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Jenny Simpson Runs 4:19.3 To Win 2013 5th Avenue Mile, Nick Willis Wins Men's in 3:52.1

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By Chris Lotsbom, @ChrisLotsbom
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NEW YORK (22-Sep) — Jenny Simpson and Nick Willis were all smiles crossing the finish of the NYRR Fifth Avenue Mile presented by Nissan here today, winning handily under perfectly blue skies. Running away from the field at halfway, Simpson cruised to her victory in a very fast 4:19.3, while Willis waited until the final 600 meters to separate from the field. His winning time was 3:52.1.

SIMPSON CONTINUES AMERICAN WINNING STREAK, EARNS SECOND VICTORY

Jenny Simpson didn't waste any time asserting herself at the front of the women's contest. Soon after hearing the starter's gun, the 27-year-old found herself leading the pack of 15 alongside Australia's Zoe Buckman. Spread out across two lanes of Fifth Avenue yet still bunched close together, the group would reach the first quarter mile mark in 65 seconds, a step behind the 2013 World Championships silver medalist in Simpson.

It was in the second quarter mile, rising up a slight incline, that Simpson gritted her teeth and began to separate from the bunch. Passing halfway in 2:14, the 2011 IAAF World Champion was only getting started.

As she would tell New York Road Runners President and CEO Mary Wittenberg, "I didn't want it to be close. That's how a medalist runs."

"I kept telling myself to be relaxed at halfway," explained Simpson. "My thought was when we hit the descent at halfway, just run hard the rest of the way. I was pleasantly surprised how well it worked out for me."

From there on, it was the solo Simpson show. Gradually step by step the gap back to chasers Morgan Uceny and Violah Lagat lengthened from five to ten meters. Splitting 3:18 at three quarters of a mile, Simpson had a four second advantage on the group.

"I didn't know how much of a lead I had, I just kept focusing on the car ahead of me," she would say with a laugh.

With 200 meters remaining and the crowd noise growing, Simpson allowed a smile to come across her face, knowing she had a kick left in her to finish the job. Stopping the clock at 4:19.3, Simpson earned her second victory here in three years and extended America's winning streak to five. Hers was the fourth-fastest time in the history of the race.

"This is a good feeling. In some ways this is the simplest race of the season, a straight line you just run as hard as you can and see how everything shakes out," she said.

Second went to Uceny in 4:23.4, her second straight week with a podium finish at a road mile.

"I'm really happy with my finish," said Uceny, 28. "Jenny Simpson ran a great race. She was really aggressive and made a break early on. Just the way my season's been going, I wasn't ready to cover that move but I finished strong and was happy with the race. It's a great day and a great event."

Rounding out the top five were Dutchwoman Susan Kuijken (third, 4:24.2), Kenyan Violah Lagat (fourth, 4:25.1), and Italian Margherita Magnani (fifth, 4:26.5). American Olympian Shannon Rowbury placed tenth in 4:28.3.

In the end, the day belonged to Simpson, who was swarmed with autograph-seeking kids soon after the race. She won \$6000 in prize and bonus money, including a \$1000 prime for leading at halfway.



Jenny Simpson on her way to winning her second Fifth Avenue Mile in three years in 4:19.3, the fourth-fastest time in event history (photo by Jane Monti for Race Results Weekly) [Click for photo gallery](#)

"When you can do well at the World Championships [silver medal], that's the most important thing of the season. But finishing off the season with a win in the United States and a city like New York, that's like food for your running soul. That leaves me going into my break with a really good feeling going into next year," said the champion.

Fifth Avenue Mile Professional Women

Pl.	Bib	First	Last	Age	City	State	Country	Affiliation	Time
1	32	Jenny	Simpson	27	Boulder	CO	United States	New Balance	04:19.3
2	42	Morgan	Uceny	28	Plymouth	IN	United States	adidas	04:23.4
3	40	Susan	Kuijken	27	Melbourne		Netherlands	Nike	04:24.2
4	44	Violah	Lagat	24	Colorado Springs	CO	Kenya	adidas	04:25.1
5	45	Margherita	Magnani	26	Ostia		Italy	New Balance	04:26.5
6	34	Hannah	England	26	Birmingham		United Kingdom	Nike	04:26.8
7	38	Charlene	Thomas	31	Menston	0	United Kingdom	New Balance	04:26.9
8	37	Heather	Kampf	26	Minneapolis	MN	United States	Asics	04:27.8
9	39	Katie	Mackey	25	Seattle	WA	United States	Brooks	04:28.1
10	33	Shannon	Rowbury	29	San Francisco	CA	United States	Nike	04:28.3
11	36	Gabriele	Anderson	27	Minneapolis	MN	United States	Brooks	04:29.0
12	46	Sara	Vaughn	27	Beaverton	OR	United States	unattached	04:29.8
13	35	Zoe	Buckman	24	London		Australia	Nike	04:30.0
14	41	Chelsea	Reilly	24	Oakland	CA	United States	Bay Area Track Club	04:30.8
15	43	Eilish	McColgan	22	Carnoustie		United Kingdom	Nike	04:30.9

LATE BREAK EARNS WILLIS MEN'S TITLE

The men's contest began similar to the women's in that the first quarter mile featured a group closely bunched together with a pair out front. Bernard Lagat, the 2011 Fifth Avenue Mile champion, and Olympic silver medalist Leo Manzano pulled the 20-man field along with Will Leer a step to their left.

As the group rose the hill culminating at East 75th Street, Leer, 28, made a move to be the first at halfway (\$1000 bonus), taking the outright lead in a matter of seconds. The break served to wake the field up.

"When Will Leer took a lead after half, that is when I thought 'this is good, someone is making a break,'" said Lagat, noting that the field had began to bunch and slow.

Leer would be first across the halfway mark in 2:00 –earning the \$1000 prime– before the race really got interesting. In the third quarter mile, it was New Zealand's Willis moving up on the outside, escaping a brief period of being boxed in. Also making contact with the leaders was Australia's Collis Birmingham.

As the clock read 2:57 with a quarter mile remaining, Willis simply turned to another gear. The only one to respond immediately was Garrett Heath, though by the time he could begin his kick Willis was three steps ahead.

Urging the crowd to cheer with about 100 meters to go by waving his arm, Willis already knew he would break the tape with his second win here in five years.

"I found myself in the lead and my legs were rolling pretty good so [I said] I feel good I'll go all the way to the finish," said Willis, who also won the event in 2008 after winning his Olympic silver medal. "I wanted to enjoy the crowd the last 100 meters."

The battle for podium spots, however, was just heating up, with Heath trying to fend off a hard charging Lagat.

"When Nick took off I thought I have to go with him but he made a huge break and from there I wanted to see and chase the other guys," said Lagat.

After Willis crossed the line in 3:52.1, the next four finishers would all come in within two-tenths of a second of one another.

Lagat managed to overtake Heath for second, 3:52.9 to 3:53.0, with Ryan Hill sneaking in for fourth in the exact same time as Heath. A tenth of a second later came Leer in fifth.

But, topping them all was Willis, who said the win was a bright spot in his 2013 campaign. After being sidelined with a hamstring injury for most of the outdoor track season, Willis and coach Ron Warhurst agreed that the 30-year-old was at a different part of the training cycle than most of the field, the majority of whom ended their season here.

Where most are wrapping up their hard training, Willis is only getting started in his buildup for the IAAF World Indoor Championships.

"Next year is the World Indoor championships, maybe my last chance to do a World Indoors," he said. "I'm treating this little bit that I've done now as an indoor season, and I'll treat the indoor season as an outdoor season. So my goal is to kind of replicate the times I run outdoors on an indoor track."

In total, 16 men broke four minutes for the event, which is slightly downhill from start to finish. Interestingly, Willis's 70-year-old coach, Warhurst, ran the 70+ division and earned a net-time of 8:01.



Nick Willis Wins (Click for Photo Gallery)

Fifth Avenue Mile Professional Men

Pl.	Bib	First	Last	Age	City	State	Country	Affiliation	Time
1	8	Nick	Willis	30	Ann Arbor	MI	New Zealand	adidas	03:52.1
2	2	Bernard	Lagat	38	Tucson	AZ	United States	Nike	03:52.9
3	10	Garrett	Heath	27	Palo Alto	CA	United States	Saucony	03:53.0
4	15	Ryan	Hill	23	Raleigh	NC	United States	Nike	03:53.0
5	7	Will	Leer	28	Marina Del Rey	CA	United States	Nike	03:53.1
6	6	David	Torrence	27	Oakland	CA	United States	Nike	03:53.2
7	11	Craig	Miller	26	Madison	WI	United States	New Balance	03:53.7
8	17	Collis	Birmingham	28	Ballarat	0	Australia	Nike	03:54.3
9	16	Matthew	Elliott	28	Rock Hill	SC	United States	Brooks	03:54.7
10	14	Ben	Blankenship	24	Eugene	OR	United States	Nike Oregon Track Club	03:55.7
11	3	Leonel	Manzano	29	Austin	TX	United States	Austin Track Club	03:56.0
12	20	Ben	St Lawrence	31	Centennial Park	0	Australia	New Balance	03:56.2
13	9	Evan	Jager	24	Portland	OR	United States	Nike	03:57.6
14	12	Ryan	Gregson	23	Wollongong	NS	Australia	Nike	03:58.1
15	18	Daniel	Huling	30	Portland	OR	United States	Nike	03:58.1
16	22	Andy	Baddeley	31	London	0	United Kingdom	New Balance	03:58.7
17	4	Nick	Symmonds	29	Eugene	OR	United States	Nike Oregon Track Club	04:00.1
18	21	Brett	Robinson	22	Ballarat		Australia	New Balance	04:02.0
19	5	Lopez	Lomong	28	Beaverton	OR	United States	Nike	04:02.9
20	19	Pablo	Solares	28	San Francisco	CA	Mexico		04:05.3

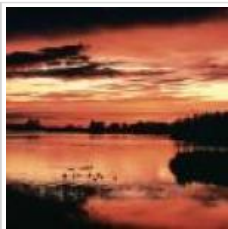
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Jenny Simpson queen of the road after victory on Fifth Avenue

Denver Post wire services The Denver Post

Posted:

DenverPost.com

NEW YORK — Jenny Simpson, one of the most successful track and field athletes in University of Colorado history, enjoyed a victorious New York moment Sunday, easily winning the Fifth Avenue Mile.

Simpson, the 2011 world champion and silver medalist this year in the 1,500-meter run, won in 4 minutes, 19.3 seconds — the fourth-fastest women's finish in the history of the race. Fellow American Morgan Uceny was second in 4:23.4.

Simpson didn't waste any time making her way to the front of the pack after a quarter-mile. At three-quarters of a mile, she had a four-second advantage on the lead group of runners.

"I didn't know how much of a lead I had. I just kept focusing on the car ahead of me," said Simpson, a multiple NCAA steeplechase champion.

With cheers from the crowd growing in the final 200 meters, a smile crept across Simpson's face as the two-time Olympian realized her second victory here in three years was imminent.

"Thanks to everyone that came out to #5thAveMile to cheer us on today," Simpson posted on her Facebook account. "The crowd excitement makes a huge difference!!!"