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### **WARDIAN TO DEFEND TITLE AT 2011 ING MIAMI MARATHON®**

Michael Wardian is returning to Miami to defend his title in the 2011 ING Miami Marathon and Half-Marathon®, with plans to use the race as the kind of springboard that propelled him to seven marathon victories around the country last year.

“I won a bunch of marathons last year and it all started with a really good run in Miami,” said Wardian, who also won the USA Track & Field 50-kilometer title, and finished third in a 151-mile, six-day race across the Sahara Desert with food, supplies and bedding on his back.

The Virginian will be ready to go for gold in Miami once again, although a second-place finish in the recent Disney Marathon did not come without consequences.

“I ran OK at Disney but had a problem with my leg,” he says. “I had a little bit of a pull and had a lot of pain during the race. I ran a 2:27 which is not one of my better times, but it was better than my Miami time last year.”

Getting to last year’s ING Miami Marathon proved to be the greatest obstacle for the 36-year-old who works fulltime in international shipping. After an 80-hour work week spent moving aid to earthquake-ravaged Haiti, he won the ING Miami Marathon less than 24 hours after arriving in South Florida.

But the busy married father of two small children is used to a packed schedule. Wardian rises at 4:45 am to get everything packed into each day: training runs of 15 to 30 miles, a fulltime job and Dad duties.

That doesn’t include his weekend jaunts to run in marathons, ultra marathons and other challenging Man vs. Nature-type events. In 2010, he crisscrossed the world from Big Sur to Morocco to South Africa to Boston to the Sahara.

“I have a great wife and a great boss,” Wardian said. “I couldn’t do any of this without their understanding. And my sponsors also play a big role.”

On tap for 2011: defending his ING Miami Marathon title, reaching the Olympic Trials for the 2012 games and two South Africa runs—the 56-mile Comrades Race, the world’s oldest ultra-marathon, and the Capetown Two Ocean Marathon.

A Martin Luther King Day 10K warm-up assured the Virginia resident that his injured leg is ready to go.

“I feel ready to run fast in Miami,” he says. “I want to go for the Olympic standard. Anything under 2:19 will do, and I’m going for that.”

Wardian won’t be staying long in Miami after his run. Two days later, he will be rushing up 86 flights of stairs in New York City’s Empire State Building Run-Up, just another event to cross off his bucket list.

Here is a capsule look at Wardian and the other elite runners participating in the 2011 ING Miami Marathon and Half-Marathon®:

**2011 ING Miami Marathon and Half Marathon®**  
**Elite Field**

**Marathon- Men**

**Tesfaye Sendeku Alemayehu**

Ethiopia

Residence: San Francisco

Age: 25

DOB: 25

Personal Bests: Marathon: 2:11:50

Half Marathon: 1:02

10K: 28:07

15K: 45:56

20K: 58:26

Tesfaye achieved his impressive PR of 2:11:50 at the 2010 Marathon Popular De Valencia in Spain. His recent results on U.S. soil are equally impressive. He won the 2010 Napa-to-Sonoma Wine Country Half Marathon in convincing fashion by smashing the course record with a time of 1 hour, 3 minutes, 58 seconds. He also placed second at the popular 2010 Army 10 Miler in Washington, DC, posting a strong and solid 47:58 time at the distance.

**Mitch Guirard**

USA

Age: 25

DOB: 01/06/1986

Residence: West Palm Beach, FL

Saucony Hurricane Team

Personal Best: Half Marathon: 1:09:44

Another local favorite from South Florida racing in the ING Miami Marathon, Guirard is a former John I. Leonard cross country star and recent graduate of the University of Florida. He has won the past two Palm Beach Half Marathons. His personal best time in the Half Marathon is 1:09. He ran recently at 2011 Naples Half Marathon, an event he used as a tune-up for ING Miami Marathon. He plans to run a sub 2:26 and in the near future, achieve the Olympic Trials qualifying standard of sub 2:19 marathon time.

**Ronnie Holassie**

USA

Age: 39

Residence: Miramar, FL

DOB: 7/29/1971

Personal Bests: Marathon: 2:13:03  
5000 meters: 14:12:01  
10K: 29:46  
Half Marathon: 1:04:15

Two-Time Olympian Ronnie Holassie, an American Citizen originally born in Trinidad Tobago, has been South Florida's fastest and most-decorated runner for over a decade. He competed at the 1996 Atlanta and 2000 Sidney Olympic Games representing his native country. He is a winner of the Mercedes Benz Miami Corporate run – one of Florida's major races – a record 13 times. Holassie has won the Palm Beach Marathon for three years in a row (2008-2009-2010) and the Gasparilla Marathon – Tampa in 2008 and 2009. He currently resides in Miramar where he owns a car detailing business. Holassie is the local favorite to win the ING Miami Marathon.

**Peter Kemboi**

Kenya

Age: 33

Residence: Hebron, Kentucky

L.M. Elite Running Club

DOB: 1/1/1978

Personal Bests: Marathon: 2:09:21

Kemboi, a 30 year-old Kenyan training in Kentucky, captured four podium finishes in 2010 including a win at the Memphis Marathon and runner-up spots at the OBX and Columbus Marathons. Peter Kemboi also defied the scorching sun/humidity to win the 2007 Mombasa International Marathon, breaking the course record and finishing in an impressive 2:09:21. While he was in Kenya, Kemboi trained in Kitale, one of Kenya's agricultural breadbasket areas a few kilometers north of Eldoret – the country's running Mecca. He has also recently claimed victories in the USA Marathon circuit by winning both the 2010 St. Jude Memphis Marathon and the 2011 Mississippi Blues Marathon, where he took the lead at the 24-mile mark and won in a time of 2:19:47.

**David Marruti Opiro**

Kenya

Atlas Runners Club

Age: 34

Residence: Powder Springs, GA

DOB: 3/21/1976

Personal Bests: Marathon: 2:12:41  
Half Marathon: 1:02:12  
10K: 28:07

Opiro is part of Atlas Runners Club, a professional elite runners club based out of Atlanta, Georgia. It was formed in 2006 by former track and road race athlete Jacob Kirwa to further-develop distance runners. He ran his marathon PR at the 1999 Gold Marathon International in Milan, Italy - 2:12:41. His 10K best time was 28:07 in Cuneo Italy.

**Girma A. Segni**

Ethiopia

Age: 25

Residence: New York, NY

DOB: 7/13/1985

Personal Bests: Marathon: 2:26:39

5000 meters: 14:30

10,000 meters: 30:08

1,500 meters: 4:06

Marist High School graduate Girma Segni (Bronx, N.Y.) was named the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference Men's Cross Country Co-Runner of the Week in the 2008 season 2 times. Segni earned his bachelor's degree in 2009 and master's in 2010. In his five-year collegiate running career, he established himself as the most decorated distance runner in school history. He graduated with both the indoor and outdoor school records in the 5,000 meters, and also had the outdoor school record in the 10,000 meters. In cross country, he was the fastest runner in school history at Van Cortlandt Park. Segni currently resides in the Bronx. He recently raced the 2010 New York City marathon – a World Marathon Majors event - and finished the challenging course in a respectable 2:26:39 for 25<sup>th</sup> overall.

**Michael Wardian**

USA

Residence: Arlington, VA

Club/Team: MarathonGuide.com/The North Face

Age: 36

DOB: 4/12/1974

Personal Bests: 5 km: 14:55

10 km: 30:55

10 Mile: 51:25

Half Marathon: 1:06:30

Marathon, 2:21:37

50 Mile: 5:21:00 (Split from 2010 Comrades Marathon)

100 km: 6:53:17 (2009-IAU-World Championships)

**Career Highlights:**

2009 BRONZE MEDAL-50K WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

2008 US NATIONAL CHAMPION 50K-2:55:05 (Championship Record)

2008 US NATIONAL CHAMPION 100K-6:56:57 (Course Record)

2008 US NATIONAL CHAMPION 50 MILE

2008 US NATIONAL RUNNER UP TRAIL MARATHON-2:35:04

2004 & 2008 US MEN'S MARATHON OLYMPIC TRIALS COMPETITOR

GUINNESS WORLD RECORD HOLDER FOR FASTEST MARATHON WHILE PUSHING A PRAM (With son, Pierce Miler Wardian)  
MEMBER US 100km TEAM 2008, 2009, 2010  
2009 & 2010 US NATIONAL CHAMPION 50 km

Wardian returns to defend his title at the ING Miami Marathon. At the 2010 edition of Miami's event, he won with a time of 2:28:39. Wardian started running and competing in triathlons in 1996 after successfully completing 3.5 seasons of Division I lacrosse at Michigan State University. In his first marathon in 1996, Wardian qualified for the Boston Marathon and has since completed more than 100+ marathons and Ultra Marathons on three (3) continents, 20 triathlons, including Iron Man Lake Placid, the Marathon Des Sables (250K-self sufficient race in Sahara Desert) and one (1) adventure race.

Wardian runs approximately four races per month and holds a full time job as an international ship broker. Wardian also has a young family with his wife, Jennifer. They have two (2) small boys.

**Other men to watch in the marathon:** Elliot Mason (Miami local), Alan King (Billings, MT USA), Phillip Walkins (Coral Springs, FL)

### **Marathon- Women**

#### **Gina Aalgaard- Kelly**

USA

Age: 34

DOB: 8/26/1976

Residence: Fargo

Personal Best:           Marathon: 2:57  
                                  Half Marathon: 1:23

Professor Gina Aalgaard was runner-up at 2010 Fargo Marathon with a 2.57 and is developing very rapidly. Also in 2010, she ran to the victory at the Disney's Princess Half Marathon with a 1.23 time. Has also ran 17.34 in 2010 for 5km and won the Manitoba half marathon. Gina has multiple race victories across the USA and Canada from 5k- 30k, and also finished 25th overall as an invited elite at the very competitive 2010 USA Women's 10 mile National Championships in Twin Cities last October. According to her coach, Gina is capable of getting close to the USA Olympic trials B standard in Miami.

#### **Stacie Albucrek**

USA

Age: 43

DOB: 9/27/1967

Residence: Fort Lauderdale, FL

Personal Best:           Marathon: 2:39:49

Stacie is another former winner of the Miami Marathon returning in 2011. Under rainy conditions in 2004, she won the Miami Marathon in a time of 2:42:32. The following year she was 3rd

overall (2005). Her marathon PR of 2:39:49 was achieved at the Virginia Beach Marathon in 2003. Most recently, Albucrek won the Fort Lauderdale 13.1 Marathon.

**Tezata Desalgn Dengersa**

Ethiopia

Age: 30

Residence: Baltimore, MD

DOB: 11/8/1980

Personal Best:           Marathon: 2:48:35  
                                  5K: 16:48

Tezata, an Ethiopian who lives and trains in Baltimore, is a winner of the 2010 Sun Trust Richmond Marathon. She also placed 3<sup>rd</sup> overall at the 2010 Marine Corps Marathon in a personal best time of 2:48:35.

**Ashley Gorr**

USA

Age: 24

DOB: 12/29/1986

Residence: Cape Cod, MA

Personal Bests: Marathon: 3:00

Ashley is a brand new marathoner, a 24-year-old American who just ran her first marathon in NYC in 2010. Since it was her first attempt at the marathon distance, her coach set a very conservative goal. At the 2010 NYC Marathon, Ashley had her fastest splits in the last 2 miles, running exactly 3.00. For 2010, her plan is to develop into a full marathoner and make it to the USA Women' Olympic trials.

**Alena Vinitskaya**

Belarus

Age: 37

8/23/1973

Residence: Belarus

Personal Bests: Marathon: 2:33:30  
                                  10,000 meters: 34:24:67

Alena recently demonstrated she is in great shape with her 2:36:31 time at the 2010 Twin Cities Marathon. She has also ran 2:38:23 at same event in 2007. Alena is very familiar with the ING Miami Marathon course, finishing runner up in 2003 and 2010.

Other woman to watch in the marathon: Lee Di Pietro (former Disney Marathon winner, from Ruxton, MD)

**Half Marathon- Men**

**Kumsa Adugna**

Ethiopia

Age: 24

DOB: 7/17/1986

Residence: Bronx, NY

Personal Best: Half Marathon: 1:04

1,500 meters: 3:43:4

Kumsa Adugna is a member of NYC based West Side Runners team. In 2010 he placed 17<sup>th</sup> overall at the highly competitive NYC Half Marathon, with a time of 1:04:49.

**Boaz Cheboiywo**

Kenya

Age: 32

DOB: 8/2/1978

Residence: Ypsilanti, MI

Personal Bests: Half Marathon: 1:01:35

1500 Meters: 3:35.20

One Mile: 3:59.61

3000 Meters: 7:39.04

Two Miles: 8:11.62

5000 Meters: 13:19.21

10,000 Meters: 27:44.15

10 Km (road): 27:54

Half Marathon: 1:01:35

3000 Meters Steeplechase: 8:31.22

For close to a decade now, Cheboiywo has straddled two worlds -- that of his native village in Kenya's Western Highlands and the U.S., his home since he came to Eastern Michigan University in 2001. Upon US arrival, he established himself immediately by winning the NCAA Cross Country Championship, also becoming an NCAA champion in 10,000 meters (2002) and a fixture near the top of the American road race circuit.

Soon after NCAA outdoors in 2003, he signed a contract with Nike and hit the professional circuit while still pursuing his degree in secondary education, which he earned in 2004. By 2005, he had notched track PRs of 3:35 for 1500m, 8:11 for 2 miles, 13:19 for 5,000m and 27:46 for 10,000m. He also became a prolific road racer at several distances. In 2009, he made his half marathon debut at the Philadelphia Distance Run and placed fifth in a deep field in 1:01:35. He also got his feet wet in the marathon by signing on to pace the first half of the 2009 Chicago Marathon in 1:03. At that same year, Cheboiywo rose to a new level of road race prowess, with such stellar finishes as third in the Healthy Kidney 10K in Central Park and second at the famous Beach to Beacon 10K. The Nike connection helped him for a brief stint with the Nike Oregon project under Alberto Salazar guidance. Currently, Cheboiywo is coached by Brad Hudson from Eugene, OR.

**Bado Worku Merdessa**

Ethiopia

Age: 22

DOB: 9/10/1988  
Residence: Bronx, NY

Personal Best:           Half Marathon: 1:03:45  
                                  3,000 meters: 7:40:74  
                                  5,000 meters: 13:18:08  
                                  10,000 meters: 29:21

A young Bado Worku Merdessa jump started his successful running career placing 10<sup>th</sup> overall at the 2004 IAAF World Junior Championships in the 5,000 meters, with a time of 13:30:45. In 2010, he won the 30th Stratton Faxon Fairfield Half-Marathon with a time of 1:05:49. Merdessa also won the 2010 Grandma's Half Marathon in Duluth, Minnesota. To cap a perfect year of road racing, he ran his PR at the NYC Half Marathon, posting 1:03:45 which was good for 13<sup>th</sup> overall. Other impressive results include a win at Pikes Peak 10K with a time of 28:43 and 12<sup>th</sup> overall at competitive Utica Boilermaker 10K.

**Ketema Nigusse Tola**  
Ethiopia  
Age: 30  
DOB: 1/29/1981  
Residence: Bronx, NY

Personal Best:           Marathon: 2:14:29  
                                  Half Marathon: 1:04:58

Katema ran a 2:15:45 at the 2008 Berlin Marathon – a World Marathon Majors event. In the following year, he achieved his marathon PR at the PF Chang Rock and Roll Marathon in Arizona, posting a 2:14:29 time in 4<sup>th</sup> place overall.

**Moses Waweru**  
Kenya  
Age: 32  
Residence: Coon Rapids, MN  
DOB: 2/7/1978  
Duma Runners Club

Personal Best:           1:05:10

The 32-year-old Waweru, who has run bests ranging from 3:38 for 1,500 meters to two hours, 23 minutes for the marathon, has become one of the top road racers in the Great Lakes region. He won the 2010 Des Moines Half Marathon.

Runners to watch: Jason Bodnar (Biltmore Lakes, NC, former Fort Lauderdale local standout runner); Cobi Morales (2 -time Fort Lauderdale 13.1 marathon winner, from Miami);

### **Half Marathon- Woman**

**Aziza Aliyu Abate**

Ethiopia  
Age: 25  
DOB: 10/2/1985  
Residence: Albuquerque, NM

Personal Bests: 3,000 meters: 9:19:14  
5,000 meters: 15:41:01  
10 Km: 32:53  
Half Marathon: 1:11:07  
Marathon: 2:40:50

Aziza ran to her very impressive Half Marathon PR of 1:11:07 at the ultra competitive Philadelphia Distance Run, where she captured the 5<sup>th</sup> overall position. She also ran her 10K PR of 32:53 in New Jersey. She debuted at the marathon distance at the 2010 NYC Marathon, with a time of 2:40:50.

### **Fiona Docherty**

New Zealand  
Residence: Boulder, CO  
Age: 35  
DOB: 9/1/1975  
Club: Boulder Express  
Run for Asics

Personal Best: Marathon: 2:32:17  
Half Marathon: 1:14:42  
10K: 34:08

New Zealand's Fiona had a near perfect racing season in 2010. Currently living and training in Boulder, CO under coach Steve Jones guidance, she ran a PR of 2:32:17 for 11<sup>th</sup> overall at the 2010 Bank of America Chicago Marathon – a World Marathon Majors event. Just months before Chicago, Fiona was runner up at both the Virginia Beach Rock and Roll Half Marathon with a 1:15:39 and Chicago Rock and Roll Half Marathon, this time running her PR of 1:14:42. With these credentials, she can definitely be a contender to break the ING Miami Half Marathon course record. She also competed at the 2010 Virgin London Marathon with a solid 2:37:55. In 2009 Fiona represented her country at the IAAF Berlin World Championships Marathon.

### **Anne W. Kingori**

Kenya  
Age: 23  
DOB: 10/9/1987  
Residence: Coon Rapids, MN  
Duma Runners Club

Personal Best: Half Marathon: 1:15:20  
3,000 meters: 9:09:02  
5,000 meters: 15:46:67

Kingori lives and trains in Minnesota. She ran her Half Marathon PR at the competitive 2010 Delhi Half Marathon, a IAAF Gold Label Race, with a 1:15:20 time.