

Up Dawg Ten Miler — Chasing 52:12, the American Record for Women

2021 Olympian Molly Seidel and former American University star Keira D’Amato considered the favorites in this invitational race.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 16, 2020, Washington, DC: Organizers of the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile (CUCB) announced today the list of American women who will join Oakton, VA native and former American University standout Keira D’Amato on the starting line of the **Up Dawg Ten Miler** on Monday morning, November 23 for the race to better 52:12, which would establish a new American Record for a 10-mile women’s-only road race. Besides D’Amato—a 36-year-old mother of two, and full-time realtor—the all American invited field to date includes 2021 Olympic marathoner **Molly Seidel** (26); DC local **Susanna Sullivan** (30); **Bethany Sachtleben** (28), who recently relocated from her hometown of Fairfax, VA to Broomfield, CO; and **Emily Durgin** (26), who is currently training in Flagstaff, AZ.

The inspiration for this record attempt can be traced to April 6, 2014, when CUCB race committee member D’Amato, who was pregnant with her first child at the time, and was nearly 10 years removed from her outstanding running career at American University, held the finish line break tape as **Janet Bawcom** broke the American Record for the second consecutive year, on the flat and very fast CUCB Ten Mile course. It wasn’t until early last spring—some two years after restarting her competitive running career, and placing 15th in 2:34:24 at the 2020 U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials—that D’Amato thought to herself, “I can run faster than 52:12,” and reached out to CUCB race director Phil Stewart to gauge his interest in race directing the Up Dawg Ten Miler; Stewart and the CUCB organizing committee quickly agreed to help.

When asked what she thought about D’Amato’s ambition, Bawcom said: “I am so excited for Keira on her quest for the 10-mile American Record. Keira seems to be super fit right now, so it will be fun to see how it goes for her. I was a few months shy of 36 when I ran the 52:12, so it would be nice to keep the record in that age group and remind those younger runners that the 30+ crowd can still bring it!”

For those who wonder, the inspiration for the name Up Dawg comes from D’Amato’s love of a good joke. As her 2500+ followers on Strava know, every run she uploads to the social network for endurance athletes comes with an amusing title. Like this recent post: *It’s hard to explain puns to kleptomaniacs because they always take things literally.* Or this: *I have an addiction to cheddar cheese, but it’s only mild.* Up Dawg? Well, devoted fans of *The Office* sitcom will know the punchline. For others who wonder what’s Up Dawg, Google might prove useful.

“In terms of running, 2020 has been a pretty good year for me,” said D’Amato “Running has been my fun escape from everything we’ve been facing, so I’ve been very protective of making sure it’s just that—fun! And that seems to be working for me. Up Dawg is a name that makes us laugh and, hopefully, will make other people laugh too.

I am coming off recent half marathon and road 5K personal records, so I’m feeling extremely excited about the opportunity to chase an American Record. Let’s have some fun next Monday, shall we?”

Among the invited runners who will join D'Amato to take advantage of the undisclosed flat and fast course—and the rare opportunity to race in these times of Covid—D'Amato has the fastest 10-mile personal best (53:23), which she ran en route to a 1:10:01 at the 2020 Aramco Houston Half Marathon. Local runner, Susanna Sullivan has run Cherry Blossom numerous times, running her fastest in 2014 (54:31), while chasing Janet Bawcom. Bethany Sachtleben has run Cherry Blossom a couple of times, but her fastest 10-mile time (54:42) was run in 2019 in Pittsburgh. Emily Durgin hasn't run a 10-mile race, but her road 10K best of 33:38 is only one second slower than D'Amato's, so she is sure to be in the thick of things on November 23rd. Molly Seidel hasn't run a 10-mile race either, but her 1:09:35 half marathon best, second-place finish in the 2020 U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials, and her 2:25:13 marathon best, placing her 6th overall at the invitation only 2020 London Marathon on October 4, would indicate that she's got a fast 10 miler in her legs.

While the Up Dawg Ten Miler will not take place on the traditional CUCB Ten Mile course, the route will be flat and fast—depending upon weather conditions, of course—but the location will not be made public due to Covid-19 restrictions on crowd size.

There will be a livestream of the event at 8 am Eastern time on November 23 on the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile Run & 5K Run-Walk Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Credit-Union-Cherry-Blossom-Ten-Mile-Run/158596577506334>. Anyone interested in following the race should like the Facebook page so the stream will appear in their Facebook feed.

Race results, with mile splits for all runners, will be distributed by press release as soon as possible following the race. Media interested in covering the race in person should contact Keith Peters at 307-690-6803, or kpeters@cherryblossom.org. Mary Hanley will be on site on race day to provide media support and facilitate post-race interviews.