

Michigan Runners Sweep Walt Disney World Half Marathon in Impressive Fashion

Famed Hansons running club runner sets record time; celebrities among record field of 27,000 runners; 20th anniversary Disney Marathon presented by Cigna set for Sunday

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. (Jan. 12, 2013) – Michigan runners Mike Morgan and Melissa White blazed around Walt Disney World on Saturday – Morgan even set a race record – en route to sweeping the Disney Half Marathon titles.

Morgan, of Rochester Hills, Mich., flew around the 13.1-mile course in 1:05:26 to cross the finish line at Epcot well ahead of the rest of the record field of more than 27,000 runners, which included Joey Fatone (Dancing with the Stars), Joan Benoit Samuelson (1984 Olympic Marathon Gold Medalist) and Dick Beardsley (1981 London Marathon winner). Morgan's time barely eclipsed the old race record of 1:05:35 set by fellow Hansons running club member Tim Young in 2011.

White, of Shelby Township, Mich., was the first female to break the finish line tape with a time of 1:14:56, roughly a minute shy of the race record of 1:13:04.

From the start, Morgan, a member of the Hansons-Brooks Distance Project along with White, had his sights set on establishing a new mark at Disney, particularly after breaking away from the pack after the first mile.

"I had a goal of getting under the course record. It was a challenge and I barely got under it," Morgan said. "This was a world-class event, so to come down here and run well is great."

White was thrilled to run so fast so early into her running season.

"I'm just getting started so I wasn't sure where I was," White said. "So I just decided to go out there and see what I could do."

More than 10,000 runners from the half marathon field will be back at Disney on Sunday for the 20th anniversary of the Disney Marathon presented by Cigna as part of Goofy's Race and a Half Challenge – running the half and the full marathon on consecutive days (39.3 miles). The 26.2-mile race through all four Disney theme parks has drawn unprecedented interest this year, selling out less than five months after registration began, marking one of the fastest sellouts in the event's history.

Runners from around the country and beyond have been undoubtedly drawn to the event because of several unique features tied to the 20th anniversary, such as new course twists (the route goes through the Walt Disney World Speedway and *Champion* Stadium), the new Mickey Mouse medal, the post-race party at Downtown Disney and the chance to run with several celebrities and famous former runners who have registered to run.

The Walt Disney World Marathon Weekend presented by Cigna features events for the entire family such as **Kids' Races** a **Family Fun Run 5K** on Friday, the **Half Marathon** and the **Marathon** on Sunday. The **Health and Fitness Expo** runs throughout the weekend at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex and features the latest in running technology and fashion, as well as renowned running experts like **Jeff Galloway**, the official training consultant for *run* Disney.