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## RECORD ATTEMPTS, MO'S RETURN AND RUN FOR UKRAINE ARE HIGHLIGHTS AS VITALITY WEEKEND RETURNS

- Festival of running starts with family-friendly Vitality Westminster Mile on Sunday 1 May
- Sir Mo Farah returns to racing at Vitality London 10,000 on Bank Holiday Monday 2 May, while Eilish McColgan threatens British and European 10K record
- More than 16,500 people set to take part in event that includes special Run for Ukraine wave to raise funds for DEC's Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal

The Vitality Westminster Mile (Sunday 1 May) and Vitality London 10,000 (Monday 2 May) return to central London this weekend for the first time since 2019.

More than 16,500 people will take part in the Vitality London 10,000 on Bank Holiday Monday 2 May, headed by elite races that will see Sir Mo Farah returning to racing for the first time since June 2021 and the event debut of in-form Eilish McColgan, who could threaten Paula Radcliffe's 19-year-old British and European 10K record.

Sir Mo is the most successful athlete in the history of the Vitality London 10,000, with seven victories to his name, and the multiple world and Olympic champion will use this year's event as his first race back since picking up an injury last year while trying to qualify for the Tokyo Olympic Games.

The 39-year-old will face his long-time friend and adversary Chris Thompson, as well as Phil Sesemann, the first British finisher at last year's London Marathon. Andy Butchart, however, has had to withdraw from the race.

McColgan comes into the elite women's race in red-hot form having smashed the British 5K record in Malaga, Spain, last Sunday (April 24). The Scottish star is already the owner of the women's only British 10K record (30:52), which she set at the Great Manchester Run last year.

Only two British women have ever run faster over 10K than McColgan: Radcliffe, whose European and British record stands at 30:21, and McColgan's mum, Liz Nuttall (formerly McColgan) who is the Scottish record holder with her personal best of 30:39 set in Orlando in 1989.

**McColgan said:** "I couldn't have asked for a better start to my 2022 season than to set a new British 5K record in my first race. Now I'm really looking forward to coming back to the UK and running the Vitality London 10,000 and seeing what shape I am in over 10K."

Joining McColgan in the elite women's field is two-time Vitality London 10,000 champion Steph Twell and Jess Piasecki, the sixth fastest British woman of all time over 10K. Charlotte Purdue, who was ninth at The Boston Marathon earlier this month and was due to race, has had to withdraw due to illness.

A record 18 wheelchair athletes will take part this year, with the field led by Paralympic stars David Weir and Shelly Woods.

For the full elite fields, [click here](#).

There will be 10 start waves at the Vitality London 10,000, including a Run for Ukraine wave, where the 2,000 entrants are encouraged to wearing blue and yellow and fundraise for the Ukraine relief effort. One hundred per cent of the discounted £15 entry fees for this wave will be donated by organisers London Marathon Events to the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal.

for a cause that means so much to him.

Anthony's wife Anna is Ukrainian and he is running 10 kilometres for as long as it takes to complete 1,569 miles – the distance between the football grounds of Brighton and Hove Albion, the club he supports, and Anna's favourite football team in her home town of Dnipro.

Anna's mother has fled Ukraine to live with the couple in Brighton, but the remainder of her family remain in the war-torn country.

**Anthony said:** *"Anna has many friends and family still in Dnipro, some unable to leave but most wanting to stay in their homes.*

*"I met Anna while watching England play football at the Euro 2012 tournament. As it was football that brought us together, I have committed to run those 1,569 miles, the distance from Brighton's Amex Stadium to the Dnipro Arena by way of running events like the Vitality London 10,000 and other half and full marathons until I complete the distance.*

*"Between our [fundraising page](#) and money donated by friends and family beforehand we have managed to send more than £16,000 of aid so far and we hope we can send so much more. Every penny we raise is spent solely on medical aid."*

After a successful first edition in 2019, the Celebrate You wave returns to this year's Vitality London 10,000 to promote the mental health benefits that regular exercise delivers.

The wave of 1,000 participants will be led by Celebrate You co-founder, journalist and author Bryony Gordon who will be running her 10th consecutive 10K as part of her '10 days of 10Ks' challenge to promote the importance of activity for mental health and the peer support group Mental Health Mates that she founded in 2016.

Also running in the Celebrate You wave are theatre star Carrie Hope Fletcher, body positivity influencers and models Shareefa J and Jade Seabrook and Helen Thorn, one half of the comedy duo Scummy Mummies.

The Vitality Westminster Mile, staged in partnership with Westminster City Council, takes place on Sunday 1 May, with thousands of participants taking on a series of mile events throughout the day from 10:00 to 14:30.

Among the 15 waves on the day are the #RunforRuth wave for the Ruth Strauss Foundation, led by Sir Andrew Strauss, and a Special Olympics GB Unified Mile. There are also nine family waves, a parkrun wave and a junior wheelchair athletes wave. Parents or guardians have been able to register children under-12 for free.

The free Vitality Wellness Festival takes place in Green Park on both days, featuring exciting free activities for children on the Sunday and the chance to run on the Vitality Tumbleator, a giant treadmill, on both days.

The events share one of the most stunning Start and Finish Lines in sport, with The Mall providing the setting for an iconic start and Buckingham Palace as the backdrop for a stunning finish.

The Vitality London 10,000 will be broadcast live on BBC Sport Online, iPlayer and Red Button, as well as the [Vitality London 10,000 Facebook page](#), from 09:45 to 11:45.

Images and video coverage from the Vitality London 10,000 will be available [here](#). Images from the Vitality Westminster Mile will be available [here](#).

**ENDS**

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#### NOTES TO EDITORS

##### About the Vitality London 10,000

- The Vitality Westminster Mile and Vitality London 10,000 were last held in central London in May 2019
- The 2020 and 2021 events in central London were cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic
- The virtual Vitality London 10,000 first took place in 2021 and is taking place again in 2022
- The Vitality Mile and Vitality London 10,000 were staged in Hatfield Park in July 2021
- The Vitality Westminster Mile and Vitality London 10,000 are organised by London Marathon Events

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