



April 2, 2017

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Thousands of Runners Kick off the Spring Running Season at the 2017 Bank of America Shamrock Shuffle 8K

CHICAGO – Thousands of runners kicked off the spring running season under ideal race conditions at the 38th annual Bank of America Shamrock Shuffle 8K. Grant Park turned green as defending champion, Stephen Sambu, 28, of Tucson, Ariz., sprinted away from the men's field, breaking the tape in the event's sixth fastest time ever, 22:47. Two-time Olympian Kim Conley, 31, of Sacramento, Calif., took advantage of the 45 degree temperatures to run away from the women's field, winning by 59 seconds in 25:43.

"Grant Park was alive with runners this morning, and what a great annual celebration for our running community," said Executive Race Director Carey Pinkowski. "I love everything about this race: the elite competition, the team competitions, the local runners and running clubs who come out every year, the families who have made this a tradition – it's a great running party in a great city."

Sambu, the world's fastest man ever over the 8K distance (22:01.1), is just the second male athlete in the event's history to score the hat trick, winning in 2015, 2016 and today. After putting together three dominating performances, he now owns the fourth, sixth and fourteenth fastest times in the Bank of America Shamrock Shuffle 8K record books. Olympian Diego Estrada, Flagstaff, Ariz., chased Sambu through the loop course, but couldn't match the foot speed of his competitor. Estrada hung on to finish second in 23:06, and Carlos Trujillo, Colorado Springs, CO, rounded out the top three in 23:25.

"It feels really good to win again," said Sambu. "This is the beginning of the year so this race is really important for the rest of the season. And Chicago is very nice – the fans are great and the course is fast. I like coming here."

Conley, the 2015 U.S. Half Marathon champion and a two-time Olympian, made her racing debut in Chicago with an exclamation point. She hit her stride early, gaining distance on a highly competitive field, and turned in the eighth fastest time in the event's



history. Meghan Peyton, Bloomington, Minn., finished a distant second in 26:42, followed by Andrea Rediger, Minneapolis, Minn., in third in 26:50.

“The course was great and it offered a really nice five-mile tour of the city,” said Conley. “It has been a vibrant weekend in a great city, and to cap it off with a win feels good. I really enjoyed the experience, and this is a nice precursor to the track season.”

Three-time Bank of America Chicago Marathon champion and 2017 Tokyo Marathon champion, Amanda McGrory, Savoy, Ill., took the overall win in the wheelchair competition, stopping the clock in 20:06. Throughout her career, McGrory has collected 25 marathon wins and seven Paralympic medals. Jose Alejandro, Burbank, Ill., took first for the men in 24:18.

“It was so much fun,” said McGrory, speaking after her Shamrock Shuffle 8K racing debut. “It was beautiful out and I cannot wait to come back and do it all again – Chicago is like a second hometown! This was a good opportunity to work on pacing and cornering.”

American record holder and three-time Olympian, Deena Kastor, Mammoth Lakes, Calif., ran in spite of several setbacks, including bronchitis. The 8K American Record holder and 2005 and 2009 Shamrock Shuffle 8K champion, held on strong to finish 11th in 27:42.

“I had a lot of training setbacks so I knew I was not as fit as I wanted to be,” said Kastor. “I love this sport and I love this event. Everything that Bank of America does for the running community here is so engaging and inspiring. “

Two-time champion, Alexi Pappas, opted out of the elite competition as she recovers from an injury, but she ran with Ellie Grammas, Niles, Ill. Grammas, 12, ran alongside Pappas to win her age division and place in the top 100 of all female participants, turning in a swift time of 31:53.

The 2017 Shamrock Shuffle 8K also included the ninth annual Deloitte elite club competition, featuring 53 elite USATF-member club teams from around the country. The men’s competition crowned a new winner, Pike’s Peak Elite. Pike’s Peak Elite took the title, scoring four runners, with a combined score of 1:35:20. The Hansons-Brooks Distance Project, the 2015 and 2016 Deloitte elite club competition team champions, finished second in 1:35:47 and Runablaze Iowa finished third in 1:36:14.

New Balance Chicago finished on top of the podium in the women’s competition. Kristen Heckert, Bolingbrook, Ill., lead her team, scoring three runners, to the third fastest combined team score ever, 1:22:39. Movin’ Shoes Race Team finished second in 1:22:58 and Big River Racing finished third in 1:23:27.

**Top 10 Male Finishers**

1. Stephen Sambu, 22:47
2. Diego Estrada, 23:06
3. Carlos Trujillo, 23:25
4. Matthew Williams, 23:31
5. Robert Curtis, 23:33
6. Devin Allbaugh, 23:35
7. Benjamin Sathre, 23:37
8. Caleb Rhynard, 23:39
9. Brogan Austin, 23:43
10. Tate Schienbein, 23:47

Top 10 Female Finishers

1. Kim Conley, 25:43
2. Meghan Peyton, 26:42
3. Andrea Rediger, 26:50
4. Diane Robinson, 26:52
5. Gabi Anzalone, 26:56
6. Kristen Heckert, 27:15
7. Alyssa Schneider, 27:23
8. Jamie Cheever, 27:31
9. Lizzy Berkholtz, 27:33
10. Julia Kohnen, 27:41

About the Bank of America Shamrock Shuffle 8K

Long recognized as an annual rite of spring and the kickoff to the outdoor running season in Chicago, the 38th annual Bank of America Shamrock Shuffle 8K takes runners on a scenic tour of downtown Chicago, starting and finishing in Grant Park. Continuing for the ninth year, the event hosted the Deloitte Elite Club Competition featuring USATF-member running clubs from across the country. For more information about the event and how to get involved, go to www.shamrockshuffle.com.