

The Virgin Islands Consortium

St. Thomas Welcomes Elite Runners For Third Cruise Marathon Challenge

Tourism / **Published On June 03, 2019 11:50 AM /**

Staff **June 03, 2019**



Elite runners from 11 countries are returning to St. Thomas today to compete for top honors in the third cruise marathon challenge as they island hop via the Carnival Fascination ship, the Department of Tourism (D.O.T.) has announced.

D.O.T., in collaboration with St. Thomas Road Runners, will once again host the race. The first two [Southern Caribbean Challenges](#) were held in 2016 and 2017, while last year's event was cancelled due to the impact of the 2017 hurricanes.

Over the seven-day challenge, 22 runners hailing from the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Czech Republic, Canada, Poland, Australia, Pakistan, Italy, Taiwan

and Philippines will compete in seven marathons on six Caribbean islands and one aboard a cruise ship, according to the release.

Between them, the runners have broken 15 World Records and have completed more than 2,000 marathons in different parts of the world; some have run a marathon in over 100 countries.

Ziyad Rahim, Founder and CEO of [Z Adventures](#) and an adventure-runner from Pakistan, stated: "We have a star-studded lineup of marathon globetrotters on this trip. The oldest competitor is 71 years young and the field includes multiple World Record holders in various categories. Runners on the trip have run marathons all over the world. However, these are all new countries and destinations for them, and they are eagerly looking forward to this adventure."

Rahim, a Guinness World Record holder who is also participating in three of the races, said he looked forward to local Virgin Islands runners taking part and meeting the group. "All our runners are amateurs. Some are doctors, lawyers, teachers, diplomats and bankers. But we all have one thing in common - the love for travel and running. In short, we are a United Nations of runners hopping from island to island, country to country, and sharing the tarmac with like-minded people from all over the world," he said.

Joseph Boschulte, U.S. Virgin Islands Commissioner of Tourism designee and an advocate for boosting sports tourism in the territory, described the cruise marathoners as excellent examples of sports tourism.

"I'm delighted to welcome them as they promote healthy outdoor activities while simultaneously promoting the U.S. Virgin Islands to runners around the world as well as their friends, families and supporters," he said.

The marathon schedule began in Puerto Rico on Sunday morning, and continues to St. Thomas, St. Maarten, St. Kitts, St. Lucia and Barbados.

The Caribbean Sea Marathon, aboard the Carnival ship, entails running 233 rounds of the ship track making it possibly the hardest of the races due to its repetition on a moving ship.

Notable athletes include:

Beth Sanden (USA): Beth is a 64 year-old paraplegic athlete, who holds multiple Guinness World Records in marathons. In 2002, while training for Ironman, she had a bike crash which caused a T6-7 spinal cord injury paralyzing her from the waist down. After multiple surgeries, she resumed training and went on to break world records by completing marathons on all seven continents and the North Pole. She is a motivational speaker, a triathlon coach and author of the book "Rekindle Your Purpose".

Dan Micola (Czech Republic): Dan has set some incredible running feats. In 2017, he broke the world record for most marathons completed in different countries; in one year he ran 59 marathons in 58 countries. He runs more than 50 marathons in an average year and has completed 238 marathons in 94 countries.

Wojciech Machnik (Poland): Wojciech is currently on a world record-breaking challenge as he is aiming to break the record set by Dan Micola. Since August 2018, he has completed marathons in 54 countries. Wojciech is a motivational speaker and regularly

appears on Polish television to share his experiences.

Lichu Sloan (Taiwan): Lichu, the oldest athlete on the trip at age 71, has completed 230 marathons in 90 countries across all seven continents. She ran the Boston Marathon three times; ran seven marathons on seven continents in seven weeks; completed all World Marathon Majors and a marathon in each of the 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia, twice. Lichu started marathon running at age 52.

Kevin Brosi (USA): President of Marathon Globetrotters, the premier club for recording statistics of runners who have run marathons around the world, has run over 600 marathons in 50 countries and all seven continents. He has also completed a marathon in all 50 U.S. states (three times) and once in all Canadian provinces and territories.

Liz Gmerek (USA): Liz is a marathon globetrotter and has to date completed more than 500 marathons and 200 half-marathons, covering all 50 U.S. states (three times) and 30 countries.

Karen Michelson (Canada): Karen has completed 138 marathons in 38 countries on all seven continents and all 50 U.S. states. She is the first Canadian woman, and first non-American woman, to run a marathon on all seven continents. She is the first Canadian to be a member of the Grand Slam Club by running marathons on all seven continents and the North Pole. She is also the only female to compete in the North Pole Bike race.

Deborah Lazerson (Italy): Deborah has completed 150 marathons in 40 countries. She is also a 50 states finisher and has completed a marathon on all seven continents. She is one of fewer than 20 runners, of a field of over 25,000, to have achieved Double Agent Mount Everest status by completing more than 30 marathons and half-marathons in different countries, states and provinces within 365 days. She is a former U.S. NASA Astronaut Candidate Finalist, in 1994 and 1997.

Jane Trumper (Australia): Jane will be aiming to complete her 300th marathon on this trip. The first woman to run across the Simpson Desert in Australia, covering 644 kilometers in 45-degree Celsius heat, Jane is also the first woman to complete the grand slam of ultras in Australia (four races of 100 miles or more in under four months) and has the fastest known time running Via Francigena - 2,300 kilometers from Canterbury, U.K. to Rome, Italy in under six weeks, unsupported.

Rico Bocagz (Germany): Rico is the youngest member of the group and at 31 has already completed 244 marathons in 50 countries. During the Eastern Caribbean Challenge in March 2019, he won the races in Guadeloupe, St. Martin and Martinique.

Ziyad Rahim (Pakistan): Apart from launching the cruise challenges, Ziyad holds 10 Guinness World Records in long-distance running. He has run 161 marathons in 63 countries and is the only athlete in the world to complete a half-marathon, full marathon and an ultramarathon on all seven continents six times. In 2015, he took 36 runners from around the world to complete seven marathons on seven continents in the shortest time. The challenge was completed and in the process 15 Guinness World Records were broken. His company, Z Adventures, has organized marathons in over 40 countries across all seven continents, which is the most by any marathon travel company.