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TOP ENTRANTS ANTICIPATE 2014 NAPA VALLEY MARATHON

36th Annual Race Celebrates Rich History of Northern California Marathons

NAPA, Calif. — February 20, 2014 — Two former champions are hoping to overcome recent challenges and, perhaps, repeat history at the **Kaiser Permanente Napa Valley Marathon** on Sunday, March 2, 2014 the venerable race announced today as it unveiled this year's elite fields. A solid contingent of invited runners heads the sold-out crowd of 2,700 marathon participants who will descend upon the scenic Napa Valley wine country and navigate the marathon's renowned point-to-point 26.2-mile course. The male and female winners will earn coveted first place prizes: their weight in fine Napa Valley wine.

Top entrants **Chris Mocko** (San Francisco, Calif.) and **Devon Yanko** (San Anselmo, Calif.) have each ascended the winner's podium two times at the Napa Valley Marathon (NVM). The NVM all-time winner's list contains an array of outstanding distance runners. The superb NVM men's course record of 2 hours, 16 minutes and 20 seconds was set in 1987 by (U.S.) National Distance Running Hall of Fame member Dick Beardsley. Yanko (nee' Crosby-Helms) set the fast women's course standard of 2:39:37 in 2012 and also won in 2007. The record for the most wins at NVM is held by Mary Coordt (Elk Grove, Calif.). Coordt captured the women's crown in 1997, 2005, 2009, and 2010.

NVM's gently-rolling-but-fast course has stayed the same for the entire 35-year history of the event. The course is certified (for accurate distance) by USA Track & Field (the U.S. governing body for the sports of distance running, track and field, and race walking).

Mocko, age 27, who won the men's race in 2011 and 2012, is hopeful for a strong comeback after finishing tenth at last year's NVM, on an "off day" for him. Following an injury-plagued 2013, the former Stanford University distance runner says he is back to training 100 to 110 miles a week including a hard weekly training session on the track. The recent consistent training has paid off for Mocko. At this year's Kaiser Permanente San Francisco Half Marathon on February 2nd, he was rewarded with a two-minute personal best, finishing second in 1:06:35.

"My ultimate goal for the Spring season is a 26.2 mile tour of (April's) Boston Marathon, but Napa will be a leading indicator of my fitness over the longer distances," Mocko said. "It will help determine whether pursuing the 2016 U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials qualifying standard of 2:18:00 is in the cards for me. If I can keep myself in contention at Napa over the first 15 miles and finish strong, I'm confident of a personal best and a low-2:20s clocking."

Mocko's current marathon personal best is 2:23:40 which he recorded in 2011.

Yanko, 31, is not quite as confident in her race-day prospects going into this year's NVM as she gains back her strength after recently being diagnosed with, and receiving treatment for, severe iron deficiency anemia.

"We're working on getting my iron levels up, and they're improving, but I'm not sure how they will be by race day," said Yanko, an accomplished marathoner and ultramarathoner (distances beyond 26.2 miles) who has represented the U.S. on international ultra distance teams. "I really do hope that I can be there since I'd love to go after the (2016) U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials qualifying time. The decision to run will have to be pretty last minute."

Yanko has run more than 15 marathons and 30 ultramarathons since 2006. Her personal record for the marathon is 2:38:55 which she recorded at the 2012 U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials race in Houston, Tex.

Additional top contenders in the invited fields include:

MEN

- **Matt Flaherty** (28, Bloomington, Ill.) returns after placing fourth at last year's NVM. He is currently focusing on ultramarathon distances and won the 2013 USA 50 Mile Road Championships (Boalsburg, PA) in 5:28:11, for which he was named USA Track & Field's Athlete of the Week. His 2:22:53 personal best marathon was recorded at Grandma's Marathon (Minn.) in 2011. He is a licensed attorney who has put his legal career on hold to pursue his running career and serve as a running coach.

"I'm excited to be returning to Napa and I'm hoping to improve both my place and time at this year's edition," Flaherty said. "I had a healthy and successful 2013 season, so I should be coming into this year's race much stronger than last year. I'm still hoping to better my marathon personal best. The Napa course is gorgeous and perfect for running fast, and, hopefully, we'll have great conditions and competition like last year."

- **Ryan Donovan** (31, Fort Collins, Colo.) will compete in his first NVM with a goal of improving his current marathon personal best of 2:25.51 that he set at last year's Columbus Marathon. Donovan has a special personal motivation that he carries with him on his runs: In 2009, Donovan's wife, Rachel, gave birth to the couple's first son, Kale Pierce Donovan. Their child was born with a very rare genetic disorder, Zellweger Syndrome, and he passed away peacefully in his sleep after 26 days of life.

"Today, I know that my son is looking down on me, and I always want him to know that I worked as hard as possible and did my best," Donovan said. "Each and every marathon I race I dedicate each mile—all 26 of them—to a day of his life."

Since then, the Donovan's have since been blessed with a beautiful daughter, Clover, who is now three years old. Donovan's wife and daughter will accompany him to NVM and cheer him on.

- **Mason Myers** (44, Carmichael, Calif.) is making his debut at the marathon distance at NVM after running competitively in high school and college and then taking an 18-year break from the sport. In high school, he earned third place in the 3,200 meter race at the 1987 California State

High School Track and Field Championships in 9:05. In 1989, he won the California state junior college title in the 3,000 meter steeplechase. At age 38, he rediscovered his attraction for road racing and cross country. Since then, as a Masters (age 40 and over) athlete, Myers has recorded excellent marks at distances from 1 mile (4:45) to half marathon (1:15:24). He is a strong contender to win the men's Masters title at NVM.

WOMEN

- **Kimberly O'Donnell** (24, Walnut Creek, Calif.) owns a marathon personal best of 2:47:13, set at the 2013 Orange County Marathon in Newport Beach, Calif., a race that she won. She has excelled at race distances up to 50K. In 2013, she set new women's course records at the Marin Ultra Challenge 50K trail race (Sausalito, Calif.), and at the Headwaters Ultra Marathon 50K trail race (Mt. Shasta, Calif.) where she ran 4:22:10.

- **Jenny Kadavy** (nee' Wilson) (31, Concord, Calif.) placed fourth at the 2011 NVM in 2:52:05 but hopes to improve by 10 minutes in this year's race. Her personal best marathon is 2:49:13 which she recorded at the 2012 California International Marathon in Sacramento, Calif.

"I think I'll be in better shape than I have been for a marathon," said Kadavy who manages to squeeze in her training while working full time as an English teacher at Freedom High School (Oakley, Calif.). where she also serves as the school's cross country coach and assistant coach for track and field.

"It would have been nice to have a couple more weeks of mileage under my belt, but I feel more prepared for this marathon than for the other four that I've done."

Kadavy recently won the Kaiser Permanente San Francisco Half Marathon on February 2nd in 1:16:03 which is roughly equivalent to a 2:40 marathon.

- **Allison Maxson Ritchie** (27, Folsom, Calif.) is moving up to the marathon distance after posting impressive marks in shorter events. She placed third at the 2012 San Jose Rock 'n' Roll Half Marathon in 1:17:37, and has a 5K personal best of 17:17. A graduate of the University of Portland where she competed in cross country and track, Maxson Ritchie went on to earn a Doctorate of Physical Therapy at the University of Puget Sound. She hopes to promote wellness through her professional career and by example as a runner.

At the Napa Valley Marathon's annual *Marathon College*, held the day before the race, **Joe Henderson** (running author, editor, and coach) will moderate a unique 90-minute panel discussion, *Celebrating Northern California Marathons*, that will include a half-dozen race directors and former race directors of some of Northern California's most famous marathons. The panelists include Gene Brtalik, event director of the Oakland Running Festival; David Hill, co-race director of the Napa Valley Marathon; John Mansoor, founder and former race director of the California International Marathon; Doug Thurston, race director of the Big Sur International Marathon; Cynthia Timek, race director of the Avenue of the Giants Marathon, and Les Wright, race director of the Lake Tahoe Marathon.

Likely topics that will be discussed by the panelists include: (1) the trend towards earlier entry cutoff dates as the demand for limited spots in marathons increases; (2) the increase in runner/walkers and pure walkers participating in marathons, and the resulting pressure to raise cutoffs for official finish times; and (3) the effect of the tragic bombings at the 2013 Boston Marathon on security measures at marathon races.

The *Marathon College* is scheduled for Saturday, March 1st from 10 a.m. to approximately 3 p.m. at the **Napa Valley Marriott Hotel & Spa**. Marathon weekend includes a Sports and Fitness Expo on Friday, February 28th, from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday, March 1st 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 2014 edition of NVM has, once again, been selected by the **Road Runners Club of America** as its **National Marathon Championship**.

The 2014 Kaiser Permanente Napa Valley Marathon starts on Sunday, March 2nd 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. In addition, an independent economic impact analysis commissioned by the marathon in 2012 estimated that the local economic impact of NVM is approximately \$3 million annually in direct spending.

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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*, Visit Napa Valley, Road Runners Club of America, USA Track & Field, MarathonFoto, Napa Valley Marriott Hotel & Spa, GU, KPIX5 and KBCW, XFINITY, Napa Valley Register, KVYN/99.3 The Vine, KVON 1440 AM, Napa Running Company, KCBS AM and FM Radio, Arrowhead Water, Wallaby Organic, Running USA, Peet's Coffee & Tea, Napa Valley Wine Train, Southgate Mini Storage, Napa Smith Brewery.

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