

RUNNING STRENGTH





**The Carlsbad
5000 has new
life, thanks to
a passionate
5K runner and
a world-class
athlete.**

***Written by
Megan Woolsey***

Elite runners lead the pack at the Carlsbad 5000, which is home to the current men's and women's 5K records (photo courtesy of Carlsbad 5000).

The iconic Carlsbad 5000 was on the brink of extinction. IRONMAN, A Wanda Sports Holding Company, had recently acquired the race and the unique format of the Carlsbad 5000 didn't quite fit with the rest of the events under the IRONMAN umbrella. There were whispers in the running community that the Carlsbad 5000 would not happen in 2019 and beyond.

This is when Ashley Gibson stepped in with a passion for the Carlsbad 5000 and a determination to keep it going strong in its 34th year of existence, and for many years to come. Gibson's company, Groundwork Endurance, purchased the Carlsbad 5000 in 2018 with the goal of restoring it to its former glory, and bringing the event back to its local roots.

Although Gibson's history as part of the San Diego community is relatively short, she is making a big impact. In 2014, Gibson and her husband, Travis, Texas natives and running enthusiasts, wanted to move to a city that would offer a healthy outdoor lifestyle. They found San Diego, with its beautiful weather and outdoor living. Their first year in San Diego was the first year the Gibsons ran the Carlsbad 5000.

"We had heard of the race and knew it was special given that the Carlsbad 5000 created the entire 5K race movement. Up until 1986, when the first Carlsbad 5000 event took place, the 5K race format really had not existed," says Gibson. "I love the Carlsbad 5000's iconic history that began with Steve Scott setting a world record, and the numerous additional world records that have since been set at the race."

Scott is one of the country's best middle-distance runners of all time. He is credited with designing the race's course along the beautiful Carlsbad coast, and then setting the world record for fastest 5K at the inaugural race. His participation in the very first Carlsbad 5000 set the precedent and helped coin one of the race's nicknames, "The World's Fastest 5K."

Now, another legendary racer is affiliated with the race. When Gibson purchased the Carlsbad 5000, she created a noteworthy collaboration with Meb Keflezighi, a San Diego resident and one of the century's greatest male marathoners, who signed on as part owner of the race. Keflezighi holds a collection of impressive honors—he was the silver

medalist in the marathon at the 2004 Olympics and winner of both the Boston and New York City marathons, among many other titles. Knowing that Keflezighi is a local celebrity in the running community who is now retired from his professional racing career, Gibson says he came to mind as someone who could be a huge contributor to re-establishing the Carlsbad 5000.

"I was inspired to be part-owner of the Carlsbad 5000 because of its historic legacy and special location in the Carlsbad community," Keflezighi says. "Runners, including myself, have come to this stage for many years to run their fastest. Many personal bests are set here and are celebrated afterwards among friends. I'm honored to be part of this special race and I especially hope that it inspires young people to enjoy a running lifestyle."

The Carlsbad 5000 is home to the current men's 5K (13:00) and women's 5K (14:46) world records. Since the first runners crossed the finish line in 1986, Carlsbad 5000 boasted 16 world records and eight U.S. records. It is a unique race because there are runners trying to break world records alongside amateurs on the same course.

Another aspect of the Carlsbad 5000 that sets it apart from other races is the Junior Carlsbad, which celebrates pint-sized runners. An entire day is dedicated to the Junior Carlsbad, the Saturday before the adult races on Sunday. This year marks an important milestone as the Junior Carlsbad's 30th anniversary. There is a diaper dash, a toddler trot and distances all the way up to a 1-mile run for kids ages 7 to 12. Keflezighi is proud to share that his three daughters will be running the Junior Carlsbad this year.

One of the Carlsbad 5000's other nicknames is "Party by the Sea." That's because the race atmosphere is all about fun and the post-race festivities make for an all-day event. Participants will enjoy two icy cold delicious beers compliments of Pizza Port, and live music will fill the streets of the Village. More exciting announcements are still to come, according to the new owners.

The Carlsbad 5000 legacy lives on, thanks to a couple of faithful San Diegans who value the traditions that keep our community strong and bring us new friends from around the world.

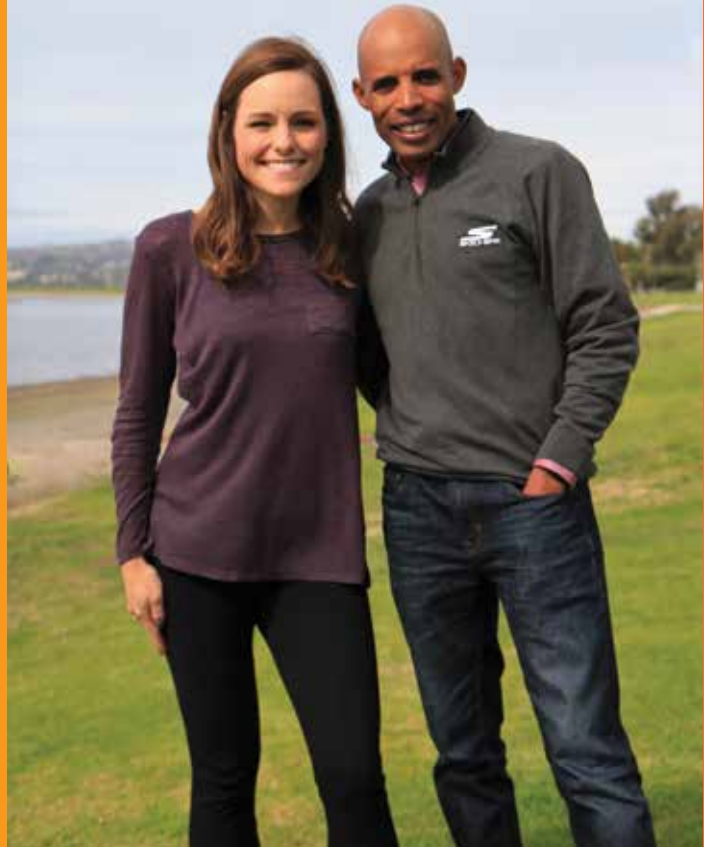
"I LOVE THE CARLSBAD 5000'S ICONIC HISTORY THAT BEGAN WITH STEVE SCOTT SETTING A WORLD RECORD, AND THE NUMEROUS ADDITIONAL WORLD RECORDS THAT HAVE SINCE BEEN SET AT THE RACE," SAYS GIBSON.



The Junior Carlsbad takes place April 6, followed by the Carlsbad 5000 on April 7. For more information, visit carlsbad5000.com.

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Ashley Gibson and Meb Keflezighi are part of the Carlsbad 5000's new ownership team (photo by Taylor Mohr).



Runners head towards the finish line on Carlsbad Village Drive
(photo courtesy of Carlsbad 5000)



CARLSBAD 5000®

WORLD'S FASTEST 5K™