

GoodLife Fitness Victoria Marathon
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MEDIA RELEASE

GoodLife Fitness Victoria Marathon Announces Strong Elite Field Over 11,000 Registered in all Events

(Victoria, BC – October 7, 2011) There will be exciting competition this year in the GoodLife Fitness Victoria Marathon. The Men's Marathon champion, Philip Samoei, is back to defend his title, as is Lisa Harvey in the Women's Half Marathon. The 8K features three-time XTERRA World Champion Melissa McQuaid and triathlete Kyle Jones. The 32nd Annual event, which takes place on Sunday, October 9, had 11,133 registrations when online registration closed at noon yesterday.

Philip Samoei will be hoping to better his 2010 time of 2:23:24. He recently ran the Manitoba Marathon and was second in the Montreal Half Marathon two weeks ago. Close on his heels will be the 2011 Oak Bay Half Marathon winner, Gilbert Kiptoo (1:06:49) who also placed second at the BMO Vancouver Marathon this year in 2:23:09. Third seed is three-time winner of the BMO Vancouver Marathon, Thomas Omwenga. He has a PB of 2:10:34 and is aiming to run 2:15, which would break the course record of 2:16:49, set by Steve Osaduik in 2006.

BC athletes running the Marathon include Ryan Day, who recently moved to Victoria from Vancouver. Ryan was second this year in the Canadian Derby Edmonton Marathon in 2:35:09 and has a personal best of 2:19:55 in the 2005 Ottawa Marathon. The Master's Marathon record could be under threat as Vancouver's Graeme Wilson, running as a Master this year, has a PB of 2:27:54 (Victoria in 2009). The record, set in 1988 by Tom Howard, is 2:27:36.

"The women's field will see some interesting competition with two Americans hoping to qualify for the U.S. Olympic Trials," says Jonathan Foweraker, Coordinator, Dairyland Elite Athlete Program. Trisha Steidl is aiming to break the 2:46 barrier – she has a PB of 2:48:17 from the Austin Marathon, and has run Seattle and Vancouver several times, finishing consistently in the top three. "Chelsea VanDeBrake is an exciting young runner and at 23 years old, Victoria will be her third marathon," says Foweraker. "She ran an impressive 2:49:52 at Grandma's Marathon this year. Vancouver Sun Run winner Lucy Njeri will be in strong contention – she has a PB of 2:34 from the 2008 Mazatlan Marathon, and she has won the Around the Bay 30km race for the past three years. And it's great to see Suzanne Evans back! The three-time Victoria winner came second last year in 2:53:53."

In the Half Marathon the top three seeds are all aiming at 1:06. James Lander, who now lives in Esquimalt, was second in the marathon last year and has a Half PB of 1:04:56. Ireland's Michael MacDiarmada has a PB of 1:09:09, set on a net uphill course in Waterford. He came third in the Victoria 8K in 2009 and has been a member of the Irish national team for the past five years competing in cross-country, track and road races. John Ricardi, from Indiana, has a PB of 1:09:04 set at 4,800 ft altitude at the Pocatello Marathon – a course record by seven minutes. Other top seeded runners include Josiah Price from Olympia, WA with a PB of 1:08:17; Jeremiah Johnston, an up-and-coming runner from Mission, BC, hoping to run 1:08; and local

Presented by



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Masters runner Craig Odermatt, who came second in the 2011 Island Race Series, and recently ran a 1:11.

The women's Half Marathon field features some great champions including two Olympians and the current record holder Marilyn Arsenault (1:15:39). Joining her is two-time Olympian Kathy Butler who has a PB of 1:11:05 (Philadelphia Distance Run, 2006). The Canadian/British citizen has several national records from both countries and has set herself a goal of 1:15 this weekend. Calgary's Lisa Harvey is the defending champion – she won last year in 1:18:34. The 1992 Olympian has a PB of 1:15 from the Edmonton Half Marathon in 2005. Britain's Mary Wilkinson recently won a bronze medal at the Commonwealth Mountain Running Championships and has a PB of 1:15:36. Rounding off the top seeds are Port Moody's Natasha Wodak, who leads the BC rankings this year in 1:17:16 and who placed second in the Victoria 8K last year, second in the TC10K, and third in the Vancouver Sun Run; and a Victoria favourite, Lucy Smith. The 19-time Canadian champion has a PB of 1:14.

The 8K Road Race will also feature some competitive runners. Jerry Ziak is a 2:17 marathon runner and was 4th overall at the Canadian 10k Championships. Vancouver Masters runner Kevin O'Connor has run a 25:41 8K and a 31:41 10K this year. Triathlete Kyle Jones has had a great year winning three ITU events and placing second in the Canadian Nationals. Calgary Masters runner and Olympian Paul McCloy will also be a threat if he continues his current form.

The women's field is led by Hilary Stellingwerff, a recent transplant from Switzerland. She was ranked ninth in the world for the mile in 2007. Becky Woods is a top young Irish athlete, placing second in the 5000m at the European Cup in Belgrade. Melissa Ross placed second in the 2011 Island Race Series, and competed on the winning Canadian team in the World Mountain Running Championships. Gillian Gook and Melanie McQuaid will also be strong contenders.

There is \$37,000 available in prize money and incentive bonus with \$3,000 each going to the top male and female, and a \$5,000 bonus for any Canadian that breaks the men's or women's course record.

Registration is still open for all events with late entries being accepted at the Race Expo, at the Victoria Conference Centre, from 3:00pm – 7:30pm on Friday, October 7, and 9:00am – 6:00pm on Saturday, October 8. There is no race day registration. To date the Marathon has 2,062 registrants; the Half Marathon has 5,930; the 8K Road Race has 2,527, and the Thrifty Foods Kids Run & Marathon is at 614. For more details, visit www.runvictoriamarathon.com.

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