

# NEWS

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**For Immediate Release**

## **USA's Bernard Lagat and Jenny Simpson Look to Defend Their Titles at NYRR Fifth Avenue Mile Presented by Nissan**

*2012 U.S. Olympic silver medalist Leo Manzano and Olympic fourth-place finisher Matt Centrowitz highlight men's field*

*Women's field features two-time Fifth Avenue Mile champion and U.S. Olympian Shannon Rowbury and World Championships 1500-meter silver medalist Hannah England of Great Britain*

*The 32nd edition of the race features more than 15 Olympians from around the globe*

**New York, September 13, 2012**—International medalists Bernard Lagat and Jenny Simpson hope to cap their summer seasons on a high note when they line up to defend their crowns at the NYRR Fifth Avenue Mile Presented by Nissan on Saturday, September 22. They will be just two of more than 15 Olympians who will contest the 32nd edition of America's most famous road mile, it was announced today by New York Road Runners president and CEO Mary Wittenberg.

Lagat will face tough competition from U.S. Olympic teammate and silver medalist Leo Manzano, 28, of Marble Falls, TX, who became the first American male to earn an Olympic medal at 1500 meters since 1968. Prior to London, Manzano won the 1500 meters at the U.S. Olympic Trials. He will be joined by teammate Matt Centrowitz, 23, of Portland, OR, who placed fourth in the London 1500 meters.

Lagat, 37, of Tucson, AZ, boasts an impressive history in this iconic road mile, having finished fourth in 2009, second in 2008 and 2010, and first in 2011.

"It was great to win the Fifth Avenue Mile last year," said Lagat. "I'd been trying for a few years. I finally won, and now it's fun coming back as a defending champion. I know there will be some guys in good form who will look to deny me that shot at winning it again, but I'm in good shape—certainly I intend to defend my title."

At the 2012 Olympic Games, Lagat just missed the bronze medal in a riveting 5000 meters. He is the American record-holder at 1500, 3000, and 5000 meters indoors and outdoors, an eight-time Wanamaker Mile winner at the Millrose Games, and a four-time medalist at the World Championships, including a double victory at 1500 and 5000 meters in 2007. He was also a two-time Olympic medalist at 1500 meters while running for his native Kenya, earning the silver in 2004 and the bronze in 2000. Lagat has had a successful 2012, becoming the second man ever to win three world indoor titles in the men's 3000 meters.

U.S. Olympian and 2011 1500-meter World Champion Jenny Simpson, 26, is set to defend her title after competing in the London Olympics just last month. Simpson qualified for the Games by finishing third in the U.S. Olympic Trials 1500 meters. She is a four-time USA indoor champion at that distance and holds the American record for the 3000-meter steeplechase.

"I can't wait for another opportunity to race in New York City," said Simpson. "It's a unique experience racing alongside such a great community of runners. Defending my Fifth Avenue title would be the best way to finish my 2012 season."

Hannah England, 25, of Great Britain is the 2011 World Championships silver medalist at 1500 meters. Shannon Rowbury, 26, of San Francisco, CA, is the 2009 World Championships 1500-meter bronze medalist and a two-time winner of the Fifth Avenue Mile.

"This is a crazy great Fifth Avenue Mile field," said Wittenberg. "Capping an Olympic year of highs and lows for many of the world's best milers, Fifth Ave provides the drama of the last curtain call. We are especially thrilled to welcome Olympians galore including our defending champions Bernard Lagat and Jenny Simpson, Olympic silver medalist Leo Manzano, and fourth-place finisher Matthew Centrowitz. We are also honored to have two-time Fifth Avenue Mile champion Shannon Rowbury back in the race again."

Other top men's and women's entrants in the field include:

- **Ryan Gregson**, 22, of Australia, who competed in the 2012 Olympic Games and is the 2012 Cork City Sports mile champion
- **Cam Levins**, 23, of Canada, who won the 10,000-meters at the NCAA Outdoor Championships and competed on Canada's Olympic team in London
- **Gabriele Anderson**, 26, of Minneapolis, MN, who took fourth in the 1500 meters at the 2012 Olympic Trials and third in the 2011 USA Road Mile Championships
- **Sarah Bowman**, 26, of Knoxville, TN, who placed sixth in the 1500 meters at the 2012 Olympic Trials

The Fifth Avenue Mile begins near East 80th Street and finishes at East 60th Street. The wheelchair and handcycle race will kick off the event at 8:45 a.m. After that, entrants will run in divisions according to age and gender. The professional women's race is scheduled to start at 12:45 p.m., followed by the professional men's race at 1:00 p.m. A total prize purse of \$30,000 for the men's and women's professional races will be offered, with the two winners finishers each receiving \$5,000.

**About NYRR**

New York Road Runners was founded in 1958 when a small group of passionate runners vowed to bring running to the people. Over the past 54 years, NYRR has grown from a local running club to the world's premier community running organization. NYRR's mission is to empower everyone, of all ages and abilities—beginners and competitive athletes, the young and the elderly, adult professionals and underserved schoolchildren—to improve their health and well-being through the power of running and fitness.

NYRR's races, community events, instruction and training resources, and youth programs give hundreds of thousands of people each year the motivation, know-how, and opportunity to start running and keep running for life. NYRR's premier event, the famed ING New York City Marathon, attracts the world's top pro runners and committed amateurs alike while also raising millions of dollars annually for charity and driving economic impact for the City. But NYRR is equally committed to the runners of tomorrow, passionately providing youth fitness programs that educate and inspire more than 100,000 kids in underserved communities in New York City, all 50 states, and around the world.

Headquartered in New York City, NYRR implements a unique nonprofit model that teams contributed and earned income to make all its efforts possible. To learn more, please visit [www.nyrr.org](http://www.nyrr.org).