

Celebrating the 40th Running of the California International Marathon

Since its inception in 1983, CIM has continued to grow and provide a positive impact for the Sacramento region.

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SACRAMENTO, Calif. – The California International Marathon, organized by the Sacramento Running Association, will celebrate the 40th running of the marathon on Sunday, Dec. 3.

Starting in Folsom and finishing at the State Capitol, the course used in the inaugural 1983 race has remained essentially unchanged for 40 years. The race was co-founded by John Mansoor and Sally Edwards and put on by the Sacramento Long Distance Running Association, which later changed to the Sacramento Running Association, or SRA.

“At the first running of the California International Marathon, my co-founder, John Mansoor and I identified 5 key components that would make the 26.2 running event endure: (1) fast sea-level flat course (2) enough prize money to attract some of the best runners (3) an international field of runners (4) media coverage and (5) including the key thoroughfares from Folsom to Sacramento to showcase our city and our capital with the finish line ending at her steps,” said Sally Edwards.

“We wanted an international, not a local marathon, that would be respected as one of the best in the nation. And that’s what the California International Marathon is -- one if not the best in the USA,” added Edwards.

The inaugural California International Marathon had 1,600 participants. This Sunday, 10,000 marathon runners are expected to cross the finish line, bringing the total number of marathon finishers since the race’s inception to approximately 142,000. 42 countries will have at least one athlete competing on race day, as well as all 50 U.S. states.

“When we started CIM 40 years ago it was always our intent to make it the ‘Boston of the West,’ allowing athletes to perform at their best in search of personal records, Boston and Olympic qualifying. Over the years the event has remained true to this original purpose,” said John Mansoor. “More athletes qualified to the Olympic Trials in the last Olympiad than any other marathon in the United States.”

In 2022, CIM had 43 women and 41 men run under the coveted 2024 Olympic Trials qualifying time of 2:37:00 for women and 2:18:00 for men. The 2023 CIM lands on the final qualifying day for the 2024 U.S. Marathon Olympic Trials, which will be held in Orlando, Fla. on February 3rd.

“Equally important over the years was co-founder Sally Edwards' goal of increasing the number of women running the event. The first CIM in 1983 had a 80-20 ratio of men to women running that year. Despite that ratio and unlike any other marathon at the time, Sally insisted on equal prize money for women to grow their numbers. Today the ratio of women to men running is near 50-50, fulfilling Sally's vision,” added Mansoor.

While athletes from around the world will run for personal bests, Boston Qualifiers, Olympic Trials Qualifiers and the over \$60,000 prize purse on December 3rd, not all runners will be on course looking for a qualifying time or personal best. A small group of CIM participants, deemed “streakers,” will be looking to complete their personal 40th running of the CIM. One of the four remaining CIM streakers who have run every CIM is SRA board member, Steve Polansky. Steve is also serving in his 40th year as a board member.

“I ran the first CIM and I was so thrilled that the original Board had created such a quality marathon along a point to point course that I literally begged to join the Board and they let me in,” said Polansky. “Since then, the course route has not changed and the quality of the volunteers and support during the race has only grown. So too has our reputation as ‘the fastest course in the West.’”

“The California International Marathon and the Sacramento Running Association have been part of the Greater Sacramento, Folsom, Citrus Heights, Orangevale and Carmichael regions for four decades and have raised an incredible amount of funds for youth groups, the American River Parkway Foundation, Shriners Hospital as well as UC Davis Children's Hospital,” added Polansky. “I am so incredibly proud to have played a small role in the development, growth, and success of the CIM and have tremendous respect for our SRA team.”

In addition to the 10,000 marathon runners, there will be an estimated 1,000 CIM Relay runners, 75,000 spectators, and 4,000 volunteers also participating in CIM's 40th marathon weekend. The race is set to generate an estimated \$11 million economic impact for the Sacramento region and has raised more than \$500,000 for local charities and community organizations through leveraged fundraising and direct giving.

“We expect the 40th edition of CIM will accentuate the expansive positive force that the previous 39 years of CIM have brought to our region and to the regional and national running community,” said SRA Executive Director Scott Abbott. “Not only is it a world-class running event that attracts the attention of runners across the globe, but it is a civic amenity that is a source of great pride for our region.”

A CIM spectator guide, race day runner tracking, and live results can be found on runcim.org.

Race Weekend Events

Friday, December 1, 12:00 pm-7:00 pm - CIM Expo - SAFE Credit Union Convention Center
Saturday, December 2, 9:00 am-5:00 pm - CIM Expo - SAFE Credit Union Convention Center
Sunday, December 3, 7:00 am - CIM & CIM Relay Start - Folsom Dam
Sunday, December 3, 11:00 am - CIM Awards Ceremony - Finish Festival Stage

The Sacramento Running Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to finding ways to encourage people of all ages and abilities to run. The SRA is committed to developing new, quality running events that appeal to a broad variety of runners.