

# 2026 Women's Distance Festival 5K & Run After the Women

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The Women's Distance Festival is part of the Maryland RRCA Women's Distance Festival Grand Prix Series, which brings together RRCA clubs from across the state to host 5K races celebrating women runners and walkers of every age and ability. In 2026, the Annapolis Striders proudly hosted Leg 4 of the eight-race series. Participants who complete four or more races earn a Grand Prix participation award presented later in the year.

The Annapolis Striders event also serves as the graduation 5K for our Beginner Running Program. Because our program includes men—and many Women's Distance Festival races do not—a companion event, Run After the Women.

## A Morning of Milestones and Memories

Saturday, July 11, brought everything a summer race morning should—anticipation, encouragement, and plenty of smiles. The 2026 event welcomed 200 registered participants, including 168 women and 32 men. Women represented 84% of the field, making this another outstanding year for the event.

Participants ranged in age from 5 to 79 years old, proving there truly is a place for everyone at the Women's Distance Festival. Some runners arrived chasing Grand Prix points, others were hoping for a personal best, and many Beginner Running Program graduates were preparing to complete their very first 5K. Regardless of their goals, every participant received the same enthusiastic cheers at the finish line.

Haley Wright captured the women's overall title in 20:05, followed closely by Jessica Ecton (20:12) and Eva Greenberg (20:31). Following the Women's Distance Festival, Martin Shpuntoff led the Run After the Women field with a winning time of 18:20.2.

## Celebrating Women

The Women's Distance Festival is about more than race results—it's about celebrating women of every age, ability, and stage of their running journey. From first-time 5K finishers to seasoned Grand Prix competitors, the event brings together women who encourage, inspire, and support one another.

One of the event's most cherished traditions is the Mother-Daughter Team Competition, highlighting the special bond that running creates across generations. Watching mothers and daughters cross the finish line together is a reminder that the Women's Distance Festival is about creating lifelong memories as much as it is about competition.

## Top Mother-Daughter Teams

- 🏆 Screamin Mimis — Helen Prevas & Caroline Prevas — 58:20
- 🏆 Cat Family — Isabella Georgandelli & Leah Georgandelli — 65:13
- 🏆 Wonder Women in Training — Juliette Beckman & Lyndsy Beckman — 69:05

Whether standing on the podium or celebrating a personal accomplishment, every woman who participated helped make this year's Women's Distance Festival another memorable event.

## Behind the Scenes: The Real Heroes

This was my second year serving as Race Director, and if there is one thing I've learned, it's that no Race Director succeeds alone. The real heroes of race day are the volunteers who quietly make everything happen.

From setting up before sunrise and staffing registration to directing runners, working water stops, assisting at the finish line, presenting awards, and packing everything away afterward, our volunteers handled every responsibility with enthusiasm and teamwork. Race day always brings surprises, but everyone rolled with the changes, stepped into new roles when needed, and ensured participants enjoyed a seamless experience.

Another heartfelt thank you goes to Tom and Mary Lou Lydon—the dream team. They delivered race supplies before sunrise, marked the course, helped with setup, and stayed afterward to return everything to the Striders shed. Their dedication and reliability were invaluable.

Thank you as well Beginner Running Program coaches, Finish Line Timing, course marshals, registration volunteers, and everyone who donated their time to make this event possible.

## 2026 Race Highlights

### Women's Overall Winners

- 1. Haley Wright — 20:05
- 2. Jessica Ecton — 20:12
- 3. Eva Greenberg — 20:31

### Women's Age Group Champions

- 1–9: Isabella Georgandelli — 29:23
- 10–19: Lindsay Ford — 21:21
- 20–29: Julia Smith — 22:12
- 30–39: Libby Miller — 21:28
- 40–49: Jessica Frost — 22:39

- 50-59: Meghan McGovern — 23:59
- 60-69: Jill Snyder — 24:23
- 70-79: Marianne Solomotis — 31:54

### Men's Overall Winners

- 1. Martin Shpuntoff — 18:20.2
- 2. Ernest Capadngan — 19:31.7
- 3. Shifeng Chen — 19:43.5

### Men's Age Group Champions

- 1-19: Michael Bencivenga — 23:10.9
- 20-29: Kyle Shoemaker — 23:44.2
- 30-39: Andrew Davis — 23:23.1
- 40-49: Vincent Glorioso — 20:37.0
- 50-59: Joseph Bencivenga — 25:59.7
- 60-69: James Pontius — 23:08.4
- 70-79: Kirk Gordon — 25:32.9

### Looking Ahead

The 2026 Women's Distance Festival and Run After the Women once again demonstrated what makes the Annapolis Striders so special: a welcoming community that celebrates runners and walkers of every age and ability. Watching Beginner Running Program graduates become 5K finishers, seeing families cross the finish line together, and witnessing volunteers work seamlessly behind the scenes made this year's event especially rewarding.

Thank you to everyone who participated, volunteered, coached, cheered, and supported the event. I'm already looking forward to welcoming everyone back in 2027 and serving as your Race Director once again.