

NEWS

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For Immediate Release

Powerhouse Quartet of U.S. Stars Meb Keflezighi, Dathan Ritzenhein, Kara Goucher, and Desiree Davila Will Run NYC Half

Four of America's leading long-distance runners will take on new 13.1-mile course on March 18

New York, February 16, 2012—In a notable gathering of four world-class American runners, Meb Keflezighi, Dathan Ritzenhein, Kara Goucher, and Desiree Davila will run the NYC Half on Sunday, March 18, it was announced today by New York Road Runners president and CEO Mary Wittenberg.

The announcements of Keflezighi, Goucher, and Davila give the race three members of this year's U.S. Olympic Marathon team. Ritzenhein, who will focus on making the Olympic team at 10,000 meters after his fourth-place finish at the marathon Trials, adds great strength to the field. Increasing the depth of the American roster are talented pros Scott Bauhs, Janet Cherobon-Bawcom, Molly Pritz, Julie Culley, Jeannette Faber, and Stephanie Pezzullo.

NYRR's flagship half-marathon, in its seventh edition, will feature a race-record field of 15,000 runners and a thrilling new course. Also new this year, WABC-TV will be airing the NYC Half live beginning at 7:00 a.m. as part of NYRR's recently announced comprehensive television agreement with ESPN/WABC-TV. The NYC Half will again offer the largest half-marathon prize purse in the United States: \$100,000. The men's and women's champions will each earn \$20,000. The race continues to attract prominent professional athletes and recreational runners from around the world.

"We are ecstatic to welcome four of America's brightest running stars to NYC," said Wittenberg. "New Yorkers and runners and fans everywhere will no doubt be awed as this spirited foursome races through the city streets on their 'Road to London.'"

After qualifying for the 2012 Olympic Games by winning the U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials earlier this year, Keflezighi, 36, of Mammoth Lakes, CA, will be on familiar ground in New York. In 2009, he became the first American since Alberto Salazar in 1982 to win the ING New York City Marathon. He has finished in the top 10 in the Marathon a total of seven times, most recently with a sixth-place finish in 2011. A silver medalist in the men's marathon at the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Keflezighi is a three-time USA cross country champion (2001, 2002, 2009) and has won more than 20 USA titles in his career.

“I am happy to announce that my first race after winning the U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials will be the NYC Half,” said Keflezighi. “NYRR events have been a big part of my professional career, so I am very excited to start my 2012 Olympic Games buildup at the NYC Half. I recovered well from the Olympic Trials and look forward to competing against the field.”

Ritzenhein, 29, of Portland, OR, recently ran a personal best time of 2:09:55 at the U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials, narrowly missing a spot on the Marathon team. A two-time U.S. Olympian, Ritzenhein finished second in the 2008 U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials and went on to finish ninth—and top American—at the Beijing Games. Ritzenhein took the bronze medal at the 2009 IAAF World Half-Marathon Championships, and his 60:00 finishing time there makes him the second-fastest American in history over the distance.

“Coming off the U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials, I need a big race to test my fitness but more importantly to turn my focus to making the Olympic 10,000-meter team, and the NYC Half is the perfect step in achieving that goal,” said Ritzenhein. “I’ve had great success at the half-marathon distance and it gives me a good bridge to slowly work my way back down to the speed it will take to have a great summer track season. I love racing in New York City and can’t wait to be back there in a few weeks to continue the journey to making the team for London.”

One of America’s premier women’s distance runners, Goucher, 33, of Portland, OR, qualified for the London Olympic Marathon by placing third at the U.S. Trials last month in a time of 2:26:06. A native of Queens, Goucher will return to New York as a fan favorite, having placed third at last year’s NYC Half. At the 2011 Boston Marathon, Goucher finished fifth in a personal-best time of 2:24:26. She made her mark on the ING New York City Marathon in 2008 when she ran the fastest-ever debut marathon by an American woman—2:25:53—and finished third. The time is also the fastest ever by an American woman at the race. At the 2008 U.S. Olympic Team Trials, Goucher achieved the rare feat of qualifying for Team USA in two events, winning the 5000 meters and placing second in the 10,000 meters.

“As always, I’m looking forward to returning to NYC to run the half-marathon,” said Goucher. “I feel a special connection with NYC, and it’s always a season highlight for me when I race there. This will be my first race after making the 2012 Olympic team. I couldn’t imagine a better place to start my run-up to the London Games.”

Davila, 28, of Rochester Hills, MI, became a member of the U.S. Olympic marathon team by finishing second in the U.S. Trials with a time of 2:25:55. Davila burst into the spotlight with her thrilling finish at the 2011 Boston Marathon, in which she battled for the win with eventual winner Caroline Kilel through the final miles and finished second by only a two-second margin. Davila’s time of 2:22:38 was the fastest time ever by an American woman at the Boston Marathon.

“After the high of the Olympic Trials, followed by a bit of recovery time, it was important for me to find a race that would get me excited to compete and motivated to train hard through the spring season,” said Davila. “The strong fields that NYRR traditionally puts together, along with the thrill of running through the streets of New York, made the NYC Half the perfect opportunity.”

Other top Americans in the field:

- Scott Bauhs, 25, of Danville, CA, is a three-time NCAA Division II champion, with titles in the 10,000 meters (2007), 5000 meters (2008), and cross country (2008). He finished

third at the 2011 USA Outdoor Championships in the 10,000 meters and competed at that distance at last summer's World Championships in Daegu, South Korea.

- Janet Cherobon-Bawcom, 33, of Rome, GA, recently finished fifth in the U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials in a time of 2:29:45. She won the 2011 Boston Half-Marathon and followed that victory with U.S. road championships at 20K, 10 miles, and 10K.
- Molly Pritz, 23, of Rochester Hills, MI, was the top American female finisher in the ING New York City Marathon 2011, finishing 12th in a time of 2:31:52 in her debut at the distance. Earlier in 2011, she won the USA 25K Championship in 1:25:38.
- Julie Culley, 30, of Lebanon, NJ, was the USA 5K champion in 2011 and the runner-up (to Cherobon-Bawcom) at last fall's USA 10-Mile Championship. The New Jersey native was second in the 2011 NYRR Dash to the Finish Line 5K on ING New York City Marathon weekend. The NYC Half will be her half-marathon debut.
- Jeannette Faber, 29, of Portland, OR, recently competed in the U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials, finishing in a personal-best time of 2:36:50. She finished third at the 2011 USA 25K Championships.
- Stephanie Pezzullo, 29, of Charlotte, NC, recently won the Naples Daily News Half-Marathon in a personal-best time of 1:13:12. She also won the Emerald Nuts Midnight Run in Central Park on New Year's Eve this past December.

The NYC Half will offer runners a spectacular tour of Manhattan as they race through Central Park, Times Square, the Hudson River waterfront, and lower Manhattan, en route to the scenic South Street Seaport finish line. At the Post-Race Festival Presented by Poland Spring, there will be refreshments, entertainment by Irish rockers Black 47 and the Shinbone Alley Stilt Band, treatments supplied by the Swedish Institute of Massage, and much more. The Festival is free and open to the public.

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 53 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.