

ING Ottawa Marathon Launches Search for Canada's Fastest City

In only 12 days, Canada's best marathon runners will take their marks at the start line of the ING Ottawa Marathon in a race to find Canada's fastest city! Organizers of the 2005 ING Ottawa Marathon today announced the ING Run for Something Better, a race within the race that will not only see which city reigns supreme on the open road, but will also help introduce less-fortunate youth across the country to the sport of distance running.

Seven Canadian cities will each send two elite runners, their best male and female marathoners, to compete for a share of \$55,000 in prize money that will be donated by ING Insurance, through the ING Foundation, to running programs aimed at less-fortunate youth in their cities. Runners from Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Saskatoon, Calgary and Victoria will travel to Ottawa to compete in the May event.

The winning city will be the one with the lowest combined times of their two runners. Beyond bragging rights for the "fastest Canadian city", what's at stake is the chance to take home \$10,000 for athletic programs that involve less-fortunate youth. Even the last place team will receive \$5,000 for their programs.

The ING Ottawa Marathon has also been designated by Athletics Canada as the site of the 2005 Canadian Marathon Championships.

"We are all searching for ways to improve athletic excellence in this country," says Manny Rodrigues, Ottawa Race Weekend Vice President. "The ING Run for Something Better can be monumental in providing opportunities both for today's elite athletes and, with the programs for the kids, for our athletes of tomorrow. And since this race also determines the 2005 Canadian Marathon Champions, not only can these runners bring home the prize money for their club, they might also bring home a national championship title."

Among the competitors are Nicole Stevenson and Matt McInnes, the 2004 Canadian Marathon Champions, who make up Team Toronto in the ING Run for Something Better.

"I think it's great what ING and the Ottawa race organizers are doing for running," said Stevenson. "It shows real long-term vision for the sport and it's an investment in the future of Canadian track & field. Kids across the country will experience running because of this program and that's the only way to make sure we have great Canadian athletes 20 years from now."

In addition to raising money for their local youth running programs, the runners from each city will also represent an elementary school in the Ottawa area, running for spots for less-fortunate youth to participate in the Ottawa Lions Track & Field programs. The athletes will visit their schools for a pep-rally before the race and many students are expected to line the route in support of their runners.

None are more excited to see the outcome than those at ING who first developed the program.

"The sport of running reflects our company's core values, such as challenging limits, long term vision and the drive to do more," said Debbie Coull-Cicchini, ING Canada's Chief Operating Officer for Ontario. "The ING Run for Something Better program represents our commitment to encouraging Canada's youth to achieve their full potential, and adding to the development of the sport of running. Running is a truly global sport that is accessible to anyone who wants to participate."

The ING Ottawa Marathon is the feature Canadian event in the ING Globerunners Series, an international running series that includes marathons in New York City, Amsterdam, Brussels, Luxembourg, Taipei and in Thailand.

"At the end of the day it's about helping a lot of kids get into a sport that they wouldn't otherwise get to try," says Rodrigues. "The nice thing is we can also show them 14 Canadian runners who made it to the national championships of that sport. We can show them that Canadian runners can really go places."

ING Run for Something Better Athletes:

Team Halifax:	Heather Goodfellow, Marathon PB 2:58:35 Tim Gillespie
Team Toronto:	Matt McInnes, 2004 Canadian Marathon Champion Nicole Stevenson, 2004 Canadian Marathon Champion

Team Ottawa:	Stéphane Gamache, 5th World Francophone Games Liz Maguire, Marathon PB 2:59:42 (2004)
Team Montreal:	Louis-Phillipe Garnier, 3rd 2003 Canadian Marathon Championships Tina Kader, 2nd in 2004 Montreal Marathon
Team Saskatoon:	Jim Jasieniuk, Marathon PB 2:24:29 Joan McGrath, Winner of 2002 Manitoba Marathon
Team Calgary / Edmonton:	Ken Myers, 4th Canadian in 2004 ING Ottawa Marathon Sandy Jacobson, 2003 Ottawa Marathon champion
Team Victoria:	Jim Finlayson, 3rd place in 2003 Ottawa Marathon Joan Cochrane

ABOUT ING CANADA AND ING INSURANCE

ING Canada (TSX : IIC.LV) is the largest provider of property and casualty insurance in Canada. ING Canada's principal insurance products are automobile, property and liability insurance, which it provides primarily to individuals and small to medium sized businesses through ING Insurance and other insurance subsidiaries across Canada.

ABOUT THE OTTAWA RACE WEEKEND

The Ottawa Race Weekend, Canada's premier running festival, combines competition, participation and fundraising to make a distinctive contribution to the health of the community. The Race Weekend has over 23,000 participants in 9 races, including the ING Ottawa Marathon. It is run by a volunteer Board of Directors. This year, the Race Weekend is scheduled for May 27-29.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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