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**Olympic Medalist Samuelson Kicks Off Training with Gazelle Girls in West Michigan
*Dual finisher gifts for Gazelle Girl and Fifth Third River Bank Run also announced***

GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN -- Gazelle Sports has announced that Olympic medalist and two time Boston Marathon winner Joan Benoit Samuelson will travel to West Michigan this week for Gazelle Girl MeetUps on Friday, January 8 and Saturday, January 9 in Holland and Grand Rapids. Samuelson, who held the 25K American record (1:24:43) on the Fifth Third River Bank Run course from 1986 to 2012, will participate in a series of events with women planning to participate in the fourth annual Gazelle Girl Half Marathon & 5k on Sunday, April 17.

"I'm looking forward to my return to West Michigan to kick off training for the Gazelle Girl Half Marathon & 5k," says Joan Benoit Samuelson. "When the women's marathon was first introduced as an Olympic sport in 1984, I had the opportunity to take home a gold medal on behalf of my country. All women events like the Gazelle Girl Half Marathon & 5k provide opportunities for women everywhere to get involved and take home their personal 'gold' in terms of better health, a personal record or doing something they didn't feel was possible!"

On January 8, women are invited to the Haworth Inn & Conference Center in downtown Holland where Samuelson will share stories and answer questions. Afterward, women are invited to rejoin Samuelson at Gazelle Sports-Holland for autographs and refreshments provided by Nike. On January 9, women can join Samuelson at the new Mary Free Bed YMCA at 8a for a 2-5 mile training run (various outside routes available), followed by a Q&A session and refreshments with Samuelson in the YMCA Community Room.

Given Samuelson's connection to women and sports, along with her former long-standing 25K American record, Gazelle Sports is also announcing that the Gazelle Girl Half Marathon & 5k and the Fifth Third River Bank Run will partner for the second consecutive year on a dual finisher medal for women who complete

MORE

GAZELLE GIRL HALF MARATHON & 5k
Olympic Medalist Samuelson Kicks Off Training
pg. 2

both the Gazelle Girl Half Marathon on Sunday, April 17 and the Fifth Third River Bank Run 25K on Saturday, May 14. In addition, the two events will introduce for the first time in 2016 a dual finisher gift (yet to be determined) for those women who complete the Gazelle Girl 5k and the Fifth Third 5k. Women will be awarded their dual finisher gifts from the Gazelle Girl Half Marathon & 5k tent near the Fifth Third River Bank Run finish line on Saturday, May 14.

About the Event

The Gazelle Girl Half Marathon & 5k began in 2013 as the first women's only half marathon event in Michigan and remains one of the largest events of its kind in the state. Organized by Gazelle Sports, Gazelle Girl connects women through movement, achievement, celebration, friendship and fun. Proceeds from the event will benefit the Gazelle Sports Foundation, Grand Rapids Opportunities for Women (GROW), Kent County Girls on the Run and the YWCA of West Central Michigan. Half marathon and 5k training schedules are available at <http://gazellegirlhalfmarathon.com/training/>. For additional information and event registration, please visit <http://gazellegirlhalfmarathon.com>.

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