the Dekalb 4 Miler in August. I would never have thought that I'd be competing in the shot put or running a 400 this year but thanks to the Club, those things have become a reality. It's great to get out of my comfort zone and challenge myself a bit."

If you want to learn more about how to become a member of Atlanta Track Club and help support its mission of building Running City USA, visit atlantatrackclub.org/join-now.





HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP

The generosity of our donors and partners is fundamental to Atlanta Track Club's mission. Your participation makes it possible for the Club to locate and build spaces needed to make the sport accessible to all who seek to get active. Working alongside some of the city's key organizations, the Club continues to develop programs for every part of the runner and walker lifecycle. From youth to adults, the Club focuses on programs such as Kilometer Kids, Atlanta Public Schools middle and high school resource programs, adult In-Training programs and our Olympic Development athletes to improve fitness and health literacy in Atlanta. Building Running City USA depends not just on the Club, but on the systems, trails, greenways and parks that provide a safe, inclusive space for runners and walkers of all ages to develop and learn. The Club is committed to funding and growing these spaces to create a more connected city in which everyone is united by fitness. Here are some of the programs a donation to Atlanta Track Club helps fund:



Kilometer Kids – Kilometer Kids was back in 2022 and more than 1,500 kids were introduced to the joys of running via the program's motto of "Be kind, work hard and have fun." This free-to-all program is hosted in schools across the Atlanta metro area and, through games and running activities, encourages kids to cover 26.2 miles over the course of 10 weeks.



Midweek Mile & Dash Series – All children 14 and under can take part in the Club's free Midweek Mile & Dash series. On three weeknights in the spring and fall, kids can compete in a dash of approximately 50 meters. Kids 6 and up and run the timed mile. There's also a track and field zone where kids can throw the "javelin" and practice hurdle drills and horizontal jumps with professional athletes.



All Comers Track & Field Meets – One of the Club's longest-running traditions, this series of seven track and field meets is held annually on Tuesday evenings in May and June. Entry is free to all, and events range from the 100 meters to the long jump to the 5000 meters. There's a spot on the start line or the runway for all whether it's your first or your 1,000th track meet.



APS Partnership – Since 2018, Atlanta Track Club has supported the growth of track and field and cross country programs in Atlanta Public Schools by providing coaching resources, clinics with Olympic athletes, marketing and meet management.



Atlanta Track Club Elite – Post-collegiate Olympic development athletes can chase their dreams in Running City USA. The Club provides coaching, training facilities, gear, physical therapy, travel expenses and stipends to professional runners and jumpers.

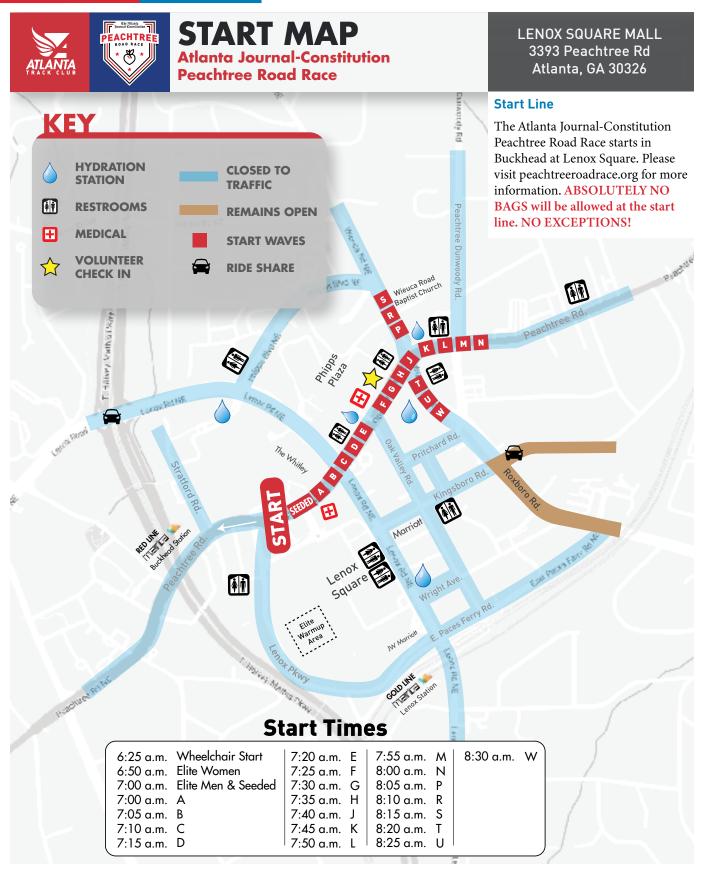
Your donation keeps the Club going the distance. Please consider making a tax-deductible donation today at atlantatrackclub.org/donate. Or you can mail your donation to: Atlanta Track Club, 201 Armour Drive, Atlanta, GA 30324



LEARN MORE AT NORTHSIDE.COM

LOOK TO
NORTHSIDE
HOSPITAL

RACE DAY READY



Getting There

MARTA: Participants and spectators are strongly encouraged to take MARTA to the Lenox station to get to the start line. MARTA will begin running at 4:30 a.m. on race day. Breeze Cards will be available for purchase at the Expo.



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2022 ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION PEACHTREE ROAD RACE

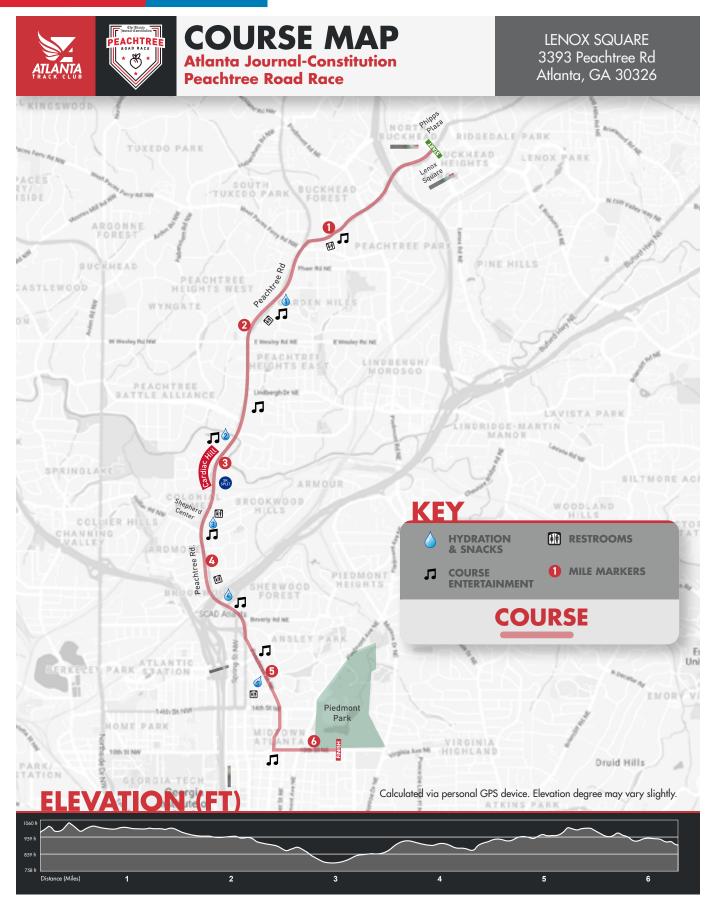








RACE DAY READY



PEACHTREE MAGAZINE

№ 45



EXCLUSIVE PROMOTION

FOR ALL PEACHTREE ROAD RACE PARTICIPANTS





















We're a **science-backed, technology-tracked, coach-inspired workout** designed to produce results from the inside out, giving people a longer more vibrant life.

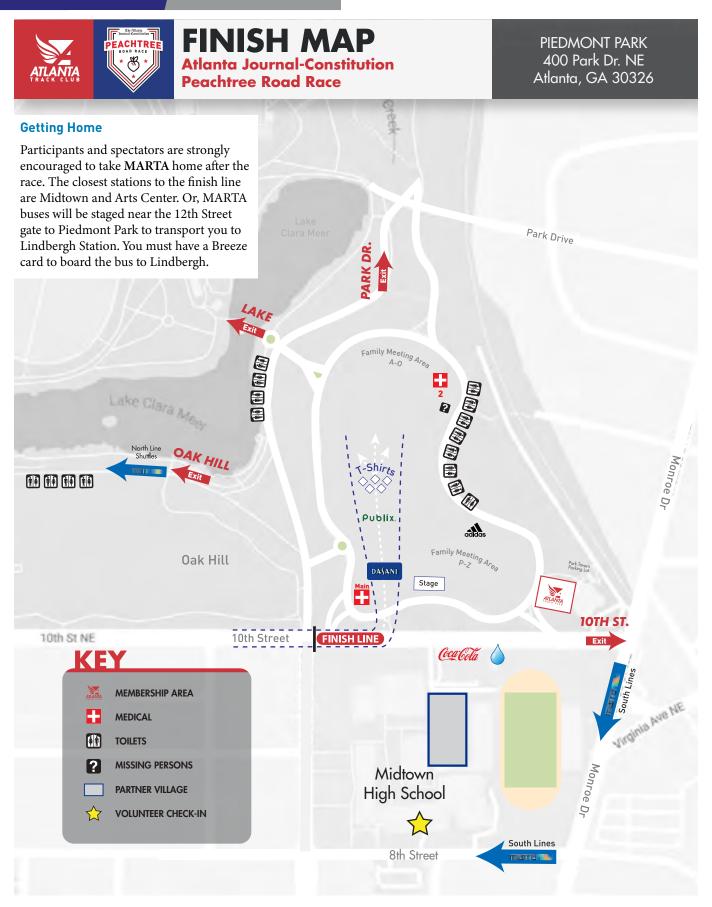


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FUN AFTER THE FINISH



PEACHTREE MAGAZINE

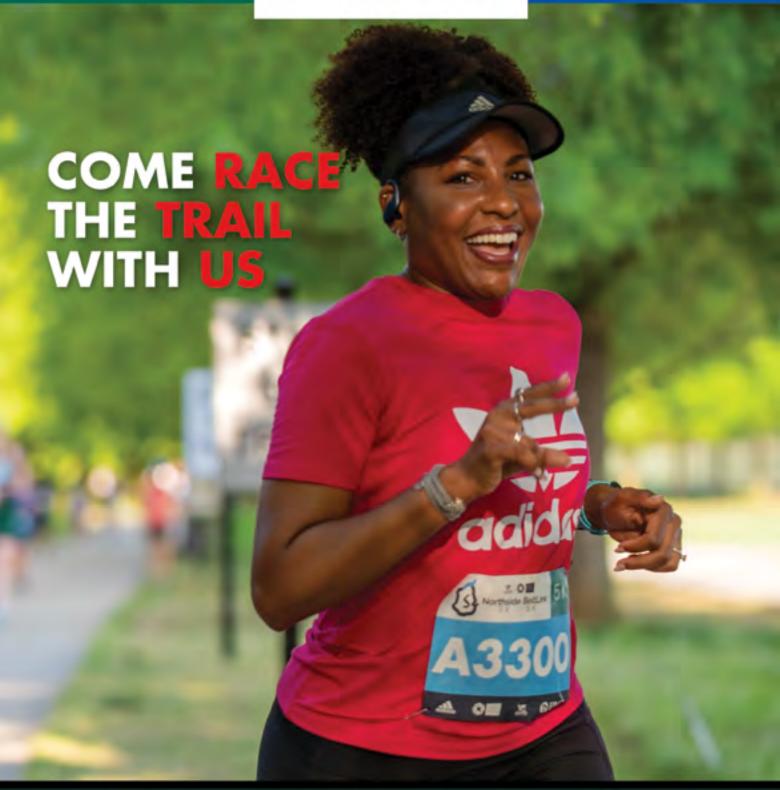
№ 47

THE BELTLINE MAKES ATLANTA RUNNING CITY USA

WESTSIDE BELTLINE 5K-8K JULY 16



3K - 10K NOVEMBER 12





REGISTER AT ATLANTATRACKCLUB.ORG





SAFETY & SECURITY

Safety is Atlanta Track Club's top priority. With the help of the City of Atlanta and various local, state and federal agencies, we've done extensive planning to ensure the safety of our participants, spectators, volunteers and partners.

On this page you will find information about some of our security measures, as well as simple things you can do to help make the 53rd Running of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race a great event.

- Substantial law enforcement presence will exist at the start, finish and post-event area, as well as along the course.
- There will be clearly defined restricted areas at the start and at the finish areas. Additional fencing with designated entry and exit points will be in place around the post-event area. Anyone entering a restricted area with a backpack, bag, purse, etc. will be subject to search.
- Piedmont Park will be open to spectators, family and friends for the first time since 2019. There will be four security checkpoints to get into the park. No bags or coolers will be permitted. Anyone carrying a bag will be required to empty the contents into a provided clear plastic bag.
- See something, say something. Be vigilant. If you see something suspicious, contact the nearest police officer or call 911.

Event Alert System

ALERT LEVEL	EVENT CONDITIONS	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS
EVENT CANCELLED Follow Official Event Instructions	Extreme conditions Event cancelled	Participation stopped/ follow official event instructions
HIGH Potentially Dangerous Conditions Follow Official Event Instructions	Dangerous Conditions	Slow down/ observe course changes/ follow official event instructions/ consider stopping
MODERATE Be Aware of Worsening Conditions	Use Caution	Slow down/ be prepared for worsening conditions
LOW Enjoy the Event	Good Conditions	Enjoy the event/ be alert

Event Alert System

Event Alert System colored flags will be located at the start line, along the course at the fluid stations and in the finish area. The flags will communicate the specific alert level, which could range from low (green) to moderate (yellow) to high (red) to canceled (black) and are based primarily on weather conditions.



Shop Faster and Easier with Store Mode



Open the app next time you're at the store to try it out.

TIME SAVING TOOLS WHEN YOU'RE ON THE RUN









- Don't forget to pick up your race number at the Peachtree Health & Fitness Expo presented by Publix if you didn't choose to have it mailed.
- Plan your race day, including how to get to the start line, where to meet family and friends, and how to get back to your car or access MARTA.
- Stay hydrated with water AND electrolytes.
- Don't try anything new on race day or in the days just before it. This includes physical activities, food, clothing or shoes. Stick with what's familiar.
- Cotton shirts or shorts may cause chafing, especially if they get damp from humidity or doused with water from those welcome hoses. Breathable running attire is best even if you're walking. And no flip-flops!
- Remember to set your alarm.
- And don't forget to have a great day you're about to become a proud finisher of the 2022 Peachtree!

JULY 4 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS



4:30 a.m.

MARTA trains begin carrying runners to the start line 6:25 a.m.

Start of Shepherd Center Wheelchair Division

6:10 a.m.

Runners begin getting into start waves

7:00 a.m.

Start of Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race

6:50 a.m.

Start of Elite Women's race 8:40 a.m.

Start line closes

8:30 a.m.

Last start wave leaves start line

HOW TO FOLLOW THE ACTION

Our official media partners, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution and WXIA-TV 11Alive, will have complete coverage of the 53rd Running of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race.

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Race day coverage and results can be found online at AJC.com.



Live race coverage on July 4 from 6-10 a.m. EDT, which will stream nationally on <u>11Alive.com</u>, and a special recapping the race at 10 p.m.



THANK YOU

Atlanta Track Club would like to thank all the people and organizations that make the 2022 Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race possible.

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution







































MEDIA PARTNERS:

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution



A special thank you to the 150 crew chiefs and more than 3,500 volunteers. Without your support, this Independence Day tradition would not be possible.

Tim Ewing, police Elliot Fried, communications Michael Gaertner, communications

Dr. Jonathan Kim, medical Dr. Lekshmi Kumar, medical Sam Shartar, medical

Ric Garni, WXIA Angela Adams, Emory University Becky Washburn, wheelchair division

Atlanta Hawks

Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens Atlanta Police Department Atlanta Department of Parks Recreation and Cultural Affairs Atlanta Fire Rescue Department Atlanta-Fulton County Emergency Management City of Atlanta Watershed Management City of Atlanta Public Works Grady Hospital and Grady EMS **MARTA**

JW Marriott Piedmont Park Conservancy Simon Property Group **Highwoods Properties HD Realty Partners** Lincoln Property Services Buckhead Community Improvement District Livable Buckhead Regent Partners **Parkway Properties** Equity One The Meridian

Midtown High School

Atlanta Braves Atlanta United Atlanta Falcons **Buckhead Church** Buckhead Grand **Post Properties** The Paramount Cumulus Radio Selig Enterprises Inc. The many organizations, businesses, churches and residents of Buckhead and Midtown



UPCOMING EVENTS

After you've celebrated your Peachtree finish, check out these future Atlanta Track Club events.

16 SATURDAY



WESTSIDE BELTLINE 5K-8K 7:30 a.m., Westside BeltLine

- Competitive 8K (ages 9 & older)
- Non-competitive 5K (ages 8 & older), strollers and dogs are welcome
- Final event in series is the Eastside BeltLine 3K-10K on November 12





PNC ATLANTA 10 MILER & 5K 7:00 a.m., Atlantic Station

- All participants receive a commemorative adidas backpack and medal
- Enjoy deals and discounts from retailers and restaurants in Atlantic Station all weekend
- 10 Miler part of the Triple Peach Race Series*
- Price increases at the end of August





INVESCO QQQ THANKSGIVING DAY HALF MARATHON, 5K, MILE & DASH

7:30 a.m., Center Parc Stadium

- Participants receive an adidas long-sleeve shirt (half marathon & 5K only) and medal
- Half marathon part of the Triple Peach Race Series*
- Price increases at the end of August

25,26

SATURDAY & SUNDAY FEBRUARY 2023



PUBLIX ATLANTA MARATHON WEEKEND Centennial Olympic Park

- Marathon, half marathon, 5K, kids races
- Celebrate the best of Atlanta by running past some of the city's most important monuments
- Prices increase on July 16

2022

*TRIPLE PEACH RACE SERIES

New in 2022! There is no longer a separate registration for the Triple Peach! Participants who registered for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race, PNC Atlanta 10 Miler and the Invesco QQQ Thanksgiving Day Half Marathon will be automatically entered into the series once they have signed up for all three in-person versions of the events. Benefits:

- Also NEW in 2022! Access to VIP amenities (as a part of the special celebration area) on Thanksgiving Day after finishing the Invesco QQQ Thanksgiving Day Half Marathon
- Triple Peach finisher's medal and commemorative item

Register for all events online at atlantatrackclub.org.

Grand Prix registration opens one month prior to each event

RESS ON. PRESS ON. PRESS ON RESS ON. PRESS ON. PRESS ON

How do you run a 10K? One step at a time.

You got this.

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution Peachtree Road Race

July 4

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