

This year will mark the 15<sup>th</sup> running of the New Balance Moonlight Run 5K. This great event has been ranked in New England Runner Magazine as one of New England's top 80 races. It is hard to believe that for the second year in a row, Moonlight will have a field that will challenge course and state records. In last year's exciting race, we watched New Balance sponsored Tom Nyaraki obliterate the course record and in the process only missing the Connecticut state 5K record by 4 seconds. Tom's new course record of 13:36 eclipsed the old mark by 22 seconds. This year's group of elites is even stronger and more accomplished than last year's group which put 4 athletes under 14 minutes.

Headlining this year's American talent is Nate Jenkins from Lowell, Massachusetts. Nate is a very accomplished road racer who finished 7<sup>th</sup> at the 2007 U.S Men's Olympic Trials Marathon in New York City. Nate has also been awarded the prestigious road scholar award by Road Runners Club of America for all of his achievements through running. Nate will be joined by fellow American, Ramon LaBoy, of Danbury, CT. Ramon is an Iona graduate that is currently sponsored by the Boston Athletic Association. Ramon is currently pursuing the US Olympic trials standard in the 3000M steeple chase. Nate and Ramon will be closely followed by a very talented group of local elites and masters runners. Our local elite and masters runners include: John Ciccarelli, Marc Robaczynski (Mohegan Striders), Ry Sanderson (CCSU), Kevin Curley (Fast Track Elite Club), Andy Watson (Bentley College), Dan Barry (Umass), David Bedoya (Greater Boston Track Club), Ryan Cheng (Brandeis), Geoff Nelson (New Balance-CT Club), Chris Chishom (New Balance-CT Club), John LaRosa (Running Heritage Track Club), Gidyeon Mutisya, Paul Mwangi and Joe Lemay (Greater Lowell Track Club). All of these individuals have run 15:30 or better to in a 5K within the last year.

The Moonlight run also has a rich tradition of international athletic prowess. This year will not disappoint as there are 16 individuals that have run faster than 14:30 for 5K. Of these 14 athletes, 10 have ran under 14 minutes. These athletes represent 4 countries: Kenya, Ethiopia, Brazil, and Argentina. This field is headed by Luke Kikosgei of Kenya who has run 12:55 and John Korir who won Bay to Breakers. The size and depth of the Moonlight field can rival almost any major road race around the world. This year will truly be an epic battle between some of the most elite runners in the world.

One of the most exciting aspects of this year's race is the addition of a tremendously talented women's field. The race will feature a star-studded cast of runners that could challenge for both course and state 5k records. This year we have two great American talents from the Raleigh Track Club, Lucinda Hull and Claudin Magnum. Lucinda and Claudin are twin sisters that have elevated themselves to elite status in the running community by running 16:17 and 16:30 respectively for 5K. These two young prodigies' will have to contend with the superstar power of Millicent Gathoni of New Balance who recently won the prestigious Boulder to Boulder 10K in Colorado. Millicent has run well under 16:00 minutes and looks forward to challenging the current course record of 15:51 held by Breeda Denehy-Willis back in 1998. In addition we will also have Claudia Camargo, the Argentinean national record holder in the half marathon, who has finished 13<sup>th</sup> at the ING New York City Marathon in 2006. There will be no shortage of talent present at this year's race.

The race is June 6th, 2008 at 8:00PM EST. The total purse is \$4,950. The breakdown of the prize money is \$1000 for 1st, \$500 for 2nd, \$250 for 3rd, \$150 for 4th, and \$100 for 5th. There is also a \$1000 course record bonus available for both the men and women. The current course records are Tom Nyaraki 13:36 and Breeda Denehy-Willis 15:51.

-Written by Michael Hall, Elite Athlete Coordinator – New Balance Moonlight Run 5K