

# WINGFOOT

MARCH 2019

**MARATHON  
MADNESS**



**PUBLIC GEORGIA  
MARATHON**  
MAKE IT A GROUP EFFORT

**OLYMPIC LEGEND  
GAIL DEVERS  
SIGNS ON**

**USATF 10KM  
CHAMPIONSHIPS  
ARE COMING BACK**



◆◆ 2018 ◆◆

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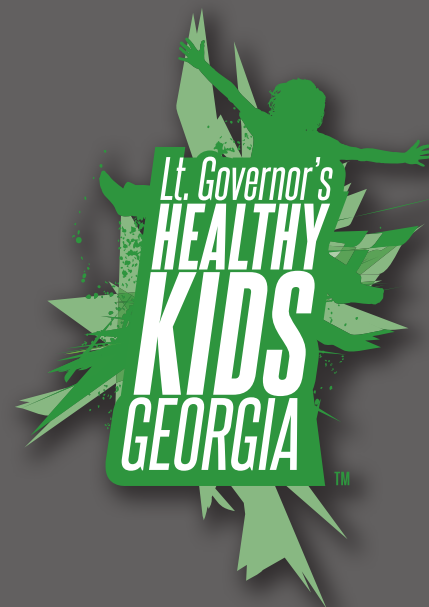


**On the Cover:** Runners in the Publix Georgia Marathon jump for joy at the chance to join forces in tackling the 26.2 miles of challenges. Photo by Joaquin Lara.

Photo credit: Leigh Moyer, Foon Fu



**MARCH 17 | PEMBERTON PLACE**



- FREE One Mile & 50m Dash
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- Fun and games
- Scholarships and prizes



Register at [atlantatrackclub.org](http://atlantatrackclub.org)

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- Ticket to a select Braves game (5K only)
- Free parking for race day

Register at [atlantatrackclub.org](http://atlantatrackclub.org)





# A Word from the Director

**We asked our staff:**  
**What is your best marathon memory?**

**Rich Kenah**  
*Executive Director*

As I walked back to my hotel after completing the New York City Marathon in 2001, I could barely walk. To this day, I remember that I winced with each step back down Central Park West thinking, ‘now I understand this thing called the marathon and I can truly call myself a runner.’

Is the marathon the Holy Grail of endurance sports distances? This one-time marathoner (as in, one marathon) thinks so. Why, you ask?

While 26.2 miles is definitely not for everyone, it is not out of reach for the masses the way, for example, a full Ironman is. It is sufficiently within the grasp of most runners who are willing to invest themselves in the months of long training and preparation required to enjoy the experience – or at least most of it. And whether you hope to simply complete the distance at a 15-minute-per-mile pace or are genetically gifted and are chasing that magic 2-hour barrier, your success will require more than just aerobic fitness. It will also depend on the ability of your mind and body to manage, conserve and even find never-before-used fuel reserves.

So now that we have established the marathon as THE event, what could make Atlanta Track Club’s Publix Georgia Marathon Weekend even better? How about a second marathon on that same weekend? And not just any 26.2 event, but the 2020 Olympic Team Trials – Marathon!



**Sallie Post**  
*Office Coordinator*

Qualifying for the 2016 Olympic Trials in my first marathon, with my husband by my side!

On January 5, Atlanta Track Club submitted a letter of intent to bid for the Olympic Marathon Trials in 2020. Unlike an actual marathon, the bid process for the Trials is short and intense: The outcome will be decided just weeks from now, in April. The theme of our bid will focus on Atlanta’s Olympic legacy and Olympic future as we compete against three other cities – Austin, Chattanooga and Orlando – for the opportunity to welcome more than 300 of the nation’s best marathoners on the Saturday before “the Publix.”

For those with a healthy skepticism about how this will impact your own marathon or Club experience, never fear. Our goal is to create an entire weekend of running activities in Atlanta on Publix Georgia Marathon weekend in 2020. As the nation’s running community looks to follow the progress of a talented group of athletes chasing their Olympic dreams, we will showcase Atlanta as a running destination and the Publix Georgia Marathon as a fun, inclusive, must-try Atlanta event as we embrace the city’s Olympic legacy and inspire our next generation toward excellence. Will this be easy? Of course not. It is, after all, a marathon.



**Andy Carr**  
*Manager, Event and Program Support/Coach*

My best is the 1995 Columbus Marathon. After trying three times to qualify for the 100th running of the Boston Marathon, I finally did it and made it by over four minutes! The elation of running that last 2/10th of a mile was incredible.”

For now, I hope your preparations for this year’s Publix Georgia Marathon, half marathon or 5K are going well. We’re looking forward to seeing you on March 18 at Atlanta’s only marathon. #runningcityusa

Rich Kenah  
  
Executive Director



# IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR!



## 2018 AJC PEACHTREE ROAD RACE MEMBER REGISTRATION MARCH 1-14

Registration opens March 1 for members  
who joined by February 1, 2018.

Members must register by  
11:59 p.m. EST March 14.

Register at [atlantatrackclub.org/peachtree](http://atlantatrackclub.org/peachtree)



Questions?  
Email [membership@atlantatrackclub.org](mailto:membership@atlantatrackclub.org)

# Get Social

This month we asked:  
What is your best marathon memory?



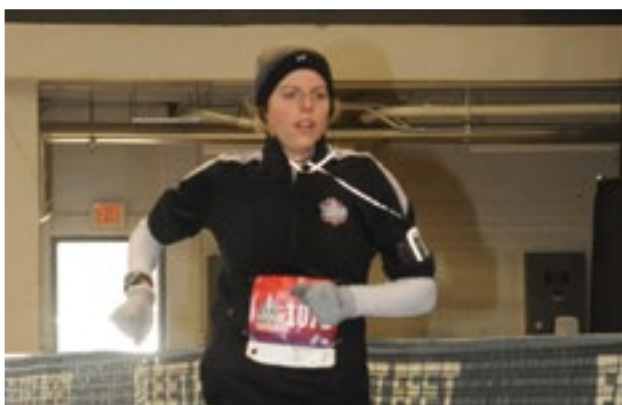
### Sharifa Knowles

My best marathon memory would have to be crossing the finish line at the Bank of America Chicago Marathon. Besides running in a beautiful city with amazing crowd support the entire 26.2 miles, I also achieved my marathon personal record!



### Ashley Greenfield

My best marathon memory was crossing that finish line for the first time! Running the marathon distance was the hardest mental and physical challenge I've faced in my running career and knowing that my body was capable of conquering it felt really great!



### Allison Lerer

Crossing the finish line at last year's Rocket City Marathon knowing that I qualified for Boston and didn't let driving six hours in the snow and ice deter me from accomplishing my dream to BQ.







### TJ Hadley

My favorite memory from my first marathon was the puppy that ran out on the course to say hi! He was just the needed boost to keep going to the finish line!

### Next Issue: A New Look

Beginning with our April issue, we'll be changing things up on "Get Social." Kicking things off will be a "greatest hits" of our best April Fools' Day posts and your reaction to them. We hope this inspires you to get social with us by using the hashtag #atlantatrackclub on YOUR April Fools' posts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram!

### Connect with Atlanta Track Club

-  facebook.com/AtlantaTrackClub
-  @ATLtrackclub
-  atlantatrackclub
-  atltrackclub





## UPCOMING EVENTS

**1-14**

**MARCH**



### AJC PEACHTREE ROAD RACE MEMBER REGISTRATION

- Members must register during this period for guaranteed entry
- Registration available at [AJC.com/peachtree](http://AJC.com/peachtree)

**17**

**MARCH SATURDAY**



### BE HEALTHY GEORGIA FESTIVAL 9:30 a.m., Atlanta, Pemberton Place

- One Mile and 50m Dash
- Free to kids 14 and under
- Part of Kilometer Kids Youth Running Series

**15-22**

**MARCH**



### AJC PEACHTREE ROAD RACE LOTTERY REGISTRATION

- Entrants will be randomly selected and notified by March 25
- Registration available at [AJC.com/peachtree](http://AJC.com/peachtree)

**18**

**MARCH SUNDAY**



### PUBLIX GEORGIA MARATHON, HALF MARATHON & 5K 7 a.m., Atlanta, Pemberton Place

- Course includes four of Atlanta's biggest parks and some of the city's most historic landmarks
- Held in conjunction with Be Healthy Georgia Festival, featuring a Fun Run & Dash for kids

Register for all events online at [atlantatrackclub.org](http://atlantatrackclub.org).  
Grand Prix registration opens one month prior to each event.



## OLYMPIC LEGEND **GAIL DEVERS** TO SERVE AS AMBASSADOR FOR KILOMETER KIDS

By Marcus Budline

Where does an Olympic legend go when her career comes to an end? How about the city of her greatest Olympic success – Atlanta, where she won Olympic gold in 1996 at both the 100 meters and 4x100-meter relay.

What was her next challenge? Raising her two daughters: Karsen, now 12, and Legacy, 10. It's an endeavor that's far from over, as she supports them in their interests of modeling and acting.

And her newest project? Coaching and inspiring the next generation of young runners as an ambassador to Atlanta Track Club's Kilometer Kids program.

As a three-time Olympic gold medalist and eight-time World Champion in the sprints and hurdles, Devers certainly knows how to inspire through winning. She also knows how to inspire through overcoming adversity: Early in her career she battled Graves' Disease, which almost led to the amputation of both feet.

With the girls growing up and giving Devers more free time, she's turned her attention back to the track – and specifically, young people.

“Back when I ran I used to say ‘I would love to be sitting in the stands at 60, 70 years old watching great competition and being involved in the sport,’” says Devers. “So just being on the end of it where I'm there to help facilitate and help their dreams come true right here in my backyard is just awesome.”

Devers' involvement with the Club began at a site she's long cherished: the Cheney Stadium track, where she participated last fall in the reopening ceremonies after it was refurbished by Atlanta Track Club. In 1996, Cheney served as the Olympic warmup track but in the years since had fallen into disrepair.

“I had gone out there a couple years prior and I could not believe it was the track we warmed up on, because it looked like a hot mess,” says Devers. “Because I ran on this track, it holds a piece of me. So it's such a thrill to be able to pass that on like a relay baton to the younger generation and let them run with it.”



Devers believes that running from a young age is a crucial part of growing up.

“What we learn from running is that if we want something great, it's hard,” says Devers. “We learn that ... when the chips are down you always find a way to get up and keep going. Those are the lessons that kids have to learn and the best way to learn it is in sports.”

Throughout 2018, Devers will be passing those lessons on not only to her daughters – who she can see already have natural running talent – but to young athletes and those coaching them, as well. Whether it's racing 10-year-olds, providing encouragement to new runners or demonstrating proper hurdling technique, Devers will be actively involved. For instance, she spoke in January at the annual Georgia Track and Field and Cross Country Coaches Clinic hosted by Atlanta Track Club, and will be a guiding, ebullient presence at Peachtree Junior in May.

“When you go out to Kilometer Kids events, you see how excited they are – You see it in their eyes how much they want this,” says Devers. “And to see parents running with them, it's just the way running is supposed to be.”

# WANT TO FLATTEN THOSE HILLS?

MAKE THE PUBLIX GEORGIA  
MARATHON, HALF MARATHON  
& 5K A GROUP EFFORT

By Théoden Janes



As events marketing manager for Atlanta Track Club, Natalie Demarko knows what makes promoting the Publix Georgia Marathon, Half Marathon & 5K an uphill battle. Literally.

“Hills come up *all* the time,” she said of the marathon, fast approaching on March 18. “[A lot of] people who run marathons, they don’t want to take on those hills. But I think the way that we’re starting to look at it is, ‘Hey, we’re Atlanta. ... If you want to say that you’ve done a marathon, come to the South. We’ll give you a marathon. This is gonna be a challenge to show that you can do it.”

Then once they’ve hooked you, they say this: Bring a group of friends. A big one. Because how better to tackle a steep challenge like the Publix than with a big group of friends?

Since acquiring the race from Life Time Events just three months before the 2016 edition, Atlanta Track Club has pushed hard to promote awareness of its group registration program, which awards benefits to groups based on the number of athletes who register for the 13.1- or 26.2-mile distances. For larger groups, perks can include mentions in the virtual event bag and shoutouts on the race’s social media pages, but perhaps more importantly it means coffee, tables, tents and real estate in what’s been dubbed “Tent City,” this year in Pemberton Place, where participants can relax with friends pre-race and then celebrate together afterward.

The efforts are paying off: In 2016, a total of 706 full and half marathoners designated a group affiliation when registering for the event; this year, 790 had done so with a month to go until the close of group registration at the end of February. Overall, finishers in the full grew from 1,277 in 2015 – the year before Atlanta Track Club took over – to 1,477 in 2017, while the Publix continues to hold the distinction of being the second-largest marathon in Georgia.

And more and more, the groups that enter the most people in the race are learning to embrace the course’s hills as a challenge to be tackled together.

“It’s a badge of honor for our guys to say, ‘I came to Atlanta and ran the Publix, and I lived,’” said Edward Walton, co-founder of Black Men Run, which last March officially brought 112 runners to the event. The group, which since its creation in 2013 has grown to 50 chapters in 29 states and multiple cities in Europe, has for years hosted its annual national leadership meeting and convention in Atlanta the weekend of the race.

Added Aprille Moore, an ambassador for Black Girls Run: “It’s definitely one of those races where it’s kind of like an ‘I-can-conquer-this’ type of thing.”

Continued on Page 12





Number of Publix Georgia Marathons that have been run

9,684

Entrants in 2017



13

Number of neighborhoods along the course

273,829

Miles run in Publix Georgia Marathon & Half Marathon since Atlanta Track Club took over



266

Number of streakers who have run every Publix Georgia Marathon, Half Marathon & 5K



BY THE NUMBERS

Average finish time in 2017

4:52:28



60,000

Number of jellybeans given out in 2017

188

Runners who are In-Training for the Publix Georgia Marathon



Number of feet climbed throughout the course

1,534

Diameter of marathon medal, in inches



4 College campuses run past





# YOUR LAST CHANCE TO SIGN UP FOR ATLANTA'S MARATHON

**REGISTER FOR THE PUBLIX GEORGIA MARATHON - MARCH 18**

Be a part of this year's celebration before it's too late!  
With a marathon, half marathon & 5K, there's an event for every runner.

## AND YOUR FIRST!

**EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION: MARCH 19 - MARCH 29**

Register for next year's marathon for just \$70 and the half marathon for just \$50. Secure your spot early and take on this Atlanta tradition!

Register at [atlantatrackclub.org](http://atlantatrackclub.org)







# SWEET 16



It's March, and the madness has spread to all aspects of our lives. While we await memorable matchups between the blue bloods and root for the classic 5-12 seed upset, practice your bracket handiwork and help us determine the best part of the Publix Georgia Marathon, Half Marathon & 5K.

Fill out your bracket, show us your upsets and let us know why you love Atlanta's premier marathon. Share your completed bracket on social using #GaMarathon by March 15 for your chance to win a Publix Georgia Marathon tee.





Continued from Page 8

Black Girls Run, by the way, officially took the group-registration crown in 2017, with 321 full and half marathoners in ATC's books – although unofficially, both Black Girls Run and Black Men Run were among several groups last year that were part of an informal grassroots effort called Team Take Down Publix. Started by Heather King of Atlanta, Team Take Down Publix's original goal was to set a record for African-American participation in a marathon; in the end, an exact number was impossible to calculate (and Guinness told King it didn't keep records in that category), so "we just ended up just treating it like a family reunion," King said. "We partied for three days, got no sleep, then went out and ran the damn marathon. It was epic."

Interestingly, as King reflected on the actual experience of covering the 26.2 miles, she didn't once mention the hills. Instead, she gushed about how awesome it was to see so many African-Americans running alongside her. And Kim McCoy – another ambassador for Black Girls Run, who also ran the full marathon in 2017 – said she was having too much fun soaking up the energy from the cheer stations, reading the creative signs and high-fiving people wearing Team Take Down Publix T-shirts to let the hills get to her.

"I honestly didn't pay that much attention to the hills," she said, "which is weird, because I'm used to running in Atlanta and I really don't care for all of them. But I didn't feel them during the Publix."

If that's a benefit of competing as a group, Brent Pease feels it, too. Pease said the Kyle Pease Foundation, which raises awareness and funds to promote success for persons with disabilities through sports, will enter a total of 218 participants into the half marathon. Fifty-eight of them will be in wheelchairs.

"That first year (2011) it was just Kyle and myself and our other brother, and that's now grown to 58 (wheelchair athletes)," said Pease, the foundation's co-founder and executive director, who plans to push his brother Kyle in a wheelchair for the sixth time in the past seven years. Kyle Pease has cerebral palsy with spastic quadriplegia and is unable to power his chair on his own.



"It's become a special race for the foundation, and it's turned into a really big opportunity for us at the beginning of the year to introduce disabled persons to endurance sports," he said. "The foundation serves all disabilities, but many of the people that come to us are very similar to Kyle in that they fall into the severely handicapped spectrum, so they need assistance to cover a mile, let alone 13, so we pair them with runners and athletes who want to help be their legs for the day. Again, seeing it go from one to 58 is truly incredible. And I don't know when it'll stop. I certainly hope it doesn't."

During the race, the presence of the biggest groups will be felt both on the course and alongside it. Some formalize their support by hosting a cheering station or volunteering at a water stop. But a lot of it is done off the books; for instance, Susan Camp of Moms Run This Town, which last year registered more than 80 runners, said she'll be driving a minivan full of members who will provide a mobile cheering station. "Our whole mantra is 'No Mom Left Behind,'" she said.

Hours later – after a running tour that includes the Martin Luther King Jr. Historic Site, Little Five Points, four different college campuses, the Speed Sign at Mile 19 and Piedmont Park – members of the biggest groups will cross the finish line and head straight to "Tent City" for the after-party.





“There’s so much activity post-race,” said Walton, the Black Men Run co-founder. “Everybody’s sore and tired, but they’re having fun. There’s lots of runners drinking beer and mimosas, we create temporary places inside the tents for folks to go change clothes ... because the tents give you plenty of room. It’s like the race is telling you not to go home. It’s telling you to stay.”

This is the kind of feedback that makes Atlanta Track Club executive director Rich Kenah smile, the kind the Club hopes to get every time it awards the group-registration incentives to clubs, teams, running stores and charitable organizations that make a commitment to the Publix together, train together, race together and celebrate together.

For groups, the tents double as a great marketing tool. Runners who don’t belong to a group might get curious and seek one out later if they’re looking to connect. For Atlanta Track Club, Kenah said, maintaining good relationships with these groups is a key to helping grow the event from an expected 11,000-12,000 participants this year (with the help of the 5K, which is back) to 18,000-20,000 three or four years from now. It’s also one of the keys to helping establish the Publix as a major player on the national marathon map.

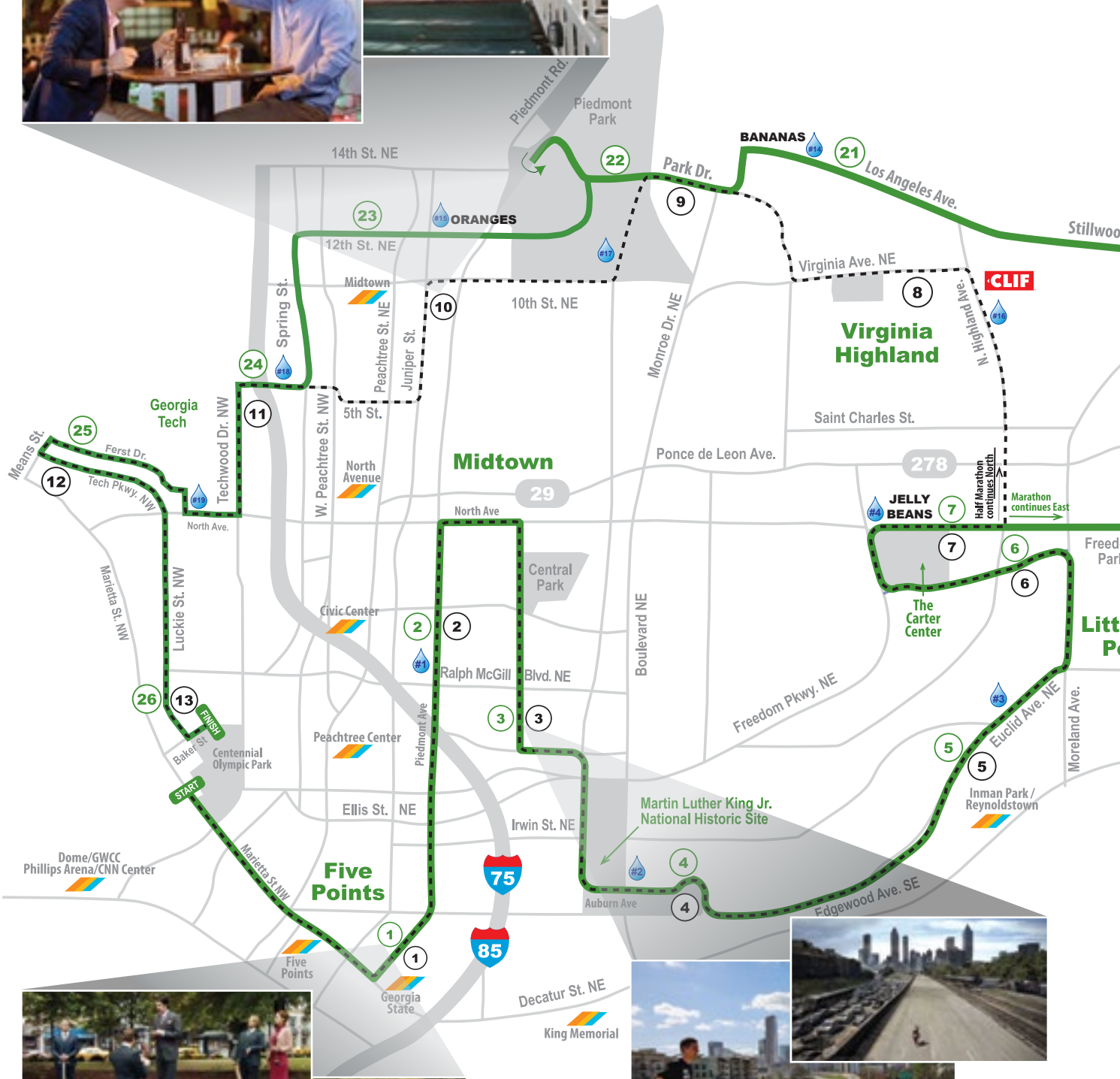
As for those, um, character-building hills?

“We embrace the fact that the Publix Georgia Marathon is reflective of the topography of Atlanta, and try not to deny it or suggest that it’s fake news,” Kenah said, with a laugh. “It’s a challenging course and I think that’s part of the personality of the event. And that’s actually what might lend itself to this group phenomenon here.

“Anybody can complete a marathon. It doesn’t matter whether you’re chasing the two-hour barrier or whether you’re trying to break the six-hour barrier; it’s a significant accomplishment to complete a marathon, regardless of how fast you go. That’s what attracts people to it. Unlike [short distances], where you can accomplish much of your preparation for that as an individual, the 26.2 miles of a marathon is a great equalizer. So to have a group of people around you that you can depend on, that can push you, that you can push, on any given day, makes that preparation for the marathon and then the race day experience that much more enjoyable.”







Anchorman 2  
Woodruff Park



The Walking Dead  
Jackson Street Bridge





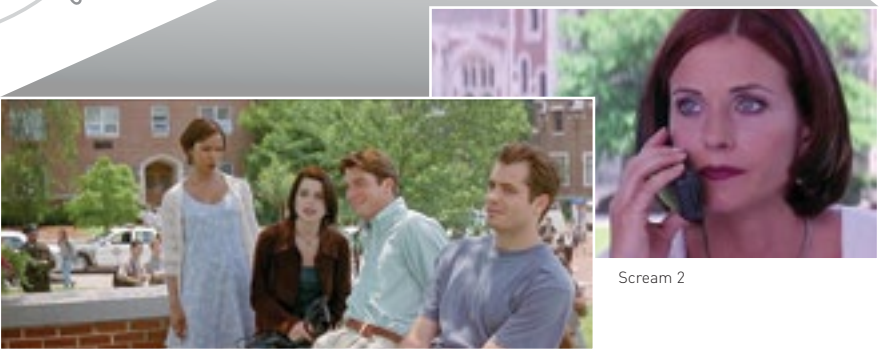
Into the Wild - Emory University



Stranger Things Emory University



Driving Miss Daisy - Lullwater Road



Scream 2

## WHAT DO YOU, RON BURGUNDY AND JOYCE BYERS ALL HAVE IN COMMON?

In fiscal year 2016, 245 film and TV productions were shot in Georgia, double the total of three years earlier, putting the Georgia film and TV industry at #3 in the nation, behind only New York and California. And this February alone, 40 movies or TV shows were being filmed in the state, many of them in and around Atlanta and many of those along the Publix Georgia Marathon & Half Marathon course. So if you're running along and suddenly feel like an even bigger star than you already are, here's the reason!

## A MARATHON HAS MANY FACES

# SUFFERING, JOY, SUCCESS...

AS THESE THREE RUNNERS CAN TELL YOU, BE READY FOR ANYTHING

By Marcus Budline

Look into the starting area of any marathon and you'll see emotions of all kinds. Hopeful, nervous, calm and confident runners get ready for multiple hours of running and walking; hours full of elation and suffering. Each person on that start line is running for a different reason, whether just to finish, to raise money for a cause or to set a new personal best.

At the end of the race, each has their own story to tell. For some, a three-hour marathon is the greatest accomplishment of their lives. For others, that's a race that went wrong from start to finish. The same goes for four hours, or five. But no matter the result, each story is worth celebrating as an opportunity to reflect, cheer and learn from.

Brought together by the common thread of this punishing distance, each of the three marathoners below had their own unique goals, moments and results. They're just three of the many faces of marathoners from around the world, an example of how one distance can connect people of all kinds for a day they'll never forget.

### The Suffering

Obsessive. That's the only way to describe Stella Christoforou's approach going into the 2017 TCS New York City Marathon. The former University of Georgia middle distance runner now living in Kentucky was making her first foray into the marathon distance, and it was all she could think about.



Stella Christoforou

"Pretty much half of 2017 was all about the New York City Marathon," Christoforou says. "Sleeping and breathing and waking up and eating and just thinking constantly about the New York City Marathon. I was obsessed."

Heading into the race, Christoforou's goal was to run under 2:55 or to be among the top 50 female finishers. At the halfway

point, she was far ahead of pace, clocking in at 1:25 through 13.1. So far out in front of her goal, Christoforou knew that from there it was either going to be a day of pure joy to remember or one of the most painful days of her life.

"I went out way too risky," Christoforou says. "I didn't play it safe. I took a risk and just went out and after it. From the half marathon I was just thinking 'Stella, this could be the best day of your life or the worst, but you will never know unless you take a risk.'"

She continued to push, even as it became clear that things were not going her way. At mile 17, she stopped for the first time, a death knell for her goal and the final sign that her training from the previous months wouldn't be paying off.

Things continued to unravel until Christoforou was sitting down in the middle of First Avenue in the pouring rain, watching as runners passed her with smiles on their faces. Everything had gone wrong.

"It wasn't any muscle," she says. "It was my heart. It was the most humiliating thing. I saw months and months of training flash right before my eyes and I'm sitting there in one of the biggest cities at the biggest marathon in the world thinking, 'Man, Stella. After all these months of your life, what are you doing?' The people passing by me were smiling and happy and I just wanted to be one of them so bad."

Christoforou was able to finish and now can look back on that day and laugh. It wasn't any muscle that hurt on the flight back – just her ego.

"I don't regret it," she says. "It was a horrible race – absolutely horrible. But I cannot complain, since I finished healthy and the only thing hurt was my pride. What really happened that day was that race truly humbled me. And that's what I love about the marathon."

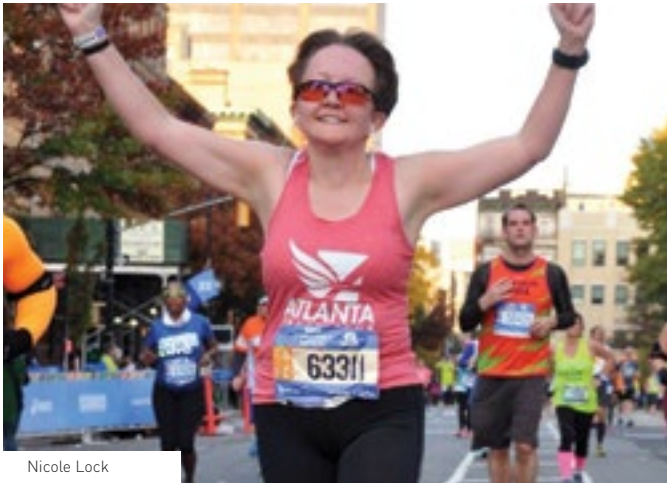
Two weeks later, after a steady diet of leftover Halloween candy, Christoforou was back on a starting line. This time, things went a little better: She went on to win Atlanta Track Club's Thanksgiving Day Half Marathon in 1:24:25.

### The Joy

The Queensboro Bridge is one of the most demarcating, intense spots on the TCS New York City Marathon course. For many, it's a place where the race really starts to intensify after a climb, and a brief section of the course that doesn't have any fan support at all.

For Atlanta Track Club member Nicole Lock, however, that stretch of the race embodied everything there is to love about marathon running and training. The bridge offered her a chance to think back on the miles she'd put in, and the beauty of the race.





Nicole Lock

“It’s almost so loud you can’t even hear yourself think,” Lock says about the course. “So it’s kind of nice to have one mile of quiet on the bridge. You’re seeing all these people running for their causes and you get a chance to reflect on your own marathon journey and those training miles.”

Lock doesn’t run near the front of the pack, so frequently misses out on the apex of crowd support toward the end of the races. But that day after the Queensboro Bridge, she felt like she was in her own personal chute on her way to glory.

“Coming back on that bridge and into Manhattan is really just amazing. I don’t often get all the cheers of being one of the top finishers, but you can hear the roar of the crowd and you’re like, ‘Oh, this is what it’s like.’”

Lock finished that race in 5:50, and had a true “marathon moment” that any marathoner not trying to hit time goals can understand. That screaming crowd and sense of triumph left her awestruck by the support and excitement that can come from the race.

As Lock remembers thinking, “I wonder if this is what Meb feels like when he wins.”

### The Success

When Matt McDonald joined Atlanta Track Club Elite coming off a successful collegiate career as a 10,000 meter runner at Princeton University, he didn’t think he’d be trying to qualify for the U.S. Olympic Trials in the marathon less than two years later.

But as he kept trying longer race distances, McDonald just kept getting better, giving Coach Andrew Begley all the information he needed to decide that McDonald would be best off as a marathoner.

So this past August, McDonald began his first cycle of marathon training, with the goal of qualifying for the Trials by hitting the B standard of 2:19 at the California International Marathon in early December. While the mileage wasn’t significantly greater than what he’d been running in college, the intensity ratcheted up – including a brutal series of 10-mile tempo runs. And although McDonald went through a stretch in early November where he wasn’t able to finish a workout for two weeks, by the time race day rolled around he was feeling cautiously optimistic.

“It was definitely the best mental prep I’ve done for a race,” says McDonald. “I was really focused on thinking back to workouts I’d done, and on remembering my mantra: Fit, faith, strength. I stole it from Andrew [McClain, a fellow Atlanta Track Club Elite runner] and it just sounded so good. You just want to repeat ‘I’m fit, I’ve got faith in my training and myself and I’m strong.’”

Conditions were perfect on race day. Combined with the net downhill course, it set McDonald up perfectly to chase after his goal.

For the first 18 miles, everything was going according to plan, notwithstanding a bleeding foot that made each step a bit soggy. Running with a pack, McDonald made it to mile 20 without hitting the wall, and decided to up the ante.

“I actually stepped on the gas a little bit around there thinking that it was going to be great,” he says. “Then mile 21 comes along and things started to hurt. I told myself ‘I’m just going to hang with these guys until mile 23.’ I knew I had enough time banked that I could hit my goal, so I stayed with a couple guys until mile 24, and then those last two miles were just slow.”



Matt McDonald

Coming down the final stretch, McDonald knew he had his goal in hand but had to convince himself he could pull off the finish through the final turns and through huge amounts of pain.

“It was just painful. I had never experienced it before but your legs just don’t want to move and your arms can’t do proper running form. I was just counting the streets down. Literally with 50 meters left I was like ‘I’m not going to make it.’”

Matt ended up crossing the line in a time of 2:18:31, besting his goal by 29 seconds and qualifying him for the Trials in his first-ever marathon. As he came through the finish area, McDonald was elated, bloody foot and all.

“I was really happy,” he says. “I had done it. I had hit my goal, even though I was also in incredible pain.”

The only disappointing part of the day? The sustained effort had ruined his appetite, meaning he could only manage a couple bites of the team’s post-race In-N-Out Burger.

# WANT TO RUN A MARATHON IN ALL

# 50 STATES?

EVEN IF YOU DON'T, YOU CAN LEARN SOMETHING FROM **NATHAN SKIPPER**



By Jay Holder

For some runners, running one marathon is a bucket list item. They complete the 26.2 and move on to the next big goal. Others catch the bug and try to tick off one every year. Then there are the few who set goals others see as impossible. Take, for example, completing a marathon in all 50 states. Plus Washington D.C.

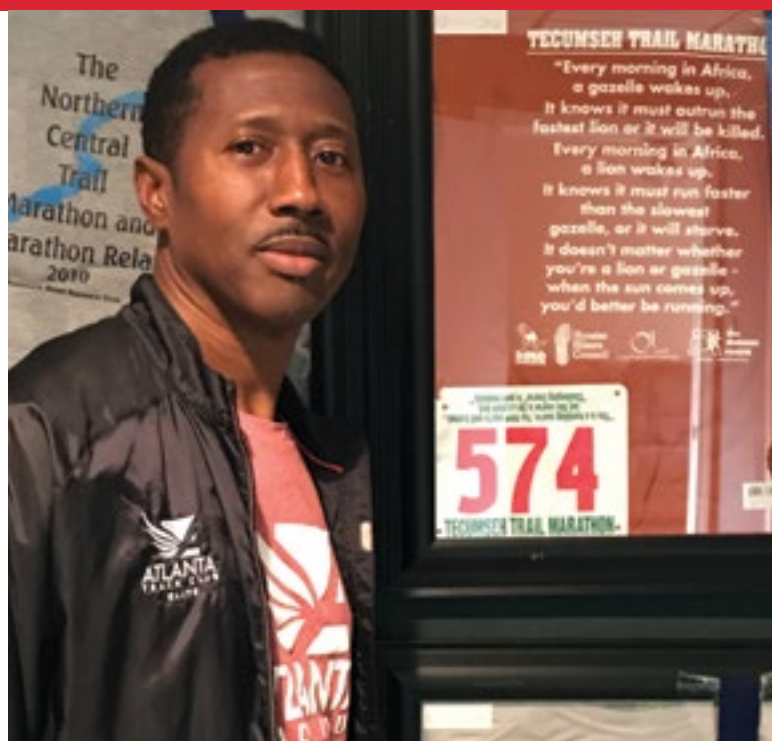
This is not a foreign concept. Thousands of people have done it. A group called the 50 States Marathon Club boasts 4,386 members. But when you compare that to the more than 500,000 runners who complete marathons in the United States every year, it's a small percentage. How do you get on the list? What does it take? We talked to Atlanta Track Club member Nathan Skipper of Ellenwood, GA, who ran his 51 marathons over the course of nine years. He even wrote a book about it, "I Run Because He Said I Couldn't." Now, he's hoping to run a marathon on every continent (although he still has six to go). We asked him for some tips.

## Why Do It?

"The United States is a beautiful place," said Skipper, who completed his final marathon at the ING Hartford Marathon in Connecticut, in 2011. "I run to travel and travel to run." Skipper tells runners not to fly to all their races, but to drive when they can. "You'll see so many amazing things."

## Let the Idea Form.

Skipper started his journey at the age of 39. But he didn't dive right into the challenge. "My neighbor was a runner who talked me into running the Marine Corps Marathon in Washington, D.C.," he said. "It hurt so badly, I took two years off." After his hiatus, Skipper went all in. Gradually, he became a self-described "marathon junkie," initially doing one per year, then two, until he was eventually doing a marathon every month.



## Be a Planner.

"I try to plan out a year in advance," he said. Skipper looked for Sunday races as opposed to Saturday races so he could fly or drive on Friday evenings. His job as a computer engineer allowed him to work on the road, which meant his hotel room was often his office.

## Have A Traveling Partner or Partners.

Skipper went to nearly all of his races with his wife and two sons, making each marathon weekend a family mini-vacation. "Those were my three angels at the finish line," he said. "They gave me a shoulder to lean on. It was a tremendous supporting cast. I could not have done this without them."





A room in the basement of the Skipper family home is dedicated to memorabilia; the shoes Skipper wore when he qualified for the Boston Marathon; the inaugural Georgia Marathon in Atlanta was the sixth of Skipper's quest for 50 in 50.



### Big Isn't Always Better.

Skipper hit all the big races, including the Boston Marathon and the New York City Marathon. But he said his favorite marathon was the Tecumseh Trail Marathon in Bloomington, Indiana. "We ran the entire marathon in the snow," he recalled. "The scenery was beautiful." His least favorite was the Wyoming Marathon. While it might be attractive to gluttons for punishment, Skipper did not enjoy descending 8,640 feet to sea level, then turning around and running back up. "It's the only finish line I ever walked across," he said.

### Staying Injury Free.

Skipper said the key to running so many marathons is easy: Wear good shoes. He said he rotates his frequently, being sure never to run on worn-out soles. But he admits that he wasn't always completely healthy when he stood on the start line. "You have to run through some things to achieve your goal," he said. "I run every day." He also said you have to know your limits and run every training run with the goal in mind: "Train adequately. Remember to run your race. You are not competing against anyone but yourself. You have to put your ego in your back pocket."

### How Much Does It Cost?

You might not be surprised to hear that it isn't cheap. Skipper estimates that he spent \$25,000 during his journey of more than a decade. "Once you have a goal in mind, a cost is just a roadblock," he said. He reiterated the benefits of planning

early, pointing out that hotel rooms and flights are often less expensive the further out from the race date. But don't spend too much time thinking about the cost, Skipper warns. "My advice is to not continually look at your credit card charges. This is an investment. You cannot enjoy life if you are afraid to invest."

### Return on Investment.

Skipper admits that he didn't master the marathon, but he did learn a lot. His average finishing time was between 3:20 and 3:30 for all of his races, which he said got easier as he went along.

"I have a legacy to show to my grandkids," said Skipper, who saved every bib and medal he ever received and displays them in his home. "Everyone has a story. It's a reminder to not put limitations on what you can do. And don't let people put limitations on what you can do."



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# 9 CHENEY STADIUM MILER

By Blais Hickey

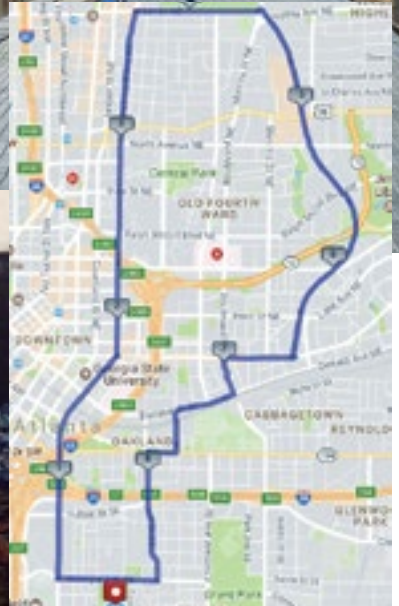
On October 23, Atlanta Track Club proudly reopened Cheney Stadium and welcomed the public back to the refurbished 1996 Olympic warmup track. Later that day, hundreds of children christened the eight lanes at the Kilometer Kids Fun Run & Dash. On April 14, over 3,000 women will end their Atlanta Women's 5K on the track's official finish line. Every day, you can find people from all aspects of the running lifecycle working out on the new facility. Even if you're not planning a speed workout, the facility offers a great place to park and warm up before a beautiful 9-mile jaunt around downtown and Midtown Atlanta. And if you need to add a few more miles, take as many laps as you need.



Hosea Williams Mural



Edgewood extension



Map My Run  
Connect with Atlanta Track Club on Map My Run to find this and other routes in the metro Atlanta area.

## Course Highlights:

- Pass the Georgia State Stadium, Georgia Capitol building, Sweet Auburn Market, Grady Hospital, Piedmont Park and Oakland Cemetery
- Enjoy some of the best street art the city has to offer
- Get off the road, hop on the Eastside Beltline and explore the new extension to Edgewood

## Course Notes:

- 9-mile loop, mostly sidewalk and paved path
- This is a great morning run, especially on a weekend. Without the usual rush-hour traffic, you can really enjoy the beauty of the city and won't have to wait at as many stoplights
- Refuel at one of the many delicious brunch spots in Grant Park

## Directions:

- Start on Connally Street and head toward Georgia Avenue. Turn left on Georgia Ave. toward Georgia State Stadium

- Turn right on Hank Aaron Drive. Continue on this road for 3 miles to 10th Street
- Turn right onto 10th Street and continue until it dead ends at Monroe Drive
- Cross Monroe to the Beltline. Continue to the Beltline extension and take the ramp to Edgewood Avenue. Turn right onto Edgewood
- Turn left onto Boulevard SE then right onto Decatur Street
- Pass the King Memorial MARTA station and turn left onto Grant Street
- Turn right onto Memorial Drive and then a quick left onto Hill Street
- Turn right onto Georgia Avenue and go three blocks to return to Cheney Stadium

## Add Distance By:

There are multiple ways to add distance:

- Run through Piedmont Park or take a few loops around the Active Oval
- Follow in Olympic footsteps and add a few laps on Cheney Track before or after your run

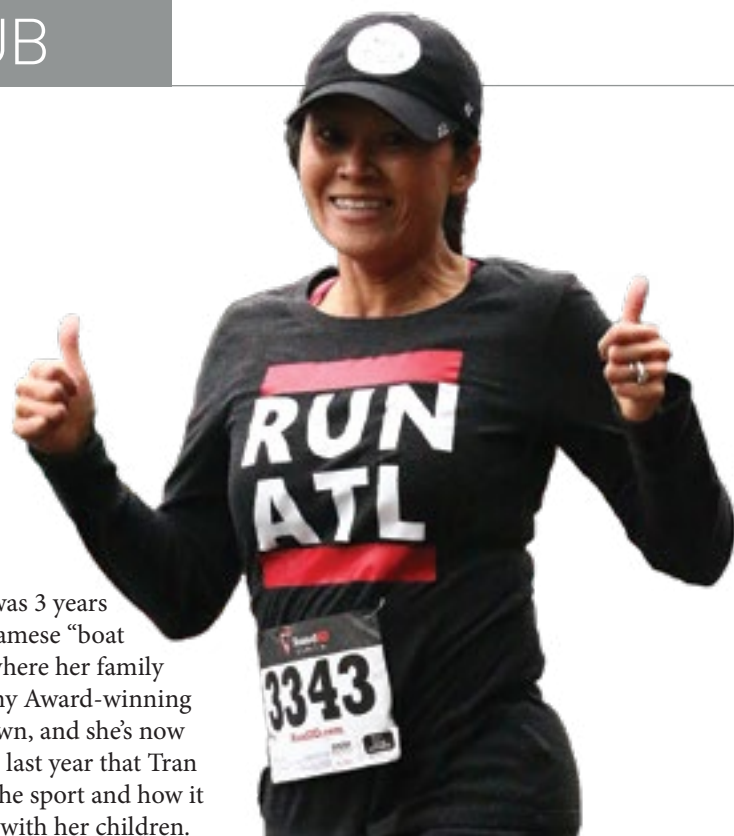
## Parking:

- Legal parking on the neighborhood streets around Cheney Stadium (741 Connally St SE, Atlanta, GA 30315)

# TRAN SMITH: FROM “I HATE RUNNING” TO COACHING

By Marcus Budline

When her family fled Vietnam after the fall of Saigon, Tran Smith was 3 years old, too young to have memories of the upheaval. One of the Vietnamese “boat people,” Tran eventually ended up at a refugee camp in Arkansas, where her family later settled. In the 43 years since, Tran went on to become an Emmy Award-winning TV producer and anchor in Memphis and to start a family of her own, and she’s now a freelance media consultant, host and producer. But it’s only in the last year that Tran became a runner. We chatted with Tran about her introduction to the sport and how it has impacted her mentality, her life in Atlanta and her relationship with her children.



## Thanks for speaking with us! Tell us a bit about your background – How did you get into running?

For years I hated running. I was always the person who said, ‘I hate running; I’m not a runner,’ and I would do anything but run. I think I hated the idea of it taking up so much time and I just couldn’t focus on it and make it interesting because I would get bored easily.

I had run in a couple of 5Ks over the years just for fun, not a lot of training and not really knowing what I was doing. But a year ago I joined this group called Boot Camp in the Park. Three times a week I meet some of the most supportive and inspirational ladies in Atlanta. It’s basically just working out with your weights and your yoga mat and using things in the outdoors. I think that really got me started.

We were including a lot of cardio in some of our workouts and we decided to try to run a 5K together, starting with the Ugly Sweater 5K in Piedmont Park. It was so much fun that when I left I was like ‘We should do this once a month,’ not realizing that we would actually do it, or that I would actually be involved in it and into it.

## What have you come to like about running? How has your view shifted?

There’s definitely the physical piece, that I can now run and jog without stopping or gasping for air. When I first started the training it was with a friend and when we started running I was huffing and puffing before we even got to mile 1. I was thinking, ‘there’s no way’ I could do this.

But now when I go 3 miles I say, ‘Oh my gosh, I can breathe and that wasn’t so bad.’ So for the physical part I feel like it made me stronger and my endurance better, but the bigger thing is the mental part. I went from thinking that I wasn’t a runner and I couldn’t run to feeling empowered and being proud that I’m actually able to complete these races and I am capable of doing it.

## How did you come to join Atlanta Track Club?

One of the friends from this camp told me about Atlanta Track Club and so I think it was halfway through last year I joined and just saw that there was this whole community out there. I thought it was just like hardcore marathon runners leaving the rest of us in the dust, but I love that when I go to an Atlanta Track Club race I see these people from various background and abilities and sizes and that the energy from being at those events is very inspiring.

## Have you been able to find community through running?

I’ve been running with my Boot Camp in the Park group, so in that sense I haven’t made a lot of new friends but I have become closer to those friends. You become closer because you’re spending so much time with each other running.

And I’m learning that there are so many other runners out there, so when people find out that I run all of a sudden you have this new bond with other people and then when I go to the races people are just friendly. Doesn’t matter if you’re showing up at 7 in the morning or at 11, people are just happy to be there and support each other. In a sense, even though I’m new to the scene, I feel like there is a community and we act as an internal support system even if we may not know each other.



I'm also going to be a coach for the Girls on the Run program for the first time. Such a humbling way to teach young ladies about fitness by preparing them for a 5K in April, but also helping them gain self confidence through support, guidance and mentorship.

**What are your running goals for the year? Is there anything you're working toward?**

Yes. So my friends wanted me to continue the "One 5K a Month" challenge, and we're still going to try to do that and I'm planning on involving my son, who started cross country. Still working on my daughter, who claims she hates running. She told me she and running do not have a good relationship.

What I found out about myself is that I feel like I'm more of a game-day person, where I'm not very good at training. I'll train but I'm not training as much as I should be and so for this year I'd like to push myself beyond just the 5K a month. I think there's too long a gap before the next race, so this year I'm looking into doing some other things, too, like an obstacle course and Climb Atlanta. We're going to run up 40 flights. Because of Atlanta Track Club, I'm going to try my first 10K at Peachtree. I felt like I needed to break it up instead of just



doing a 5K but keeping it interesting and forcing myself to do more strength training and running longer distances as well.

**Do you run with your kids ever or not really?**

More so my son. I found out that he is actually a pretty good runner, so he started cross country last year and even though I have been running longer whenever we do the 5Ks together he's usually far ahead of me. That's my big challenge for this year, to do a race with him. And I'm trying to convince my daughter to do some with me, so she's already signed up for a couple.



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By Dr. Syed W. Rizvi

**I know that running is good for me, but I also hear that running a marathon can do some damage to my body. Is that true? What can I expect?**

Running a 26.2-mile race is certainly a life-altering and rewarding experience. If you've never run a marathon, go cheer and watch marathoners cross the finish line to witness the shredded muscles and ravaged joints. That's likely how you'll look and feel afterward. Anytime you put your body, especially your legs, in a stressful and drastic situation you're bound to experience some muscular damage. The good news is that after lots of rest, you're bound to bounce back. Look at the tens of thousands of marathoners every year who run with no long-term ill effects. That said, some runners do experience a compromised immune system after a marathon because their bodies diverted resources to keep things moving. A few marathoners complain of a cold or fever following a race.

**In general, how long before everything is back to normal?**

Recovery after a marathon is vital. It's safe to expect you won't be doing any hard running or intense training for at least 10 to 14 days. Your goal is to gradually get back to running at your normal training pace without stiffness or soreness. All of us get warning signs of over training. Keep a training journal to track ache, pain and fatigue that lingers. If you have developed an injury, seek professional medical guidance.

**What can I do in the last weeks before – or even during – the marathon to put myself in the best position for a quick recovery?**

Ask your doctor for a medical checkup before embarking on any strenuous training program. If you get the all clear, I recommend you treat your body right with proper nutrition

and training regimens. This will help minimize any damage to your body. Practice taking fluids every 2-3 miles and fuel during your long runs in preparation. Pick the right running shoes that are a good match for your feet. Most shoes can max out at 300-500 miles. The wrong shoes may cause damage to your body, including stress fractures.

**What can I do after I cross the finish line and during the week or two after to speed my post-marathon recovery, and how soon can I get back to running?**

You've done it, now enjoy the experience and celebrate! In the coming weeks, as your physical and psychological recovery is underway, make sure to replenish your body with rest, good protein and carbohydrates. You want to slowly incorporate stretching, cross training that includes cycling, swimming, walking, light jogging and maybe going easy on a stair climber into your regimen. Soon enough, you'll be ready to do it all over again.

*Dr. Syed W. Rizvi is a board-certified physician in internal medicine at Newtown Medical Associates in Alpharetta. For more information, visit [NewtownMed.com](http://NewtownMed.com) or call 770-740-8550.*

Looking for Answers?

If you have a question for the doctors at Northside Hospital, email [stories@atlantatrackclub.org](mailto:stories@atlantatrackclub.org). We could answer your question in an upcoming issue of *Wingfoot*.



NORTHSIDE HOSPITAL



# LEARNING THE LABELS

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

March is National Nutrition Month. So what should we be looking for when we read the nutrition label that's on all the foods we eat and drinks we drink?

## What are the most important things on the nutrition label?

There is a lot of information on a food label, and it can definitely be confusing. Which nutrients are relevant and what numbers to look for depends on a number of factors, including the type of food, your personal needs and goals and even when you are eating a particular food. That said:

**Protein and fiber** are two nutrients I focus on, especially when it comes to snack foods. This power combo is key to keeping you energized and satisfied.

**Calories:** You don't have to count calories to be healthy. Instead, make your calories count by choosing mainly foods that offer more nutritional bang for your buck, such as vegetables, fruit, lean protein and whole grains) and limiting empty calories from soft drinks, processed snack foods and sweets.

**Carbohydrates:** Carbs are an important energy source, especially for runners. There are actually three types: starch, fiber and sugar. For the most part, choose foods that contain more fiber and less sugar (unless it's your pre or mid-run fuel, then it's the opposite!)

**Saturated fat:** Found mainly in animal products, too much can raise LDL-cholesterol (the "bad" kind.) For heart health, look for foods with no more than a few grams per serving.

**Sodium:** A common preservative found in virtually all foods from canned soups to packaged breads, sodium is an essential mineral for runners. But too much can contribute to high blood pressure, so limit to 2300 mg per day.

**Serving Size:** This is a key, and often neglected, aspect of the nutrition panel. If you eat more or less than one serving, that's OK – just make sure to multiply or divide accordingly.

Beyond the nutrition facts panel, there are many marketing claims on food labels that can be misleading. "Organic," "Gluten-Free," "Non-GMO" and "all natural" can make a food seem more nutritious than it actually is!

## Why do products claim not to contain sugar and then on the nutrition label you see they have 1-3 grams of sugar?

This could be an issue of naturally occurring sugar versus added sugar. Foods like fruit, dairy, grains and even vegetables naturally contain a few grams of sugar. Many versions of these foods also contain added sugars. For example, a serving of Greek yogurt naturally contains about 7 grams of lactose sugar. But fruit or vanilla-flavored versions may contain up to 25 grams per serving due to added sugars.

Changes are coming that will allow consumers to distinguish more easily between naturally occurring and added sugars. For now, you can use the ingredients list to check for added sugars. But keep in mind that sugar masquerades under a host of other names, such as dextrose, sucrose, brown rice syrup, corn syrup, honey, maple syrup and agave.

## Are the percentages on nutrition labels for everyone?

The percentages indicate the amount of a given nutrient that one serving of a food provides compared to a standard reference level called the Daily Value (DV). Since individual nutrition needs vary, the percentages aren't accurate for everyone. However, they do allow you to compare among similar products. For example, you may see that one brand of cereal provides 15 percent of the DV for iron, while another provides 20 percent, and choose the one that has more.

## What does "calories from fat" mean?

Calories from fat indicates the amount of calories in one serving of a given food that come from fat, as opposed to one of the other two macronutrients, carbs or protein. Its presence on the food label is a throwback to an earlier era where nutrition guidelines focused heavily on limiting dietary fat for heart health. Now, we are more concerned with the type of fat (saturated versus unsaturated) and recognize the role of dietary fat in feeling full (not to mention making food taste good!) Foods that are high in heart-healthy, unsaturated fat such as nuts, nut butters, avocado and olive oil are an important part of a balanced diet. Reflecting this, "calories from fat" will actually be removed from the new food label.

Alissa is a Registered Dietitian and certified personal trainer born and raised in NYC. She is a graduate of Yale University and New York University. An avid runner with a number of half and full marathons under her belt, Alissa believes the best form of exercise is the one you enjoy and the best nutrition plan is one that fits into your lifestyle.

For more individualized support with your weight loss and nutrition goals, Alissa is available for consultations at Good Measure Meals. Email her at [nutrition@goodmeasuremeals.com](mailto:nutrition@goodmeasuremeals.com) to learn about services and rates.





## HOW TO AVOID TAPER TROUBLES

By Amy Begley

Spring racing season can bring excitement or anxiety. Training for the longer spring races usually starts before or during the holidays, when it can be hard to stay on track during the short winter days. If you're running the Publix Georgia Marathon or Half Marathon, at this point either you have followed the training plan and are excited for the taper period before the race or you're behind in training and trying to figure out how to balance being ready for the race and not overdoing it.

Tapering is a big part of the training plan, most of which call for the last longer run to be three weeks out from the marathon and two weeks out from the half marathon. The last two to three weeks are about letting the body catch up from the training so it can go into the race fully recharged. The legs have recovered from the last longer runs while still maintaining some mileage to keep them from feeling stale. The taper also allows you to repair any minor injuries.

The main problem you may face with the taper period is that if you got behind in the training program, you'll try to make up the mileage or training in the last few weeks. Don't. This will only cause more issues. You will go into the race tired and not recovered from the long runs if you push them up to the week before the races.

It's better to get in an 18-mile long run three weeks before a

marathon than to do a 22-mile long run the week before the race. That also applies to the half marathon and getting in those last late long runs. Going into a race 80 percent prepared is better than going into the race tired from training.

The second problem people encounter during the taper period is that as your long run and mileage decrease, the amount of energy you feel and the extra time on your hands increases. People make the mistake of starting something new like rock climbing, roller blading or painting the house. It sounds like a great idea until you get injured two weeks before the big race doing non-running activities. If the urge to try something new comes up, write it down and try it after you've recovered from the race.

The third problem people encounter is the urge to do nothing between the last long run and the race. I encourage you to continue with your routine, but to scale it back even though you continue to run the same number of days per week. If you want to cut something out, quit doing leg weights or heavy lifting the week or two before the race. It is also important to run a little bit on the day before the race. Not running the day before the race will cause your legs to tighten up, so do a short shakeout of 10 minutes to 3 miles to keep your legs from feeling flat and stiff going into the race.

Trust your training, don't try anything new and enjoy the race!

# USA 10KM CHAMPIONSHIPS RETURN

By Jay Holder

For the second-straight year, the men's and women's USA 10km Championships races will be held at the AJC Peachtree Road Race on July 4.

The 2017 race featured a wild sprint finish between Leonard Korir and Shadrack Kipchirchir, with Korir outkicking his U.S. Army teammate in the final 100 meters and then collapsing to the ground. "Last year's 10K championship was one of the toughest races of my life," said Korir, who intends to defend his title in 2018. "I am excited to put it all on the line again against the best road racers in the United States."

For the women, Aliphine Tuliamuk led a pack up Cardiac Hill before surging and leaving her rivals behind to earn her sixth U.S. title. That left Sarah Pagano and Jordan Hasay to battle for second, with Pagano passing Hasay just after the turn onto 10th Street to claim the runner-up spot. Hasay would go on to run last fall's Bank of America Chicago Marathon in 2:20:57 to become the second-fastest American woman in history.

"There is nothing better than getting a flag on America's birthday," said Tuliamuk. "This will be the most memorable flag I have."

Runners will be competing for a \$70,000 prize purse, with the male and female winner each winning \$10,000.

Member registration for the 49th AJC Peachtree Road Race is open March 1-14, with Lottery registration taking place March 15-22. The race will be broadcast live locally on WXIA-TV with a national broadcast on NBC Sports later the same evening.

## Masters to Race for USA 5km Title at Atlanta's Finest 5K

The country's best masters road racers will line up in midtown Atlanta on August 18 for the USATF Masters 5km Championships. The race will be held in conjunction with the Atlanta's Finest 5K. Prizes will be awarded to the top overall finishers, age group winners from ages 40 and up in five-year increments and teams for ages 40 and up in 10-year increments.

Last year, 254 runners competed in the 5km championships, held in Syracuse. Kevin Castille, 45, won the men's race in 14:29, with Sascha Scott, 42, winning for the women in 17:50.

You can register for the championship race if you are 40 or older at [USATF.org](http://USATF.org), or you can register for the Atlanta's Finest 5K by visiting [atlantatrackclub.org](http://atlantatrackclub.org).

## Club Receives \$25,000 Development Award

Atlanta Track Club was among the top honorees at the 2018 Running USA Industry Conference in Austin on February 11, receiving the Allen Steinfeld Development Award. The \$25,000 grant will go toward the Club's goal of sending at least one athlete to the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo.



The award, named for the former New York Road Runners president and CEO who died last year, is granted annually to an elite athlete development program whose athletes aspire to compete at the highest levels of international track and field and road racing.

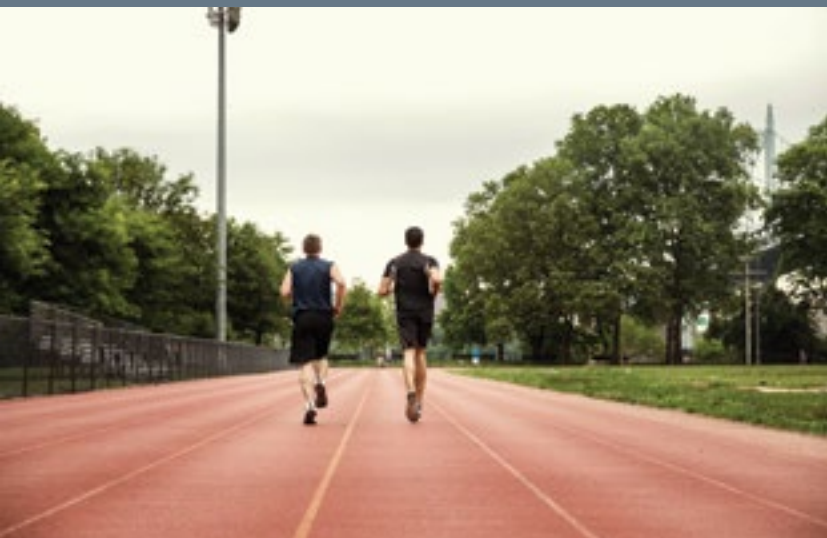
"Atlanta Track Club's elite athletes embrace the core values of this organization – community, camaraderie and competition – as they work day in and day out to achieve their dreams," said Atlanta Track Club Executive Director Rich Kenah, who accepted the award on behalf of the Club. "We are excited to apply this generous gift to the resources they need to compete against the world's best."

Running USA is a not-for-profit organization with a stated mission of advancing the growth and success of the running industry.



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