



***RUNNING SHORTS**

RECORD FIELD -- The field for this year's race will likely top 4,000 runners — our largest to date! As of Thursday evening, 3,660 runners had registered. Our previous highest was 3,616 for the event's 25th anniversary in 2004. Organizers expect to pick up an additional 300-400 “last chance” signups Friday at the CapitalCare Health & Fitness Expo from noon-8 p.m.

ONE FOR THE BOOKS -- If she wins again in 2009, Benita Johnson will become only the second FRW champion to have earned four titles in a row. (*Lynn Jennings earned four titles between 1993-1996.*) Johnson will also become the second winningest runner behind Jennings' seven titles (5 in the 5 km race and two in 10 km edition, which ended in 1991.)

COUNTRIES REPRESENTED: 11 — USA, South Africa, Russia, Ukraine, Mexico, Romania, Burundi, Kenya, Ethiopia, Australia, and Canada

LADIES OF THE RINGS — There are 9 Olympians in the 5k race: Joan Samuelson (USA); Colleen DeReuck (USA); Elva Dryer (USA); Benita Johnson (Australia); Dulce Rodriguez (Mexico); Mariya Knovalova (Russia); Diane Nukuri (Burundi); Rene Kalmer (South Africa); and, Jane Gakunyi (Kenya).

REMATCH ON THE CARDS — Many of our elite runners fared well at last weekend's Boulder Boulder 10k race: 1st Mamito Daska; 2nd Teyba Erkesso; 4th Dulce Rodriguez; 5th Millicent Gathoni; 6th Ashu Kasim; 8th Jane Gakunyi; 10th Natalia Sokolova; 14th Tera Moody; 20th Marina Ivanova; and, 24th Adriana Pirtea.

BIB SWITCH — Elite bibs will not include numerals in 2009. Instead, all elite bibs will feature each athlete's first name, their country flag and country name. This switch, which follows the lead of most road races in the US, allows spectators to root for each runner by their first name.

ONE UPPING HERSELF — 1984 Olympic marathon champ Joan Samuelson is hoping to set a new 50-54 American Age Group record at the event, beating her old time of 17:24, which she set in Providence, RI, Sept. 21, 2008. Samuelson is running well right now and just broke the U.S. women's indoor 3,000-meter record for runners 50 and older. Running in her first competitive meet in six years, the 51-year-old clocked 10 minutes, 22.69 seconds at the USA Masters Indoor Track & Field Championships. She lowered the record of 10:23.84 set by Kathryn Martin.

A NEW TWIST — This year nine athletes visited 16 schools as part of the annual Athlete Visitation Program. These schools include newcomers McNulty Academy in Amsterdam and Mayfield School. And, for the first year since the event went international in 2005, two non-English speaking elites took part — Adriana Pirtea (Romania) and Diane Nukuri (Burundi).



MASTERS FIELD STRONG — The dash for the \$10,000 open field first place check won't be the only exciting race to watch tomorrow morning. The event's masters field includes top Canadian master and defending champ Paula Wiltse (Running Times 2008 Masters of the Year), Colleen DeReuck, who set the masters world record (15:48) here in 2004 (ranked 2nd 40-44), Carmen Troncoso (ranked 3rd 45-49), Joan Samuelson (ranked 1st 50-54), strong American Trina Painter, plus the Ukrainian Master Averkova, whose 5K PR is 15:38, and who finished 15th at the 2009 Boston Marathon. It should be an excellent race.

D-TAG TIMING SYSTEM UNVEILED — In 2009, all runners will wear the innovative D-Tag timing system to track their results. The system allows race organizers to print an integrated bib and tag for each participant, encoding the runner's bib number into the tag's radio frequency ID. The peel-off, disposable portion of the bib becomes a tag that runners attach to their shoes. Each tag contains a transponder that registers when a runner crosses a timing point such as the start or finish. With the D-Tag, FRW runners will no longer have to register a timing chip or have the chip removed at the finish line.

LOCAL ELITE MAKES FRW DEBUT — Toni Wiszowaty, from Plattsburgh, a six-time All American and 2008 Penn Relays 10k Champ, will make her FRW elite debut and could be one to watch.

SAVORY CREATIONS — To celebrate the cultural diversity of this year's elite field, Certified Master Chef Dale Miller will cook food from 5 nations — Russia, Australia, GB, Kenya and Mexico at the volunteer party (6-9 p.m. Saturday) at his new restaurant located at 30 S. Pearl Street.

CONGRATULATIONS — FRW organizers wish Tera Moody the best of luck later this summer when she represents the US in the marathon at the 12th IAAF World Championships in Berlin (Aug. 15-23).