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On the Cover: Rhonex Kipruto made history when he broke the tape in 27:01, earning a $50,000 event-record bonus and running the fastest 10K ever in U.S. Photo by Victah Sailer.
Today, we acknowledge all the work you put in to get here.

In running and in life, there’s only one day you’re in control of: today. We’re proud to support Atlanta Track Club as they work to make it one to remember.
Each year, as spring arrives with its longer and hotter days, there’s a predictable – and visible – rise in the number of runners and walkers doing their thing on Peachtree before dawn and those first light hours of the day. While some of these folks are simply fair-weather exercisers (not judging!), this annual surge is largely related to preparations for the AJC Peachtree Road Race.

As Atlanta Track Club finishes the cleanup from what this less-than-objective observer believes was an epic 50th Running, I’ve recently noticed something very different from years past: Those runners and walkers heading up and down Peachtree have not gone into their usual summer hibernation!

It is true that the Club’s flagship event is the Peachtree, and that the Club looks to use the event as an annual reminder that regular aerobic exercise will improve your life in more ways than I can list here. It is also true, though, that tens of thousands of “Peachtree’ers” struggle to stick with their pre-race running and walking routines after July 4 because … well, life just gets in the way.

But on my morning commute into Atlanta Track Club’s offices the last few weeks, I can’t help but notice that the usual post-Peachtree falloff hasn’t happened. From Brookhaven through Buckhead and into Midtown and Piedmont Park, it seems like there are even more runners and walkers out there on the roads and sidewalks and in the park than before the Fourth.

I’d like to think that Running City USA is feeling the same way as the Club’s staff coming out of Peachtree – inspired, proud and fired up to continue the journey toward being the healthiest darned city in America. Regardless of the reason, it’s exciting to see so many and such a diverse mix of people lacing up and getting their runs on this summer.

Moving forward has become a movement here in Running City USA, and we couldn’t be prouder to be part of it. We hope you had a successful 50th Peachtree! Now on to the 51st, and all the great running and walking days that will come in between.

Rich Kenah
Executive Director
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- Check out squad cars, motorcycles and the Mobile Command Unit
- Part of the 2019 Grand Prix Series presented by Piedmont Healthcare
- Proceeds benefit Crime Stoppers Atlanta

24 SATURDAY AUGUST

IN-TRAINING FOR THANKSGIVING DAY HALF MARATHON
7:00 a.m., Atlanta Track Club Office, Atlanta, GA
- Train for the Invesco QQQ Thanksgiving Day Half Marathon with this 16-week program
- Two coach-led practices per week: Saturday long runs and Wednesday workouts
- Designed for all levels of runners and walkers
- Registration cutoff date August 31

20-21 SEPTEMBER

WINGFOOT XC CLASSIC
5:30 p.m. Friday, 7:15 a.m. Saturday, Sam Smith Park, Cartersville, GA
- New race schedule for 2019, with two days of cross country-style racing: high school, middle school, youth, college and community races
- 3K, 5K and 8K on grass, dirt and gravel
- Friday night races under the lights
- Community race to take place Saturday, September 21, at 7:15 a.m.
- Free for Atlanta Track Club members, $10 for nonmembers
- Part of the 2019 Grand Prix Series presented by Piedmont Healthcare

Register for all events online at atlantatrackclub.org. Grand Prix registration opens one month prior to each event.
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This month:
Thousands of you posted about your historic day at the 50th Peachtree! We hope that you’re already looking forward to the start of the next era!

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PEACHTREE AT 50
LONG-AWAITED DAY ENDS IN SPEED, SWEAT AND SMILES

By Barbara Huebner, Marcus Budline and Jay Holder

The 50th Running of the AJC Peachtree Road Race rewrote the event’s history books with four new event records and the fastest 10K ever run on U.S. soil. Behind the greatest athletes in the world, 60,000 participants streamed across the line at Piedmont Park, sweaty and smiling and celebrating a half century of Atlanta’s Fourth of July tradition.

On an historic day for both the event and the sport, the race awarded $200,000 in event-record bonuses – $50,000 in the men’s and women’s open and the men’s and women’s wheelchair divisions.

Rhonex Kipruto, a 19-year-old Kenyan who has been dazzling far beyond his years on the both the road and track, hit the tape in 27:01, three seconds faster than the previous fastest time in the U.S., the 27:04 run by Joseph Kimani in 1996 at this race. On that day, the temperature at the start was 63 degrees; this year it was 77 degrees with 79 percent humidity.

“It was hot,” said Kipruto, who nonetheless blasted a 4:11 second mile, leaving his pacemaker behind. After his brother, Bravin Kiptoo, dropped off just after 5K, it would be a solo effort the rest of the way, hitting 5K in 13:12 – well below event-record pace, but with a much-tougher second half of the course remaining. At five miles (21:51), Kipruto was slightly off the pace needed.

But then came the downhill finish, and the ultimately successful race against the clock began in earnest as spectators roared him on to the tape.

“I am happy for [the bonus] because when I was coming here I was coming for a course record, and I thank God for that,” he said after a modest-but-beaming celebration at the finish line.

Kiptoo would finish second in 27:31, the fourth-fastest performance in race history. Colin Bennie was top American, in 29:12.
If the men’s race was a one-man show, the women’s was a fight to the finish, culminating in a victory for Brigid Kosgei in 30:22, breaking Lornah Kiplagat’s 30:32 event record from 2002 by a hefty 10 seconds.

“I want to say thank you to the people who were cheering us all the way,” said Kosgei, who brought the fastest 10K personal best (29:54, #2 in history). “They say "try, try, try," and I was so happy for those people.”

A pack of four Kenyans – Kosgei, Fancy Chemutai, Agnes Tirop and Caroline Chepkoech Kipkirui – would hit 5K in a breathtaking 14:57, 38 seconds ahead of the event record; at five miles (24:44) the chance for a record was fading but an epic battle was just beginning.

First Kosgei pushed the pace. (“I just moved, and they were not leaving me. Everyone is trying to be in position because they were trying for the record.”) As the trio turned the corner from Peachtree to 10th Street for the final, downhill 1,030 meters, the strain was showing on Kosgei’s face but she nonetheless seemed to take command as Chemutai fell back.

Then, suddenly, Kosgei faded. First Chemutai, the fourth-fastest 10K runner in history, passed her. Then Tirop, the 2015 IAAF World Cross Country Champion and 2017 World Championships bronze medalist at 10,000 meters, did the same. Grimacing, Kosgei fought back. Again Chemutai faded, and it was down to two: Kosgei and Tirop, shoulder to shoulder, laboring mightily for the win – and, astonishingly, the event record, which was suddenly back on the table thanks to the scorching battle for the line.

Kosgei would hit the tape an instant before Tirop, with both women given the same time. Chemutai ended up third, in 30:32 – which equaled the mark of Kiplagat. The top American was Emily Sisson, seventh in 32:02: a time that would have won every Peachtree since 2012.

The wheelchair races followed a similar pattern, with Daniel Romanchuk taking control on Cardiac Hill midway through the race to win easily in 18:11, smashing the event record of 18:38.06 set by Saul Mendoza in 2004.

“It still hasn’t entirely sunk in yet,” said Romanchuk, 20, both of his third consecutive Peachtree victory and the payday, the largest ever in wheelchair racing thanks to the bonus. “It was a fast day and a great field. I was just sprinting all the way to go as fast as I could. It was very strong record so I knew it had to be an all-out effort.”

Meanwhile, the women’s wheelchair race was another three-way battle, this time among seven-time Peachtree winner Tatyana McFadden, defending champion Susannah Scaroni, and 2013 Peachtree winner Manuela Schar of Switzerland.

In the end, it would be Schar who prevailed, her winning time of 21:28 shattering the event record (22:09.97) of her countrywoman Edith Hunkeler, set in 2009. McFadden (21:29) and Scaroni (21:30) would also finish under the old mark, with only two seconds separating first and third.

“It’s amazing,” said Schar, a marathon specialist who has won 10 of the past 13 Abbott World Marathon Majors races. “I was just happy to win it because it was such a tough race. I haven’t been in many races that close. To get that bonus is huge.”
“Huge” is an apt description of the day.
“We set out to invite the best of the best athletes in our sport to this year’s event in both the footrace and the wheelchair race, with the hope that they would put on a show for Atlanta in our 50th year,” said Rich Kenah, executive director of Atlanta Track Club and race director of the Peachtree. “They put on more than a show: they put on a fireworks display. Four-for-four in a record chase in the 50th Running of the world’s largest 10K is like batting 1.000 in the World Series.”

Atlanta Track Club Athletes Sweep Top Georgia Prizes
Atlanta Track Club’s Wilkerson Given and Janel Blancett went home with the Top Georgian honors, as Given crossed in 30:12 and Blancett finished in 36:03. Given and Blancett are both training for the 2020 U.S. Olympic Team Trials – Marathon which will be held in Atlanta on February 29, 2020.

Author Emily Giffin Wins T-Shirt Contest
Emily Giffin was the winner of the AJC Peachtree Road Race T-shirt contest with her design, titled “Lucky Bib.” Created in collaboration with Atlanta Track Club member Tina Tait, the design was part of a special competition ahead of this year’s race, with submissions curated by notable Atlantans and Atlanta institutions.

“Honestly, that was the highlight of my life,” said Giffin, an Atlanta Track Club member who ran the race with her daughter, Harriet, while her sons and husband raced ahead. “It’s more than winning a contest – It’s the fact that this is my family’s passion. The Atlanta Track Club means so much to us and so it’s symbolic of what we do as a family.”

In honor of her victory, Atlanta Track Club and the Atlanta Journal-Constitution will donate $5,000 to Giffin’s charity of choice. She selected City of Refuge, an Atlanta faith-based charity that helps families transition out of crisis.

Mayor Bottoms is Official Starter, Then Walks the Course
Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms served as an official starter at Lenox Square, as she kicked off the race and then walked the course with her staff and one of her sons.

“I was born in 1970, so to think that this race started seven months after I was born and that now I get to kick it off as Mayor it really is a dream come true for me and speaks to what’s possible in our city,” she said.

Bill Thorn Finishes 50th Consecutive Race
For the 50th straight July 4, Bill Thorn crossed the Peachtree’s finish line, as he continued his streak as the only member of

Continues on Page 13
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Register at atlantatrackclub.org
Continued from Page 11

the Original 110 finishers to complete every edition of the race. Walking alongside his friends, family, and former Atlanta Track Club Executive Director Julia Emmons, Thorn was ecstatic to finish the Peachtree yet again.

“It could’ve been just a fad,” said Thorn of his early Peachtree streak. “But as you go along through the years, people like Julia say to me every once in a while to keep going and that was really encouraging, and so it just became a year after year thing. Whoever would have imagined that little tiny group would have turned into this?”

Members of the Original 110 and legends of the Peachtree were celebrated throughout the week of the event, starting with a special reception on Tuesday, July 2, at Park Tavern. On race day, Emmons – an ever-present advocate for women runners – served as official starter for the women’s elite race, while Tim Singleton Jr., son of race founder Tim Singleton (who died in 2013), and 1970 race winner Jeff Galloway started waves A and E, respectively.

Of the Original 110 finishers, 32 completed the race’s 50th Running.

Peachtree Goes Green

While it’s the colors red, white and blue that are most often associated with July 4, Atlanta Track Club tossed green into the mix this year with efforts to make the AJC Peachtree Road Race a more environmentally friendly event. Thanks to recycling stations set up around Piedmont Park, the addition of “Green Team” volunteers and post-race sorting of trash bins, Atlanta Track Club collected more than one ton of recyclable plastic on race day, including tens of thousands of plastic bottles. Those bottles will be used to create 64 benches that will be donated to parks and tracks throughout metro Atlanta.

A compost area at the member party also diverted 2,037 pounds of waste from landfills.

Peachtree Junior Is the Future

Nearly 1,500 kids took part in the Anthem Peachtree Junior on July 3. Held the day before the AJC Peachtree Road Race for the first time, participants in the mile had the chance to finish their race at the famous Peachtree finish line. Age group winners were invited to be part of the finish line ceremony the next day. Participants in the dash enjoyed a race course lined with spectators in The Meadow of Piedmont Park.

Athletes in all the races were cheered on by Fancy Chemutai and Emily Sisson, who would compete the next day, and three-time Olympic gold medalist Gail Devers.

Flying High at the Expo

Runners picking up their bib numbers at the Peachtree Health & Fitness Expo suddenly found themselves cheering and clapping in rhythm for a world-class athletic competition. Winning the triple jump was Keturah Orji, who finished fourth at the 2016 Olympics, while the women’s pole vault champion was Sandi Morris, the 2016 Olympic silver medalist. Jacob Wooten, the 2019 NCAA Indoor Championships bronze medalist, took the honors in the men’s vault.

Held on a custom-built runway inside the Georgia World Congress Center, the competition was sanctioned by USATF, and the results were recognized as official.

Orji, who competes for Atlanta Track Club Elite, had her sights set on reclaiming her American indoor record, and she looked to be on her way with a first attempt of 14.42 meters (47 feet, 3.75 inches), just five inches shy of the current mark. It would be her best of the day, good enough to easily win the competition.

“Competing here today was really exciting,” said Orji, an eight-time NCAA Champion for the University of Georgia. “I know a lot of people here have probably never seen a triple jump competition, so it was just exciting to have them here and help them learn about the event.”

In the women’s pole vault, Morris – the American outdoor record holder – didn’t miss on a single attempt through 4.80 meters, wowing the crowd and winning handily.

Spectator Anna Smith, who finished third in the 2019 GHSA 3A state championships for Westminster High School, was riveted. “It’s very impressive and cool to see live,” she said, standing along the vault runway. “It’s very cool for people who may not know the pole vault to get to watch this.”

After victory was sealed for Morris, she took three attempts at 4.96, hoping to get a shot at the world indoor record of 5.03 meters (6 feet, 6 inches) held by American Jenn Suhr. It was not to be, but Morris was still happy with the day.

“This was awesome,” she said. “I think sometimes when we’re down on the floor of a stadium it’s hard to get perspective on how we’re jumping, so this is an incredible way to bring it right to the people. I love being able to make that personal connection with the fans who are supporting me instead of being really far away from them. I had a blast.”

For more on what happened to the triple jump sand and pole vault pit after the competition, see Page 23.
BIG CHANGES START SMALL.

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The 50th Running of the AJC Peachtree Road Race was always in the plan for Grant Kendall. Before the feeling of frustration from the right side of his body not functioning properly, before the gut-punch of a frightful MRI, before a tumor was removed from his brain, before the recovery – Peachtree was always in the plan.

But the medical journey to the start line was not: Earlier this year, his July 4 tradition – this would be his 20th Peachtree – was thrown into serious jeopardy.

The questions began more than two years ago, when Kendall noticed issues in his right leg as he tried to rock his brother’s children. They persisted through 2018 as he continued to roll his right ankle while running. They intensified after he tossed an apple on vacation and it ended up dozens of yards shy of its target. And they came to a head in February, when Kendall rolled his ankle yet again while on a run in Savannah with his wife, Lisa.

What had once been just “concern” turned the usually calm, analytical man into “super upset.”

Upon returning to Atlanta, a battery of neurological tests followed to try to find the culprit, but they showed no musculoskeletal problems. Without anywhere left to turn for a possible answer, an MRI was scheduled for April 1.

Lisa let her husband go alone to the MRI that day, assuming that, as is typical, the results wouldn’t come until a few days later. But the results were immediately, staggeringly clear: Pressing against Kendall’s motor cortex was a tumor the size of a large lime or small avocado, growing inward from his skull.

“When he came home that day we sat down and it was kind of surreal,” Lisa said. “It was one of those moments when I was in a lot of shock.”

But Lisa, who herself works at Emory as a nurse practitioner, quickly “went into medical professional mode,” working to understand the next steps of the process and getting surgery scheduled as soon as possible. Three weeks later, on April 23, the tumor was removed with no major complications, meaning that Kendall was able to leave the hospital just a few days later, with an optimistic prognosis and path to recovery.

The world’s largest 10K then became a goal even greater than it had been before. With the Peachtree taking place just two months after his surgery, Kendall knew the race could be a perfect marker and step on his road to recovery.

“It was motivation,” he said, that he had already been accepted in the lottery. “I definitely wanted to make sure I was able to get back out there and run.”

On his first day home after the surgery, he and Lisa walked a mile around their house. Four weeks later, they ran 50 meters, walked for a bit, and then run 50 meters more. Just two months later, Kendall had run more than three miles continuously and was ready to go for the race.

In many ways, his July 4 went according to the plan he’d had all along. He finished his 20th Peachtree – albeit somewhat slower than he would have hoped four months ago – and celebrated July 4 with Lisa.

“We were fortunate to be able to do it this year,” Lisa said. “But it wasn’t easy.”

“It felt good,” Kendall echoed. “It was nice to be back and be able to run just like normal.”

By Marcus Budline
Laura Youngblood (1:11:28) and Jean Turner (2:35:43)
Laura Youngblood and Jean Turner both made it to the AJC Peachtree Road Race finish line, in a triumph of body and mind. Youngblood, 42, a health scientist and Newnan resident, was still on medication. Diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer that spread to her brain and bones shortly after last year’s Peachtree, she underwent weeks of full brain radiation as well as endocrine and targeted therapy. She hit the course this July 4 with two friends. Not only did she finish, but she did it faster than she had expected. “Still quite a bit slower than my pre-cancer pace,” said Youngblood (at top in photo). “But it gives me hope that I may be able to regain some of the speed I lost!”

For Turner, 55, an Army Nurse Corps officer, shortness of breath while training in the week before the race, followed by news of decreased heart function, had her doubting she’d make it to the Peachtree after all. But she had her mind set on it after a tough year, which included surgery to remove a tumor on her left lung and lymph nodes as well as chemotherapy that didn’t end until just after Memorial Day.

So the McDonough resident, who discovered her love of running while deployed to Iraq, decided to try power-walking the race. At that pace, she found she was enjoying sights and sounds she hadn’t gotten to notice before. Her excitement grew. When she cleared Cardiac Hill, she knew she had it. Said Turner: “I actually cried and rejoiced when I crossed the finished line!”

Mira Bergen (1:45:53)
Mira Bergen, a devoted Peachtree participant for over 40 years, met her race goals – and then some. A year and change after a total left hip replacement, she finished the race faster than last year’s 2:10, which she did just three months after she got “Ruthie,” her new hip. And really, Bergen wasn’t competing with anybody but herself. What always means more to Bergen is the humanity of the Peachtree: The woman with an artificial leg and a walker. The disabled young man who walked with his arms around the shoulders of two companions. “I cried the whole way,” she said.

Also along the route were commemorations of people who were Peachtree regulars over the past 50 years: Twin sisters, now deceased. A beloved restaurateur. “It shows you the cycle of life,” said Bergen, a 72-year-old Atlanta resident. “The only time I saw these people was during the Peachtree Road Race. To me, it just typifies Atlanta spirit and who we are and how we take care of people.”

Mark Kelly (1:37:12)
“Maddox Strong,” the 25-member team that ran to raise funds for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, ended up bringing in $50,425 – more than four times its goal. “It is a testament to the passion of our team and their love for Maddie,” said Mark Kelly, 67, beloved former athletic director of St. Pius X Catholic High School and organizer of the effort. Kelly, of Tucker, is the grandfather of Maddox Kelly, the 5-year-old cancer fighter and inspiration for the passionate team.

On July 3, Maddox ran the 50-yard dash in the Peachtree Junior. The next day, the spirited little guy was smack in the middle of a big group of family and friends in blue Maddox Strong shirts, shaking cowbells and holding up signs to cheer on Kelly, Maddox’s brother Jackson and the rest of the team as they powered down the final stretch of their run.
After the Peachtree, Kelly said, the team celebrated with a French toast breakfast, awards for each member and a trophy for the boy who gave them the will to run.

"I am a great believer in angels," said Kelly. "I speak here not of the angels in heaven but here on earth, individuals who bring forth the goodness of God through their goodness. Angels were at work here."

Marcus Powell (1:00:35)
For Marcus Powell, 42, Peachtree 2019 was all about honoring his mother, the late Carrie Lou Sutton Powell.

"I was thinking about my mother when the race first started and when I approached the 6-mile mark," the divinity school graduate and Delta aircraft loading agent said. "The race was awesome."

Powell, of Union City, had run the Peachtree in 2007 when his mother, a hard-working, church-going woman who raised 12 children, was gravely ill with cancer. Powell, her youngest, planned to go visit with her right after the race. In the last 50 meters, his power was fading. Then a burst of strength came over him. He believed it was the spirit of his mother, helping him to finish strong. Afterward, he learned that his mother had died.

This year, Powell said: "I ran my personal best, and I did not walk at all."

Later in the day, he joined family members, who gathered as they do each year in a celebration of their matriarch's life with a prayer vigil and a cookout.

Armistead (49:20), Hannah (1:03:06) and Sarah (45:55) Burwell
Armistead and Hannah Burwell’s standing AJC Peachtree Road Race date was a family affair this year, and happily so: Their daughter ran 45:55, good for 191st place among all females.

“Our daughter Sarah was the speedster,” said her father.

The 16-year-old, who placed third this spring in the Georgia state 7A high school championships at 3200 meters, also scored a coveted Top 500 finishers glass.

During the race, son John, 13, and Hannah’s parents were stationed near the midway point to cheer them. Right after the race, father, mother and daughter met in Piedmont Park and walked back along the course together.

Armistead, 48, a steel fabrication facility manager, and Hannah, 47, a high school English department head, ran their first Peachtree together back in 1998 when they were dating. Six days after the 50th Peachtree, the East Cobb couple celebrated their 20th wedding anniversary.

As usual, family and friends gathered after the race to celebrate. This year it was a party of 12 for a lively July 4 breakfast at a restaurant on the race course.

Rowan Stephens (1:35:33)
The 50th Peachtree celebrated the history of the iconic race, but it also had an eye on the future. And do you know what makes young runners – to use their lingo – hyped? Super soakers.

As spectators sprayed the onslaught of runners, Rowan Stephens, running alongside her teacher and coach, Randal Smith, had her day made. The 14-year-old jumped in a soaker stream at Mile 3, and continued a day that has the aspiring marathoner already excited about coming back for next year.

“It was like she was running a party the whole time,” said Smith. Stephens was one of more-than 4,500 runners under 18 in the race. As she finished – continuing the aqua theme – she met her parents at the post-race water station, where both volunteered as a way to make the 50th Peachtree a family celebration.

Doug Hinton (1:04:46)
Doug Hinton kept all three of his streaks alive at the 2019 AJC Peachtree Road Race.

Hinton, 52, a native of Conyers, Georgia, who now lives in Ocala, Florida, completed his 26th Peachtree in a row. He also finished 12 minutes ahead of his son Reed, 22, who is still looking for his first win over dad. The third streak was one he was actually hoping to end, but Hinton still didn’t crack the one-hour mark – though he came close.

“I’ve got to come up with another way to train,” he said. “The heat and humidity were not as bad as in Florida. But the hills got me.”

Hinton’s mild disappointment was outweighed, he said, by the thrill of being on the starting line for the 50th Running. He was in Wave E, near some of the Original 110. “I enjoyed listening to them,” he said. “Many of them knew each other. I thought it was cool that people came back for this.”

Hinton, who served overseas in the Marine Corps Reserves, said the jet flyover at the start of the race always gets him fired up.

“I was in Desert Storm, and the week before the ground war Continues on Page 19
Atlanta Track Club would like to thank all the people and organizations that made the 2019 AJC Peachtree Road Race possible.

Jack Abbott, course
Elliot Fried, communications
Michael Gaertner, communications
Kyle Clay, start
John Curtin, elites
Dan Dachelet, finish line
Sonia Edwards, AJC

Tim Ewing, police
Thomas Goodhew, WXIA
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Dr. Lekshmi Kumar, medical
Dr. Matt Marchal, medical
Sam Shartar, medical
Becky Washburn, wheelchair division
David Ziskind, communications

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.
we were six miles from the Kuwaiti border,” he recalled. “We started hearing a rumbling in the distance, and in a minute we saw three B-52s over the horizon. We thought, ‘These are our guys up there.’ I always think back to that day when I see a flyover.”

Ray Bobo (1:43:39)
Ray Bobo had to feel like a time traveler. Think about it: The last time he entered the Peachtree, it was 1994. A lot has changed: the size of the city, the size of the race, new construction in Buckhead and Midtown that has transformed the route.

“The start was not that different, but the finish is,” Bobo said of the course. “The finish line actually was in the park.”

Bobo got to the finish differently this time, too. In 1994, he ran. But achy knees have made a walker out of the 73-year-old. Awaiting him in The Meadow was his wife, Wanda, who helped pass out T-shirts to the finishers.

“She texted me at one point during the race and said, ‘We’re all out of mediums,’” said Bobo, who is a medium and became momentarily panicked. “But it turned out that was only for the line she was working.”

Bobo recruited Ross Ritter, the pastor of his church in Canton, Georgia, for this year’s race. Ritter, in his early 40s, ran a creditable 57:08 in his first Peachtree.

In 1994, when Bobo was pastoring a church in Mississippi, he made the trip with a parishioner, Bryan Jones, and logistics were a snap by comparison. The men drove over the day before and bunked in a mobile home.

“Atlanta has changed a lot,” Bobo said. “I saw a lot of new stuff I had never seen before.”

Jeff Vance (1:38:42)
When Jeff Vance crossed the finish line, he threw his hands in the air in mock jubilation, thinking it would be amusing if one of the event photographers got a shot making it look like he had won.

In reality, the soon-to-be-50-year-old Cumming resident finished 43,719th, in a time of 1:36:42.

But it was still a huge personal victory: Vance – who has end-stage renal disease and is awaiting a kidney transplant, and who had almost no running experience – achieved his goal of finishing his first Peachtree alongside his younger sister, Sarah Vance Knetchel, and his father, Phil.

“I can’t say it was fun necessarily,” he joked. “But it was a fun, unique experience.” And he added that this wasn’t a one-and-done thing.

“Actually, I was just at Dick’s buying more shorts and a new shirt to run in. But I want a better number at Peachtree next time. There’s a race in Savannah that my sister’s looking at to see if it’s a qualifier. If so, we’re gonna do it. It’s not till December ... so I’ve got plenty of time to get faster.”

Rachel Gervin (1:20:50)
Going into this year’s race, Rachel Gervin had three previous finishes under her belt. In all three, her best friend, Fontina Rashid, was at her side.

This year, though, she traversed the 6.2 miles alone, having dedicated the race to her late mother, Laron Buckner, and her late older brother, Robert Buckner – both of whom died less than a year shy of their 51st birthdays.

Gervin, who’ll turn 50 herself in December, said she spent the race thinking about them, but also about her own health. In fact, she was lucky to make it to the start all this year: During training, she had to battle through several weeks of severe neck and back pain.

“There was actually a sign that I saw a woman holding, at about the 4-mile mark. It said, ‘You’re doing better than I am!’ And I thought, ‘You know what? I am! I got up at 5 o’clock in the morning, got on the train and came out here.’

“I felt so proud that I kept at it. I wore my Peachtree finisher shirt all day – and told everybody who would listen that I did it.”

Carol Rickaby
Unfortunately, Carol Rickaby’s small-scale plans to celebrate her 50th birthday in the middle of the AJC Peachtree Road Race’s gigantic 50th birthday party didn’t go exactly as planned.

Several of the family members and friends she’d invited weren’t lucky enough to score entries. The ones who did were scattered across different waves, so most had to splinter off into pairs and meet up at the finish. Along the way, a high school friend wound up in the medical tent.

Then there were the “Happy Birthday, Carol! / 50 on 50” T-shirts her mother’s friend made for everyone. They were a fun party favor, but were made of thick cotton and wouldn’t be runner-friendly on a hot day.

But in the end, the Peachtree Corners resident (right in photo) laughed off all the hiccups and enjoyed the race with her older sister, Susan Richardson. And in the beginning, Susan found a simple way to make it special:

“As we were inching out towards the starting line, she suddenly got a huge group of people to sing ‘Happy Birthday’ to me,” Rickaby said, laughing. “Yeah, she likes to embarrass me when she can. It was all good.”
In an age of texting, the South Fulton Running Partners prefer talking. They are exclusive yet inclusive, highly organized but casual, focused and fun. Despite their name, they are not limited to the city of South Fulton, but claim membership from across metro Atlanta.

They think of themselves as more community than club, even though they are believed to be the oldest African-American running club in the country, celebrating their 40th anniversary on August 10. Their 55 active members include painters, truck drivers, doctors, lawyers, pastors and accountants, ranging in age from 36 to 78. Not every member is African-American. All of this diversity converges on a typically hot and humid midsummer Saturday morning at Jah Grille Barbecue & Seafood in South Fulton, where the parking lot serves as a staging area for the “Peachtree Kick-Back Run,” because each of the club's runs must have a name and this week's, offering routes of 3.9 and 6.2 miles, comes only two days after the big AJC Peachtree Road Race. Peachtree finisher's T-shirts are ubiquitous, worn as badges of honor.

When the group run is done, more than two dozen members and half a dozen guests enjoy a Jah Grille feast of fish, eggs, grits and fruit. But make no mistake: The primary source of fortification for South Fulton Running Partners comes from the connections formed and renewed around running. That aspect has not changed around the organization's four decades. Authentic friendship is evident in the day's warm smiles, breezy banter and raucous laughter.

“The glue is my love of the people in the group,” said Dr. Ralph Lyons, 63, a gastroenterologist who has been a member for 21 years. “It’s the fellowship, the camaraderie. People here take you to where you didn’t think you could go, as an athlete and as a person.

“This group supports each other through thick and thin, through lost spouses and physical misfortunes and other calamities. There's a light at the end of the tunnel, and there is love and running on the other side.”

You can’t join South Fulton Running Partners (SFRP) just by filling out a membership application and plunking down a fee. Those interested undergo a 16-week screening — let’s call it an acquaintanceship — during which their commitment is assessed. At the end of this period, they also must be able to complete a 6.2-mile run. Then their application is put to a vote.

“It’s so the partners can get to know you and see that it's a good fit,” said Nicole Rogers, the group’s current general coordinator (SFRP disdains the title of "president"). She is also the youngest member.

Each SFRP member is required to organize and host at least one of the weekly runs during the year, and a schedule goes out in January so that plans can be made. Each Thursday, details about the location of the Saturday run are spread via email, phone and social media.

There also are eight to 10 club-sponsored runs during the year, which can be as near as the Peachtree or as far away as Jacksonville, New Orleans or Chicago.

That's not all. During its history, the group has been involved in raising funds for a number of organizations, including the Sickle Cell Foundation of Georgia, Carrie Steele Pitts Home and Southwest Atlanta YMCA. Early on, when SFRP put on a road race for sickle cell and experienced an overrun in costs, members reached into their own pockets to ensure a worthy donation to the cause.

At least two other African-American running clubs in Atlanta have sprung from SFRP, and so has a running summit that spawned The Race, a second-year half marathon and 5K that...
supports black-owned businesses and charities. For the past two years, SFRP and Atlanta Track Club have partnered on the Southside 12K, a race held at Wolf Creek Amphitheater in College Park. This year’s was held in January, and served as the second stop of the 2019 Grand Prix Series presented by Piedmont Healthcare.

It would be nice to think that Jim Lemon had all of this in mind back in 1979, but Lemon was simply looking for an outlet to relieve stress from his federal job. So was the late Jerry McClain, and the two men began running together on the track at Arlington Christian School in southwest Atlanta.

“That got a little monotonous, so we started jogging on the street,” said Lemon, now 74. “We did the WSB 5K first, and we were the only two African-Americans in it. Then we did the Peachtree the same year. We sat down and said it would be nice to have a running club. We tried to figure out what to call ourselves.”

A graphic designer friend, Cedric Mohr, came up with the name. But Lemon and McClain already had the vision. South Fulton Running Partners would be exclusive, starting with four members and then adding six more. A charter and bylaws were written, official colors (teal and white) were selected and a motto (“Running Partners Have More Fun”) was adopted.

“We decided to run every Saturday morning,” Lemon said. “We haven’t missed one in 40 years.”

The group consisted only of men until 1981, when a persistent Sharon Riley became the first woman member.

“After about a year of running with us, she asked if she could join, and that shocked everybody,” Lemon recalled. “This was a male-bonding culture. We had a heated discussion of maybe two hours at someone’s house, and we finally voted her in.”

The times were changing, however, and the SFRP men evolved quickly enough to throw a baby shower for the second female member, Nawassa Staples. About one-third of current active members are women.

Rosita Smith, 65 and still active in SFRP, became the fifth woman to join in 1988, and said she never felt unwelcome. Julia Emmons, the former longtime executive director of Atlanta Track Club, ran on a few occasions with the group.

“She knew us very well,” Smith said of Emmons.

Once you’re in SFRP, you’re all the way in, embraced as part of the family. Bob Holmes, 76, has been a member since 1982, when he was encouraged by Lemon to join.

Holmes, who helped establish the doctoral program in political science at Clark Atlanta University and served for 34 years in the Georgia Legislature, wasn’t sure he had the time. He quickly made the time.

“Jim and I met when we were putting our kids in preschool, and he talked me into it,” said Holmes, one of several triathletes in SFRP. “We’ve known each other for 48 years now.”

Holmes said he appreciates the way the group doesn’t dwell on what a member does for a living or what he or she has accomplished. Many members know him only as Bob, he said, and he likes that.

“With us, you go to each other’s weddings and graduations — it’s an extended family,” Holmes said.

Lyons, the gastroenterologist, said the group’s emphasis is right where it should be: on getting the most out of life, regardless of station or circumstances, and encouraging others to do the same.

“The bonds are way more important to us,” Lyons said. “We love each other and we run together. But we’re about more than just running.”
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NEW THIS YEAR AT WINGFOOT XC: NIGHT RACING

By Marcus Budline

Heading into its fifth year on September 20 and 21, the Wingfoot XC Classic – Atlanta Track Club’s signature cross country event – has taken on a new look. Far from a standard, low-key Saturday morning meet, Wingfoot has expanded into a two-day affair, featuring championship racing under the lights and a morning start time for the community race.

Friday Night
The evening of racing gets started at 5:30 p.m. with the Youth Boys and Youth Girls divisions each racing a 3K, followed by the Frosh Championship division at 6:10 p.m. That’s when the first major update to the schedule appears: new college events, with women racing a 5K at 7:10 p.m. and an 8K for men at 7:25 p.m. Collegiate runners from across the region will toe the start line, including runners from Samford University, Clayton State University, Covenant College and Tusculum.

From there, the college teams will cede center stage under the lights to top high school runners from the state and region. At 8:05 p.m. and 8:35 p.m., respectively, the Junior Varsity Championship for boys and girls will take place, followed by the overall Championship division at 9:05 p.m. and 9:25 p.m.

In previous years, the Championship races have led to fast times, epic finishes – last year’s Championship Boys race was decided over the last 50 meters – and fascinating showdowns among some of the top runners in the region. For the first time, they’ll duke it out under the lights in a one-of-a-kind racing experience.

Saturday Morning
Saturday will feature a morning of racing this year, providing respite from the afternoon heat and a more convenient start time for the community race, which kicks off the day at 7:15 a.m. and gives competitors a rare opportunity to jump over hay bales and race through the rolling hills of Cartersville, GA.

Following that race, varsity runners will toe the starting line for A and B divisions for both boys and girls, followed by A and B divisions of junior varsity closing out the weekend of racing. The last race of the day is scheduled to kick off at 11:15 a.m.

Club Donates Pole Vault Pit and Sand to Atlanta Public Schools
On July 2 and 3, Olympians Keturah Orji and Sandi Morris triple jumped and pole vaulted, respectively, on a custom-built runway as part of a special competition at the Peachtree Health & Fitness Expo. Now, Atlanta Public Schools athletes will be landing on that same pit and in the same sand.

Following the conclusion of those two events, Atlanta Track Club donated both to Atlanta Public Schools. The pole vault pit and half of the sand was donated to Maynard H. Jackson High School, while the remainder of the sand was donated to Lakewood Stadium, which hosts all Atlanta Public Schools track and field meets throughout the year.

“We were thrilled to see so many high school students come to watch the Expo competitions, and get a chance to learn from some of the best athletes in the world,” said Rich Kenah, executive director of Atlanta Track Club. “It makes us even happier to be providing this much-needed field equipment to Atlanta Public Schools. We’re excited to watch the future of Running City USA train and compete on it.”
2019
The Year Of
COFFEE
David Bloomquist has represented Atlanta Track Club all over the world. Bloomquist, 61, received his Six Star medal in London in April, marking his completion of all six Abbott World Marathon Majors races. He ran four of the six for charitable causes, and estimates that he’s raised more than $25,000 through marathon and triathlon fundraising. Now, the Woodstock, Georgia, resident is focusing on running a marathon or half marathon in every state. By the time you read this, No. 41 should be in the books.

**How did you get into running?**
This past Peachtree was the 10-year anniversary of running my first Peachtree, which I did with my daughter on a dare. At the time, my health wasn’t very good. I was overweight, pre-diabetic, high blood pressure, you name it. But she dared me to do it, and that first year I ran a mile, walked the rest, and she left me behind. I was determined I wasn’t going to let her do that to me again, so that’s when I called up Atlanta Track Club. We participated in In-Training for Peachtree and that second year I actually beat her by two seconds.

**When did running become something you could use to give back to causes you felt strongly about?**
My daughter talked me into registering for the Augusta Half Ironman, and the two of us did it with Team In Training. Then, I did another triathlon with Team In Training. Having done those two events, I was beginning to get comfortable with fundraising for these charities.

Fast forward another year and there was an auction to run Boston, representing the Club for Kilometer Kids. Bidding goes to $4,000 to $5,000 to $6,000 to $7,000 to $8,000 and finally $9,000, and I won! There are pictures of me immediately thereafter with this look of disbelief on my face like “what have I gotten myself into?”

**When did the idea to do all six Abbott World Marathon Majors enter your mind?**
I had run Chicago in 2015, and I got into the lottery. Once I had the opportunity to run Boston, then the idea of running all six majors became a semi-realistic goal.

**Which one was your favorite?**
Boston will always be my favorite because of the heritage and the culture and the support, the fans along the road, and the hills.

**Which one is the hardest?**
Boston is probably the hardest when you get to the Newton hills. By the time I hit those hills, I’m thinking, “I’m from Atlanta. We eat hills for breakfast,” and powered through.

**Describe what it was like to get your Six Star medal.**
When you finish that race, initially you get your race medal, but immediately beyond that Abbott has a booth. There’s a receiving line. You feel like you’re royalty. Everybody’s shaking your hand and congratulating you; they put the medal around your neck, and they take the pictures. I was very emotional.

**What advice would you give to someone doing all six Abbott World Marathon Majors?**
These races are so hard to get into. You can qualify if you have elite times but for most of us, the lottery isn’t going to work. So, you might as well plan around doing it in conjunction with a charity. Finding one that’s meaningful to you is important. Also, the amount of the minimum commitment varies from race to race and charity to charity, so you’ve got to know what you’re getting yourself into.

*Interview lightly edited for space and clarity.*
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“I’m just studying,” said Nicky Akande when she answered the phone. “It’s pretty much all I do.”

That’s because Akande, a four-time Georgia high school state champion and the state’s 2009 Gatorade Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year out of Collins Hill High School, has been busy studying for the bar after her graduation from the Villanova University School of Law.

As a three-time All-American at Villanova, Akande’s career included three straight Distance Medley Relay titles (2012-2014) and a collegiate record in the 4x800 at the Penn Relays, contributing to a total of six Championship of America titles at the prestigious event.

With her for every one of those Penn Relay titles was teammate and roommate Emily Lipari, an NCAA champion and 11-time All-American who has gone on to run professionally.

“It can be super-competitive to be on a team but be running against each other,” said Lipari, the 2018 USATF 1 Mile Road Champion. “We’ve usually been on the relays together so that was great, but because our friendship was so good I don’t think we would have worried about it the other way, either.”

The two have remained best friends, with Akande calling herself “one of Emily’s biggest fans, of course” and preparing to be a bridesmaid in Lipari’s wedding this fall.

From her sophomore year of college, Akande knew that she wanted to attend law school, but first the dual citizen had her eye on making the 2016 Olympic team for Nigeria. So after graduating from Villanova, she signed with adidas Rogue AC and relocated to Austin, Texas. But in March 2016, Akande was diagnosed with stress reactions, torn cartilage and a dislocated kneecap.

“My whole right leg was pretty messed up,” she said. It was a tough decision to end her Olympic quest for immediate surgery, she said, but “I didn’t want a knee replacement at age 30.”

Lipari described her friend’s surgery as “horrible. She was so passionate about running.”

So it was back to Philadelphia and on to law school, from which she graduated in May. (She also recently became engaged, calling this spring “a pretty big couple of months.”) She’s in the gym most every day, and has been running for fun. And with time out before starting her job with a big Philadelphia law firm, she plans to ramp up her training after taking the bar exam and maybe do a local road race this fall.

Running, she said, was great discipline for law school.

“Racing gave me the ability to transform and adapt to many situations,” she said. “In a race, you go in with a plan, but you have to adapt quickly and the same goes for school, and life in general.”

With law school behind her, would she consider a competitive comeback?

“I really miss it,” she said. “I wouldn’t say never, but right now my focus is just on passing the bar exam.”

Said Lipari: “She’s got so much going for her now, and she’s found an exciting path. But she’s done a lot of swimming and biking [because of the knee injury], so I could see her doing a triathlon. I don’t know if SHE knows that yet, but that’s my prediction.”
Sandwich
Simple and satisfying, a sandwich can easily be a template for a balanced meal. Here are some tips to optimize the nutritional benefits, whether you prepare it yourself or order it out:

- Choose whole grain bread, wrap or pita for extra fiber and nutrients
- Fill with lean protein, such as turkey breast, grilled chicken or tuna
- Pile on the veggies – lettuce, spinach, tomato, peppers, onions, sprouts, cucumbers – the more the better!
- Choose mustard over mayo for less saturated fat
- Include a small amount of cheese, avocado, hummus or oil-based dressing for healthy fats, boosting flavor and increasing satiety
- Try apple slices, berries or grapes on the side instead of chips

Salad
Salad is often a go-to meal when you’re trying to eat more healthfully, but watch how you build it. If your salad is loaded with toppings and heavy on dressing, it can provide more calories, saturated fat and sugar than you need. On the other hand, a skimpy salad that’s just lettuce and tomatoes is not only boring, but lacks key nutrients and will leave you hungry a few hours later.

Fiber-rich carb:
- Whole grain crackers, bean chips or air-popped popcorn
- Whole grain cereal or a grain-based granola bar
- Fresh or dried fruit
- Pita bread or mini pitas

Protein:
- Hard-boiled eggs
- Slices of deli turkey, ham, lean roast beef
- Canned tuna
- Greek yogurt or cottage cheese
- String cheese or sliced cheese
- Roasted chickpeas or edamame

Healthy fat:
- Avocado
- Peanut butter or your favorite nut butter
- Nuts and seeds, such as cashews, almonds, walnuts or pumpkin seeds
- Olive oil (use as a salad dressing, or to cook veggies)
- Guacamole
- Hummus

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

Whether or not you have kids at home, the back-to-school season tends to be a busy time of year. It also offers the opportunity for a fresh start, and if you’re looking to refocus on healthy eating this fall, improving your lunch habits is a great place to start. Convenience is key in the middle of a busy workday, which is why many of us end up hitting fast food, grabbing leftovers or even skipping this crucial meal – and then snacking on less-nutritious fare later in the afternoon. Here, I share three healthy, easy lunch options, reducing stress and allowing you to reap the benefits of a nourishing midday meal.
You plan your long runs and short runs, hill repeats, what shoes you wear and what you eat. Just as important in your training plan is how much sleep you get.

How much sleep is enough?
Insufficient sleep is defined as getting six hours or less of shut-eye a night. According to the National Sleep Foundation, most adults need 7-9 hours of sleep each night, with the most common sleep time being reported as 7.5 hours.

What are the physical effects of insufficient sleep?
Your sleep affects everything, so it should be no surprise that a lack of sleep can negatively affect both your running performance and recovery.

Sleep deprivation increases production of stress hormones and leads to more difficulty storing carbohydrates and greater difficulty regulating glucose. These changes increase your risk of cardiovascular mortality, high blood pressure and diabetes. They also can lead to reduced endurance or hitting the wall earlier.

Insufficient sleep can result in slower reaction times and more injuries. A recent study looked at next-day performance of NBA basketball players after late-night Tweeting. When they were on social media as compared to when they got a good night’s sleep, their performance was significantly worse than their baseline performance. Specifically, they had fewer rebounds, fewer points scored and a lower percentage of shots made.

In fact, multiple studies have shown that athletes have a higher perceived exertion when they are sleep deprived as compared to when rested. Even one night of sleep loss has been shown to reduce time-to-exhaustion in runners.

A good sound sleep can help your body’s physical restoration and healing. Deep sleep (also called delta sleep or slow wave sleep) is where 90 percent of growth hormone (GH) is secreted. GH can impact your body’s ability to heal. When you’re sleep deprived it means that you aren’t spending enough time in deep sleep, which limits the amount of GH produced.

This is particularly important when training for distance races. Bottom line: Insufficient sleep equals slower performance.

So what can you do to ensure a good night’s sleep?
Demanding training and race schedules make high-quality sleep a must. Here are a few tips:

- Keep a consistent sleep schedule (including bedtimes and awakening times) that allow for sufficient shut-eye.
- Support good-quality sleep by creating a relaxing routine before bed to help you manage stress and decompress.
- Avoid social media or television before bedtime. Studies have shown that light, particularly the wavelength of blue light, has the most-significant effect on influencing our circadian rhythm. Your tablet, television and cell phone all contain blue light and have the potential to disturb your sleep.
- When possible, try to get your workouts in during morning or early afternoon hours. Avoid heavy meals and exercise 1-2 hours before bed.

If you consistently struggle with sleep and performance despite making healthy changes, talk to your doctor, who may refer you to a sleep specialist in order to rule out a more serious condition.

Dr. Scott Leibowitz is the medical director of sleep medicine at Northside Hospital and Laureate Medical Group. For more information visit northside.com/sleep.

Looking for Answers?
If you have a question for the doctors at Northside Hospital, email stories@atlantatrackclub.org. We could answer your question in an upcoming issue of Wingfoot.
A SALUTE TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

It takes more than 3,500 volunteers to put on the AJC Peachtree Road Race. As we celebrate the completion of the 50th Running, we want to thank everyone who dedicated their time, sweat and energy toward making it one of the greatest events in Atlanta history. From helping Club staff prepare in the office to handing out race numbers at the Health & Fitness Expo to passing out water on race day, volunteers are what make the Peachtree possible.

As we say goodbye to the 50th, we are also saying goodbye to some longtime volunteer Crew Chiefs. Crew Chiefs lead entire teams of volunteers and often put in countless hours in the weeks and months leading up to the event. Volunteer leaders were celebrated in July at the 2019 Crew Chief Party, with special recognition to those who are retiring. We are forever grateful to them.

Our retirees and their years of service:

Patricia Stoeckig: 35+ years
Richard Stoeckig: 35+ years
Jack Abbott: 30+ years (in photo)
Sandra Abbott: 15 years
Kyle Clay: 20+ years
Jill Clay: 15+ years
Holt Persinger: 8 years
Jennie Persinger: 8 years
Nominations Open for Board of Directors

By Mary Ford
Chair of the Nominating Committee

Will you help guide the future of Running City USA? Atlanta Track Club is accepting nominations for its Board of Directors, the governing body for the Club, a 501(c)(3) not for profit. The Board is responsible for driving our strategic direction aligned to the mission and vision of a healthier Atlanta through running and walking.

Nominees must have been members of Atlanta Track Club for at least one year immediately preceding the date on which they are elected to the Board. Prior non-profit board experience is a plus, but not a requirement. The slate of candidates put up to Atlanta Track Club members for a vote should reflect the diversity of the organization as well as the broader Atlanta, national and global running community.

“As a member of the Board of the second-largest running organization in the U.S., I am able to participate with my colleagues and the staff in setting strategy that not only affects the direction of the organization but positively impacts the health of the greater Atlanta population, and through example reverberates throughout the running/walking community around the globe,” said Shawn Hardister, Board Chair. “All of us are runners as well as business leaders, and it is wonderful to serve in your area of passion.”

Board members serve three-year terms and must attend monthly meetings as well as meetings of any committee on which they serve.

Those interested must submit a resume or CV and a letter of intent describing why he or she should be a member of the board and how they would contribute to Atlanta Track Club. Nominations are due by 5 p.m. on Friday, September 6, and can be emailed to boardnominations@atlantatrackclub.org

Club Remembers Jerome Scales

Atlanta Track Club will rename its January event in South Fulton County after Jerome Scales, a former member of its Board of Directors who passed away in June after a long battle with cancer. He was 48.

A date will be announced soon for the Jerome Scales Southside 12K, which honors the dedicated member of Atlanta Track Club who served on the Board from 2013 to 2018 and served as a Run Lead in the Club’s In-Training programs. An employee of Delta Airlines, Scales was also a member of the Delta Dusters Running Club. Besides being a runner, he was a husband and a father to three young women.

Scales was passionate about bringing Atlanta Track Club’s vision of a healthier and more active Atlanta to Atlanta’s historically black neighborhoods. He worked and ran with running groups and clubs throughout metro Atlanta.

After Peachtree, an Olympic Trials Course Tour

Several of the top Americans at the AJC Peachtree Road Race were up early on July 5 to plan for their next race in Atlanta: The U.S. Olympic Team Trials – Marathon.

Lindsay Flanagan, Samantha Palmer, Emily Sisson and Kellyn Taylor joined Atlanta Track Club staff members for a tour of the final 8.2 miles of the course they’ll run on February 29, 2020. The course consists of three 6-mile loops and the final 8.2 miles, which includes nearly the entire 6-mile loop.

Taylor, who placed sixth at the 2016 Trials and has a personal best of 2:24:28, told LetsRun, “It’s not as bad as people said, that’s my first impression. But you definitely need to respect it since there are some hills, especially later in the race.” LetsRun, a running website, had a staff member on the tour.

Since the course was unveiled in early 2019, a number of other contenders have also made the trip to Atlanta to see it for themselves, most notably at the Road to Gold: An Atlanta 2020 Test Event that was held in March. In addition, two-time Olympian Des Linden previewed the course on July 2, and in May Sara Hall, a 2:26:20 marathoner, toured it with her husband and coach Ryan, the 2008 Trials champion, following on a scooter.
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The AJC Peachtree Road Race was more than a month ago, so by now you’re recovered and probably – hopefully! – ready for the next goal. Or perhaps you were a spectator, inspired by the excitement and energy of the day to tackle a race yourself. Either way, congratulations! And mark your calendars, because our In-Training program for the Invesco QQQ Thanksgiving Day Half Marathon starts on August 24.

If you ran the Peachtree and took a little time off, I would start back into training slowly. The goal the first week would be to do three or four days of 3-5 miles. (If you didn’t do the Peachtree, start with just the Monday, Wednesday and Saturday workouts in the chart for the first few weeks.) Below is a sample training plan to prepare for In-Training for Thanksgiving Day Half Marathon. Starting now gives you time to slowly build up mileage and confidence to conquer the half marathon distance.

Registration for In-Training for Thanksgiving Day Half Marathon closes August 31. I hope to see you out there.

### How to Get in Training for Your Next Goal

By Amy Begley

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<td>4 miles easy</td>
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<td>Aug.12–18</td>
<td>4 miles easy</td>
<td>30 XT or OFF</td>
<td>1 mile WU, 8-10 X 400m run/ 200m walk or jog, 1 mile CD</td>
<td>4 miles easy</td>
<td>30 min. XT or OFF</td>
<td>4 miles easy</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Everything works better when it all works together

Connect all your employee health benefits with Anthem’s Whole Health Connection®

Talk to your broker or visit anthem.com/specialty to learn how Anthem’s Whole Health Connection can connect your health, dental, vision, life and disability benefits.

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