

ING Ottawa Marathon expands search for Canada's Fastest City

On May 28th over 5,000 marathon runners are expected to take their marks at the start line of the ING Ottawa Marathon. For eighteen participants, the race will take a whole new meaning. Eighteen athletes from nine Canadian cities will compete in the *ING Run for Something Better*, a race within a race to declare Canada's fastest city. Launched two years ago, the program's main goal is to introduce less-fortunate youth across the country to the sport of distance running.

Last year, seven cities competed for bragging rights and top funding for local athletic programs. Toronto was declared champion when its two elite runners offered the lowest combined time for the ING Ottawa Marathon. That success prompted more cities to vie for the title and share \$68,000 in prize money donated by ING Insurance, through the ING Foundation, to running programs aimed at less-fortunate youth. Runners from Halifax, Montreal, Quebec City, Ottawa, Toronto, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Vancouver and Victoria will travel to Ottawa to compete in the May event.

Beyond bragging rights for the "fastest Canadian city", the winners – the lowest combined time for the ING Ottawa Marathon – will take home a \$10,000 ING contribution for athletic programs that involve less-fortunate youth. However, everyone will be a winner: Even the last place team will receive \$5,000 for local programs.

"The ING Run for Something Better is the type of program that will help develop the Olympians of tomorrow," says Manny Rodrigues, ING Ottawa Marathon Vice President. "We are already seeing results. One of the under-privileged youth from our inaugural program adapted very quickly to the sport and has gone on to win at Ontario provincial championships."

The champions of the 2005 *ING Run for Something Better*, Nicole Stevenson and Matt McInnes of Team Toronto, will not be competing this year due to training and competition conflicts. Team Toronto for 2006 will include Tim Shannon, 26, and Tania Jones, 36, the 2002 Canadian Marathon Champion.

"This will be my first ING Ottawa Marathon in four years, since taking a break to have my son Callum," says Jones. "I am thrilled to be returning to a race at which I have had so much success. Representing the future track stars of Toronto in this program motivates me to train harder and race faster."

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.

Those at ING who first developed the program say the expansion can only mean good things for youth in Canada.

"Success in distance running – just like success in life – comes from a long-term commitment and a willingness to challenge limits, values that we share as an organization," said Debbie Coull-Cicchini, ING Canada's Chief Operating Officer for Ontario. "Our support of distance running and the *ING Run for Something Better* encourages young people to reach their full potential and to go beyond what they think is possible."

"The foundation of this program is getting kids into sports, and for under-privileged youth running is one of the most accessible options," says Rodrigues. "The *ING Run for Something Better* provides them with 18 role models from across Canada, both male and female, a venue that showcases how they can use sport as a competitive outlet or as a healthy recreational lifestyle, and most importantly, it gives them an opportunity to get involved at no cost to them."

ING Run for Something Better Athletes:

Team Halifax:	Scott Garinther	Team Saskatoon:	Jim Jasieniuk
	Heather Goodfellow		Joan McGrath
Team Toronto:	Tim Shannon	Team Edmonton:	Yves Gagnon
	Tania Jones		Krissy Dooling
Team Ottawa:	Rick Hellard	Team Victoria:	Jim Finlayson
	Liz Maguire		Nancy Baxendale
Team Montreal:	Louis-Phillipe Garnier	Team Vancouver:	Simon Driver
	Tina Kader		Katrina Driver

Team Quebec City: Jean Gauthier
Celine Boilard

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