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Event Director:

Michelle Blanchard 206-465-0795
michelle@hogbackdevelop.com

Elite Runner Relations:

Tim Cummings 509-969-8867
tim@yakimamile.com

***This year's Downtown Yakima Mile attracts top Elite runners,
and benefits families in the Yakima Valley***

YAKIMA, WA – The Olympics may be over, but the competition for the title as the world's fastest mile runner definitely is not. And this week, some of the world's top 1-mile racers arrive in Yakima for Saturday's (Aug. 28) Downtown Yakima Mile.

The first Yakima Mile, in 2019, established a new Washington state record for men when Amos Bartelsmeyer, running for Germany, sped through the downhill portion of Yakima Avenue with a blazing time of 3 minutes, 51.79 seconds.

This year's race returns with a white-hot men's field of more than 20 Elite milers, most with times under 4 minutes, including Olympian Matthew Centrowitz. He took the gold medal in 2016 in the 1,500-meters with a time of 3:50:00 and became the first U.S. runner to win the event since 1908. He comes to Yakima fresh from the Tokyo Games, where he finished strong in the 1,500-meter semifinals. Also running in the men's Elite field is Craig Engels. After finishing fourth in the 1,500-meters in the U.S. Olympic Trials, he has been on a tear across the country torching every road he's touched.

The field also includes Vincent Ciattei, Sam Praker, Brett Meyer, Garrett Heath, Paul Ryan (Washington State grad), Andrew Rafla, and Tripp Hurt. Collectively, they hold 13 of the 20 fastest outdoor mile times run this year by Americans.

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Meanwhile, the women's Elite field features University of Washington alum Eleanor Fulton, Olympian and UW alum Amy-Eloise Markovc, Marisa Howard (Pasco native), and a slew of other NCAA champions, U.S. champions and Olympians. Heather Kamph, who ran in the first DYM, says, "As a connoisseur of road miles, the Yakima Mile is among the very best I have ever experienced."

The Elite race purse (\$46,500) has almost doubled this year. The Men's and Women's Elite winners will each take home \$5,000. An additional \$5,000 will be awarded for a Washington state record-setting performance in the men's and women's divisions, and another \$5,000 will go to the runner finishing under 3:48 for the men and 4:20 for the women. Cash prizes will also be awarded to the second through sixth place finishers of the Elite races.

The Downtown Yakima Mile, presented by Home2 Suites by Hilton-Yakima Airport, is a true community event, offering 11 heats with opportunities for runners/walkers of all ages and abilities. This includes the Dog Mile Championship, the SOZO Family Mile, and the Sgt. Joe Decchio Military, First Responders & Healthcare Heroes race. The races begin 6 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 28.

This year's event supports YWCA Yakima, the largest provider of domestic violence services in Yakima County. The YWCA provides the only shelter of its kind in the city of Yakima, operating 24/7. In addition, YWCA Yakima offers the first affordable housing specific to families who are homeless as the result of domestic violence. Crisis, housing and legal advocacy is also provided to those in need. In 2020 alone, the YWCA helped 13,000 people in the Yakima Valley. We encourage you to learn more about the life-saving services provided by the Yakima YWCA at ywcayakima.org.

Additionally, we have been in constant contact with the fire department who have been kind enough to give us updates multiple times a day concerning containment levels and future wind patterns. In short, if the air quality is acceptable on race day, the race will continue, and if on race day the air quality is unhealthy we will cancel the race. Do keep in mind that because of the topography of Yakima, the distance from the fire, and the winds, the AQI may differ from location to location in the area, however, at the moment, the air quality does seem to be in our favor and has been improving since late last week.

For more information about the Downtown Yakima Mile visit yakimamile.com. Also follow us on Instagram. The races will be livestreamed on both Instagram and Facebook.

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The Downtown Yakima Mile was founded by Chris Waddle of Hogback Development Company. Hogback works to elevate the standard of living in Yakima by attracting national tenants and bringing thousands of jobs to the community. Hogback's mission is to advance the community through new construction and the rehabilitation of distressed, and often historic, properties. Learn more at hogbackdevelop.com.

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