



**COLLEGIATE  
RUNNING**  
ASSOCIATION



## Mara Olson and Joseph Gray win inaugural Collegiate Running Association Trail Championships

Race was held as part of the [Indiana Urban Wilderness Run](#)



*Mara Olson with a big smile as she crosses the finish line; Joe Gray pushes the pace early*

**June 13, 2015 - Indianapolis, IN** – Mara Olson (Butler University) and Joseph Gray (Calvary Bible College) were victorious in the first-ever Collegiate Running Association Trail Championships (¼ Marathon – 10.55k) held this morning in Indianapolis, Indiana. The race, held as part of the Indiana Urban Wilderness Run, was the first public event to utilize a recently completed section of urban trails along the Fall Creek and White River corridors.

For Olson, the victory capped off an incredible 36 hours that started with an 11<sup>th</sup> place finish at the NCAA Division I Track & Field Championships in Eugene, Oregon on Thursday evening and culminated with her taking home the first place prize of \$1,000 on Saturday morning at the CRA Trail Championships. Between the two races, Olson managed to catch a redeye flight that had her arrive in Indianapolis just a couple of hours prior to the 9:00am start time.

Former George Mason University standout Bethany Sachtleben proved to be a formidable challenge for Olson for the majority of the women's race, but ultimately was not able to close the gap late. Competing in her first CRA National Championships, Sachtleben earned herself a \$750 runner-up prize. Samantha Bluske (Toledo), Samantha Ginther (Indiana University) and Marion Cherop (Western Kentucky University) finished 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> respectively, earning \$600, \$400, and \$250.

On the men's side, the victory served as a little bit of redemption for Joseph Gray after he finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in the CRA 10k Road Race Championships last March in Richmond, VA. The 18-time Team USA member and 9-time US National Champion used a strong push throughout the second half of the race to pull away from runner-up Stephen Cheptoek (Western Kentucky University). Will Christian (Old Dominion University) had a great race to finish in third and was followed closely by Lex Williams (Illinois State University) and Benjamin Snodgrass (Binghamton University).

"We were extremely impressed by our collegiate fields this morning" said CRA co-founder Jon Molz. "The race was able to attract student-athletes from eight different states representing three different countries, which shows that word is getting out about the CRA and the events we are putting together. Three of the top five men's finishers have previously won prize money at a CRA National Championship and while we greatly appreciate their continued support, we were just as excited that all of our top five finishers on the women's side were competing in their first CRA event."

In addition to strong elite fields, the race also served as the first public event held on the soon to be named Indiana Urban Wilderness Trail in downtown Indianapolis. The challenging course offered a little bit of everything for the participants: cross country style grass fields that had segments of both smooth and rugged running; a flat and fast limestone path right beside Fall Creek where runners could push the pace, and a forest loop that included multiple log jumps, deep sandy sections, and many twists and turns on completely natural surfaces. Keeping true to the "urban" portion of the trail name, the race course also traversed beneath several city bridges and had a large section with the city skyline looming right overhead.

"We couldn't be happier to partner with an event that was created to utilize a brand new trail system right in downtown Indianapolis" said CRA co-founder Steve Taylor. "Hopefully the people of Indianapolis spread the word about these new trails and this event so that others can get out and explore a truly unique place to run and exercise. Promoting healthy lifestyles through running is the CRA's mission and what better way to accomplish that then to work with a new running event on new running trails."

### **2015 Collegiate Running Association ¼ Marathon Trail Championships**

#### **Men:**

1. Joseph Gray – 33:01 - \$1000
2. Patrick Cheptoek – 33:33 - \$750
3. Will Christian – 33:51 - \$600
4. Lex Williams – 34:43 - \$400
5. Benjamin Snodgrass – 35:41 - \$250

#### **Women:**

1. Mara Olson – 37:33 - \$1000
2. Bethany Sachtleben – 38:40 - \$750
3. Samantha Bluske – 40:52 - \$600
4. Samantha Ginther – 41:52 - \$400
5. Marion Cherop – 42:35 - \$250

### **[About the Collegiate Running Association](#)**

The Collegiate Running Association is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization founded November, 2013 with a mission to promote healthy lifestyles among college students by providing and expanding opportunities in the sport of running. Our vision is to offer national championship events in road racing, mountain running, and trail running with prize money specifically reserved for college students that will be open to all college students enrolled in at least one class. In 2014 the CRA held two national championship events: a 10k Road Race held within the Ukrop's Monument Avenue 10k in Richmond, VA, and a Mountain Race held in conjunction with the USATF Mountain Running Championships in Lincoln, New Hampshire. Combined, these events saw nearly 3,700 college students representing 150 colleges and universities compete. In 2015, The CRA will host four national championship events open to all college students, including two road races, a trail race, and a mountain race. To learn more, visit the CRA [National Championships](#) page.

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