

# Global Running Industry Converges at Walt Disney World Marathon Weekend for Inaugural runDisney “State of the Sport” Forum

## **Forum to feature the world’s foremost running industry leaders tackling a variety of relevant topics; Event part of new runDisney Race Director Series; 2017 Running USA Industry Conference up next for Walt Disney World Resort**

LAKE BUENA VISTA, FL (Jan. 6, 2016) – Global running industry leaders are converging on the Walt Disney World Marathon Weekend presented by Cigna this weekend for runDisney’s first-ever State of the Sport forum and Race Director Series.

Nearly 100 of the most highly-respected names in the global running sector – major race directors, media executives, industry influencers and former Olympic runners – are expected to attend the Jan. 7 forum, making it perhaps the most significant gathering of running industry leaders ever assembled.

The event, staged at Disney’s Contemporary Resort, is being anchored by a panel discussion featuring race directors and executives from the world’s top running events – Peter Ciaccia (TCS New York City Marathon), Tom Grilk (B.A. A. Boston Marathon), Tad Hayano (Tokyo Marathon), Hugh Brasher (Virgin Money London Marathon), Carey Pinkowski (Bank of America Chicago Marathon) and Juergen Lock (BMW Berlin Marathon). The panel, moderated by Runner’s World editor-in-chief David Willey, is expected to tackle several key industry topics, such as the evolving demographics of runners, the impact of the upcoming Olympics, increasing runner participation and other best practices.

Additional speakers expected are Running USA CEO Rich Harshbarger, B.A.A Boston Marathon race director David McGillivray and Maribeth Bisienere, senior vice president of Disney Springs and ESPN Wide World of Sports. Other special guests will be reigning women’s world marathon record-holder and four-time Olympic distance runner Paula Radcliffe and former Olympian and runDisney training consultant Jeff Galloway.

The State of the Sport forum kicks off runDisney’s new Race Director Series, which affords race directors from around the country with behind-the-scenes experiences during the Walt Disney World Marathon Weekend. More than 40 race directors and race management personnel are expected to take part in the series that gives them special access and insight into various aspects of the four-day event operation, plus the Race Director Challenge, a light-hearted competition during Saturday’s Disney Half Marathon race.

The State of the Sport forum aligns with runDisney’s goal of broadening participation in road running and encouraging people to live a healthier and more active lifestyle. Next year, Walt Disney World Resort will once again become the center of the running universe when it hosts the 2017 Running USA Industry Conference during the Disney Princess

Half Marathon Weekend presented by Children's Miracle Network Hospitals. The annual conference brings together industry experts for sessions on best practices, panel discussions, industry awards and more.

Hosting the 2017 conference and this weekend's forum build on runDisney's growing stature as one of the leading running series in the world. In the last few years, runDisney has experienced extraordinary growth and popularity with the launch of four new race weekends - including its first international event, the 2016 Disneyland Paris Half Marathon Weekend - and frequent race sellouts at events at Walt Disney World Resort in Florida and Disneyland Resort in California.

For more information about runDisney, visit [www.runDisney.com](http://www.runDisney.com). For more media-related information, video and photos, visit [www.disneysportsnews.com](http://www.disneysportsnews.com).