



Shadow Project: A new elite masters racing team emerges in the Washington DC metro region

Master's road racing has thrived in the DC metro area for decades. The many running clubs and weekend road races are well populated with those in the 40 and up age groups. In the past year, something different has emerged – an elite masters' running team focused on middle distance track events with the goal to develop USATF and AAU Masters National Champions and Medalists to become medal contenders at Masters' Athletics World Championships on the international level.

Some of the fastest master's road racers in the Washington DC metro region with a strong interest in master's track formed a team, called the Shadow Project. This team consists of a select group of 40+ and 50+ men who have been dominating the local road and track leaderboards over the years. The team formed easily as most of the members have come to know each other through the running circuit and shared a desire to take their racing to the next level on the track.

The concept behind Shadow Project is simple. Selectively identify a group of the best regional master's middle-distance runners and apply a multi-year approach to training with hopes to further develop American World Class Level Master's 800 and 1500 athletes.



Left to Right – Peter Bandettini, Mark Walchinsky, Mark Neff, Hasan Hobbs, Scott Harmon and James Coates (not pictured Jason Abbot and Scott Wallace)

from 400M to 3000M, demonstrating their dedication and potential on the track. They were selected not only based on their performance but their ability to mesh well and contribute to the team dynamic.

The runners on the team include 50+ runners: Peter Bandettini, Mark Neff, and Scott Harmon and 40+ runners: Mark Walchinsky, Hasan Hobbs and James Coates. Members from just outside the DC metro area include Jason Abbot (VA) and Scott Wallace (MD). Every one of these runners has multiple National Championships titles and medals to their names, ranging



Head Coach Alex Amankwah - Professional 800M runner for District Track Club

They are coached by professional half-miler and Olympian, Alex Amankwah, of the District Track Club. They also maintain a network of mentors, resources, contributors and donors to provide the infrastructure required to compete at the top level; all available to the athletes. The goal is to equip the athletes with any available resources needed to be successful.

Shadow Project is truly unique for a few reasons. First, the team chemistry is extremely positive and respectful. These runners are both talented (age performances > 85%) and highly motivated, but also respect the reality that they all have day jobs, families, and other constraints, which require a degree of flexibility and discipline. Second, the professional coaching and workout plans bring focus and structure, and the team workouts bring added comradery. Regular weekly meetings with the team and coach Alex further solidify coherence and help to clarify and adjust workout plans. Third, the primary goal of the team is to compete at the highest levels internationally in middle distance master's track. This last aspect is, ultimately, the bottom line and what makes this team truly special in the DC area.



Shadow Project takes 1-2-3 at a late summer 2021 track 5000M event (Left to right – Mark Neff, Mark Walchinsky and Hasan Hobbs)

Shadow Project will be competing in 2022 at Mondo College Invitational at JDL Fast track followed by USATF Eastern Regionals at Ocean Breeze in New York and USATF Masters National Championships at The Armory in New York.

For more information, please contact shadow.project.tc@gmail.com and follow us on Instagram at Shadow Project Running.