

Classic weekend kicks off Saturday

By Richard J. Bayne
Times Herald-Record

MIDDLETOWN – The Classic weekend starts Saturday, and that means thousands of people will pour into Middletown for the two-day event.

Besides The Classic 10K and 5K on Sunday, there will be a Junior Classic on Saturday and a host of sports and community events throughout the weekend.

The 10-year-old Classic is an offshoot of the Orange Classic 10K, which ran for 25 years before disbanding.

Frank Giannino, one of the creators of the event, said the number of runners and walkers is “way up” this year. He’s expecting at least 1,000 runners and walkers when the starting gun sounds for the 10K and 5K, up from last year. Organizers are expecting about 4,000 people to attend the events, which will be centered at Middletown High

School.

In a first time for the Classic, the school’s IAAF-certified track will be put to use for the Classic Mile event on Saturday. Olympic long jump world record-holder Bob Beamon will return this year for the Bob Beamon Long Jump Challenge Saturday. Also Saturday, kids and parents will show their stuff as relay teams on the track.

On Sunday, Classic organizers and Middletown police are reminding city residents that many streets will be closed during parts of the morning as the race progresses. Police will start closing streets near the high school at 6:15 a.m. and the entire 10K course will be closed by 6:45 a.m. The race is expected to end around 11 a.m.

The Community Health Expo will be back this year. It will be open from 8 a.m.-noon Sunday, along with many other booths at the midway next to Middletown High.

Giannino is particularly proud

Registration, packet pickup

Friday: Until 3 p.m. at Frank’s Custom Shoe-Fitting, 741 Rte. 211 E., Middletown

Friday: 4-7 p.m., Middletown H.S. stadium

Saturday: 8 a.m.-noon, Middletown H.S. stadium

Sunday (race day): 6:30-8 a.m., Middletown H.S. stadium

of the Classic’s Stuff the Bus Challenge, new this year, in which race participants and sponsors are invited to fill a school bus with school supplies and nonperishable food items.

Giannino is reminding participants and fans that The Classic serves to bring the community together while it honors Frank Shorter, who grew up in Middletown and went on to score a long list of running triumphs.



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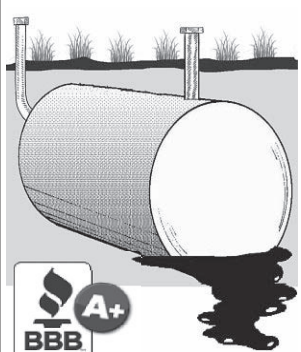
Race organizers said the route encompasses Shorter’s boyhood training loops.

The 10K starts on Gardner Avenue adjacent to the high school

and goes west on East Main Street to downtown Middletown; up Monhagen Avenue to Davidge Park; and through Randall Heights and Wisner Avenue, to finish at the high school.

—dbayne@th-record.com

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