

PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

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**COMPETITIVE FIELD SET FOR
NAPA VALLEY MARATHON**

***34th Annual Race Will Cultivate
Boston Marathon "Connection"***

NAPA, Calif. — February 16, 2012 —Two recent Kaiser Permanente Napa Valley Marathon champions will return to the 34th annual race on Sunday, March 4, 2012 determined to leverage their experience on the fast and scenic course through the Napa Valley wine country into repeat victories. A fine contingent of invited runners will head the sold-out crowd of 2,500 marathon participants, but only one man and one woman will ascend the winner's podium and take home the first place prize: their weight in distinguished Napa Valley wine.

Chris Mocko (San Francisco, Calif.) will defend his 2011 Napa Valley Marathon (NVM) men's title. Last year, the former Stanford University Scholar Athlete (for maintaining a grade-point average of 3.5 and above) scored the victory in only his third marathon. Mocko's NVM win in 2 hours, 27 minutes, and 2 seconds, came on his 25th birthday. Since then, he has lowered his marathon personal record to 2:23:40 and also scored a PR this month at the Kaiser Permanente San Francisco Half Marathon where he ran 1:08:35 for third place.

"Since last year's race, I've changed jobs and moved to San Francisco," said Mocko who works 12-hour days as a Product Coordinator at Square, a start-up company that makes mobile credit card readers and applications. "With my demanding work schedule, and no marathon races in the past nine months, I'm a little uncertain about what to expect at Napa. I can only ask to be competitive in the race for as long as possible, and hope the allure of amazing wine and a wonderful [post-race] massage at the Vintage High School gymnasium will push me to the finish line."

Another San Franciscan with a stimulating job and a hefty work schedule is the top prospect for the women's victory at NVM. 2007 NVM women's champion **Devon Crosby-Helms**, 29, will make her second appearance at the race only seven weeks after

competing at the 2012 U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials in Houston, Tex. where she lowered her personal best marathon to 2:38:55 and placed 36th. Crosby-Helms has earned more prominence, however, at "ultra" race distances from 50 kilometers (31 miles) to 100 miles. In fact, she is one of the top female ultrarunners in the world. As a certified personal chef, Crosby-Helms trains and competes between responsibilities to her small business where she cooks gourmet meals for her clients in their homes. As a member of U.S. national teams, she has competed in three IAU World Cup 100K races, an international event which is often referred to as the 100K "world championship" of ultra-distance running. At the 2009 IAU World Cup 100K in Belgium, Crosby-Helms finished fourth overall while helping the U.S. women's team win the team gold medal. In addition, she is a two-time U.S. champion at ultra distances, winning the U.S. 50-mile road championship (2010) and the U.S. 100-kilometer championship (2011).

Crosby-Helms has registered for NVM twice since her 2007 win, but both times the flu has kept her from competing. Crosby-Helms will use the Napa Valley Marathon to gauge her fitness and speed as she prepares for two challenging ultras in South Africa: the Two Oceans Marathon (56 kilometers/34.8 miles) on April 7 and the Comrades Marathon (56 miles) on June 3.

"To be competitive in these ultra races, I need to not only go the distance, but also do it fast," Crosby-Helms said. "I still have a lot of learning to do in the marathon. Marathon racing is very different from ultras and you have to use different racing tactics. I feel I'm just scratching the surface of what I can do in the marathon. Napa lined up perfectly in my schedule so I can test myself as I prepare for Two Oceans and Comrades."

Additional top contenders in the invited fields include:

MEN

- **Nathan Yanko** (30, San Francisco, Calif.) who hopes to improve upon his third-place finish at last year's Napa Valley Marathon in a 2:33:07 personal best
- **Rob Wiley** (36, Gurnee, Ill.), who registered a 2:26:06 at last year's Boston Marathon and a 2:25:22 for 29th place at the 2010 Twin Cities Marathon (which hosted the 2010 USA Men's Marathon Championship)
- **John Van Metre** (30, San Jose, Calif.) whose resume includes a 4:20 mile and 1:08:13 half marathon

WOMEN

- **Lori Stich** (41, Colorado Springs, Colo.), a three-time U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials qualifier (2000, 2004, 2008) with a 2:38:44 marathon best
- **Eileen Torres** (41, Atlanta, Ga.), 2:50:21 marathon PR, 3:47:51 50K
- **Tammy Lifka** (41, Glen Ellyn, IL) who started running in 2007 after having three children, 2:53:15 marathon PR

- **Sanya Syrstad** (46, Glen Ellyn, IL) who competes at distances from 800 meters to the marathon and was second masters woman at the 2011 Rock 'n' Roll Chicago Half Marathon in 1:26:10

Also entered in the race is legendary ultramarathon runner **Tim Twietmeyer** (53, Auburn, Calif.). Twietmeyer is renowned for his five victories and unprecedented 25 sub-24 hour finishes at the Western States 100 Mile Endurance Run. He has completed over 200 marathon and ultramarathon races.

The Napa Valley Marathon women's course record of 2:39:43 was set by Diana Fitzpatrick in 1992. Dick Beardsley, a two-time Olympic Trials Marathon qualifier (1980 and 1988), holds the men's course record of 2:16:20 set in 1987. Beardsley will be on hand at this year's NVM again, inspiring runners at the event's Marathon College which this year commemorates the 30 year anniversary of Beardsley's epic "Duel in the Sun" with Alberto Salazar at the 1982 Boston Marathon (more below).

The record for the most wins at NVM is held by Mary Coordt (Elk Grove, Calif.). Coordt, 42, who coordinates the invited athletes at NVM, captured the women's crown four times (1997, 2005, 2009, 2010). She is not competing this year following her participation in her fourth U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials last month in Houston.

Why do runners, regardless of ability, clamor for an entry slot into NVM, which has sold out every year for more than a decade?

"I've run Napa more than any other marathon," Beardsley said. "Napa is an awesome course to run fast. I like the fact that there are rolling hills, and the toughest hills seem to come in the early parts. The crowd support at the crossroads along the course is excellent. The weather is usually perfect and the race organization is second to none."

Chris Mocko, last year's men's champion, has also become an NVM enthusiast.

"I think the appeal of the race is pretty clear to all who have run it," said Mocko. "It's a fantastically organized event. The experienced organizing team makes sure you have every accommodation you need to run your best. Also, the event is small enough that it has an intimate feel that's often lacking in larger races."

"The course showcases some of the most gorgeous scenery around. That really helps break up the race, and makes each mile go by a little bit faster. There's always some great competition that pushes you to your limits in pursuit of a personal best. And, I don't think you could ask for a more appropriate first place prize than your weight in fine Napa Valley wine."

The Kaiser Permanente Napa Valley Marathon is also one of the most popular races in the country for runners to score a qualifying time for the revered Boston Marathon—the "holy grail" of marathoning for many aspirants. This year's NVM weekend will provide special inspiration to achieve that goal. The centerpiece for NVM's annual Marathon College will highlight the 30-year anniversary of the memorable day at the 1982 Boston Marathon that subsequently was coined "The Duel in the Sun." In that race, then-world-record-

holder Alberto Salazar and young upstart Dick Beardsley dueled from mile 4 to a dramatic finish. Many fans consider it the most compelling competition in the history of the Boston Marathon, and, perhaps, in the entire history of marathons. To highlight the historic anniversary, Dick Beardsley and his coach at the time, the renowned Bill Squires, will recreate that memorable day in a 90-minute program at the Marathon College.

The "College," which includes varied presentations by a faculty composed of respected running authorities and celebrity runners, is scheduled for Saturday, March 3rd from 10 a.m. to approximately 3 p.m. at the Napa Valley Marriott Hotel & Spa. "The Duel in the Sun" presentation begins at noon. Marathon weekend includes a Sports and Fitness Expo on Friday, March 2nd from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday, March 3rd from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Marriott. Both the Marathon College and Sports and Fitness Expo are free for the general public.

The 2012 edition of NVM has again been selected by the Road Runners Club of America as its Western Regional Marathon Championship, a designation it has received since 2009.

The 2012 Kaiser Permanente Napa Valley Marathon starts on Sunday, March 4 at 7:00 a.m. sharp in Calistoga on the Silverado Trail near the intersection of Rosedale Road. The 26.2-mile road course runs the length of the beautiful Silverado Trail and finishes at Vintage High School in Napa.

Entry slots are still available for the companion Kiwanis 5K Fun Run, which starts (8 a.m.) and finishes at Vintage High School on marathon morning.

Every Napa Valley Marathon participant assists important local causes. All proceeds from the Napa Valley Marathon (a non-profit organization) are donated to local charities and schools in the Napa Valley region.

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For more information about the Kaiser Permanente Napa Valley Marathon, please visit the marathon's web site at www.napavalley-marathon.org

The Napa Valley Marathon appreciates generous sponsor support from Kaiser Permanente/Thrive, Gatorade, ASICS, Silverado Trail Wineries Association, Marathon & Beyond, Road Runners Club of America, USA Track & Field, MarathonFoto, Napa Valley Marriott Hotel & Spa, GU, CBS 5 and The CW, Comcast, Napa Valley Register, KVVN/99.3 The Vine, KVON 1440 AM, the Napa Running Company, KCBS 740 AM, Silverado Brewing Company, Wine Country Inn/Napa Valley, Arrowhead Water, Calistoga Beverage Company, DJ's Growing Place, Wallaby Organic, Napa Valley Bike Tours, and ZICO.

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