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SANCLEMENTE SURGE CONTINUES, WHEELER BREAKS THROUGH IN 2026 GRANDMA'S MARATHON WHEELCHAIR DIVISION

Sancllemente Wins Third Straight Title, Wheeler Wins First in Duluth

(DULUTH, MINN.) – Luis Francisco Sancllemente and Michelle Wheeler crossed the finish line first on Saturday morning in the 2026 Grandma's Marathon wheelchair division, with each win meaning vastly different things.

For Sancllemente, it continued a years-long dominance in Duluth – he's now won three straight Grandma's Marathon men's wheelchair titles, only the sixth man to win three or more and only the fourth to win three consecutively.

To win, the 2024 Colombian Paralympian had to outduel Josh Cassidy, who hadn't competed at Grandma's Marathon since a fourth-place finish in 2026. The pair was essentially neck-and-neck through 22 miles, but Sancllemente opened nearly a 30-second gap in the race's final miles.

The winning time of 1:33:33 was the slowest of the last three years for Sancllemente, beating Cassidy by 12 seconds in the end. American Miguel Vergara was thought a top contender, but he was forced to drop from the race shortly after the halfway mark.

Wheeler, meanwhile, finally broke through at Grandma's Marathon after finishing as the runner-up in 2023 and in fourth place in 2022. She led the race from wire-to-wire, opening nearly a 90-second lead by halfway and winning with a time of 1:59:50.

A 2024 US Paralympian in short- and middle-distance track and field events, Wheeler also has career titles at the Los Angeles and Philadelphia Marathons.

Hannah Babalola finished as the runner-up with a time of 2:02:50, adding that to a third-place finish in this race a year ago. Babalola is a three-time Paralympian for Nigeria and won the 2022 Twin Cities Marathon.



There were 27 total finishers – 23 men and four women – in the 2026 Grandma’s Marathon wheelchair division.

Full results of the 2026 Grandma’s Marathon wheelchair division can be found [HERE](#).

For any questions or interview requests, please contact Marketing & Public Relations Director Zach Schneider via phone at (218) 343-9874 or via email at zach@grandmasmarathon.com.

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ABOUT GRANDMA’S MARATHON

Started by a local group of runners in 1977, Grandma’s Marathon has grown from just 150 participants its first year to now one of the largest and best-known marathons in the United States. Widely regarded as a world class event with small town charm, our race has now added the Garry Bjorklund Half Marathon and William A. Irvin 5K to its weekend offerings.

With all three races combined, our race weekend welcomes more than 20,000 participants – usually from all 50 states and from 70+ different countries – and brings with it close to \$40M of economic impact to the region.

The race got its name from the Duluth-based group of famous Grandma’s Restaurants, the first major sponsor of the marathon. As the popularity of Grandma’s Marathon weekend has grown, our mission has stayed the same – to organize, promote, and deliver annual events and programs that cultivate running, educational, social, and charitable opportunities to our communities.

Grandma’s Marathon-Duluth, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization with a 10-person, full-time staff and a 17-member Board of Directors.



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