

# Mekonnen, Romanchuk break Boilermaker Course Record

Jul. 10, 2022



## Wanjiru takes Women's Race, PRRO Super Bonus

**July 11, 2022 (Utica, NY)** Jemal Yimer Mekonnen of Ethiopia won the 45th running of the Boilermaker 15K Road Race presented by Excellus BlueCross Blue Shield, smashing a 12-year-old course record by 8 seconds in the race's return to its traditional first Sunday in July. Rosemary Wanjiru of Kenya took home the women's crown and a \$10,000 Super Bonus as part of the Professional Road Racing (PRRO) 25th Championship.

Mekonnen won the 9.3 mile race with a time of 42:38, overtaking Edwin Kimutai of Kenya in the final mile and taking the win by 2 seconds. Mekonnen took home \$7000 for winning the Boilermaker and a \$2500 bonus for winning the PRRO Championship. He was not eligible for the PRRO Super Bonus, which requires a win in a previous series race.

Mekonnen bested the Men's Open record of 42:46 set by Lelisa Desisa of Ethiopia in 2010.

Wanjiru, who previously won the Bloomsday Run in 2019, bested fellow-Kenyan Veronica Nyaru Wanj by nearly 20 seconds, finishing the race in 48:54. The women's course record is held by Edna Kiplagat of Kenya, who won the 2010 race with a time of 47:57.

Wanjiru leaves the race as the PRRO Series Champion, winning \$7000 from the Boilermaker in addition to the super bonus prize money from PRRO.

Sam Chelanga of Columbia, SC, the top American male, finished third overall with a time of 43:09, while the top American woman was Carrie Verdon of Boulder, CO. Verdon was the fifth overall female, finishing in 49:37.

As part of the PRRO Championship, runners who were eligible for the PRRO Super Bonus who finish in positions 2-10 in the men's and women's open divisions receive a \$1500 bonus. On the men's side, Kimutai earned the \$1500 PRRO bonus for his second-place finish in the men's open division, in addition to \$4000 from the Boilermaker. On the women's side, Birukayit Degafa earned the \$1500 PRRO bonus, in addition to \$1500 for her fourth-place Boilermaker finish, while Susanna Sullivan takes home the \$1500 PRRO bonus to go along with the \$1000 she won for finishing sixth.

Last year's men's open winner, Syracuse native Stephen Rathbun, who now lives in Springfield, NJ, finished 23rd with a time of 47:15. Interestingly, Rathbun's finishing time was 17 seconds faster than his winning time from the October 2021 race. New Hartford native Savannah Boucher of San Antonio, TX, who won the women's open race in 2021 with a time of 56:24 was 14th in the women's open division with a time of 54:40.

Daniel S. Romanchuk of Champaign, IL, the world's top ranked wheelchair athlete, won the Boilermaker Men's 15K Wheelchair Race presented by Sitrin and NBT Bank with a time of 31:33, besting his own course record, set in 2018, by one second. Local favorite Hermin Garic of Utica finished second in the men's wheelchair division with a time of 35:25.

Jenna Fesemyer of Champaign, IL, won the women's race with a time of 43:01. Emily Sweeney of Montrose, NY successfully completed the Sitrin Wheelchair Challenge, finishing in 1:14:15, earning a custom-made racing wheelchair.

The race returned to its traditional second Sunday in July for the first time since 2019. A total of 5848 runners finished the 15K presented by Excellus BlueCross BlueShield, while 2848 finished the 5K presented by Utica National.

Michael Hennelly of Suffern, NY won the men's 5K with a time of 16:04, while Tricia Longo of Waterford, NY won the women's race in 17:49.

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