Meb Keflezighi

Meb Keflezighi is America’s premiere marathon runner and one of the most decorated Track & Field athletes in American history. In October 2015, Runner’s World Magazine named Meb “The Most Influential Person in Running” noting that his “universal appeal only begins with his racing.” The 2014 Boston Marathon champion and 2014 USA Track & Field Male Athlete of Year has participated in 3 Olympic Games and 3 World Championships, while also accumulating 23 USA Track & Field individual titles. In February 2016, Meb qualified for his 4th Olympic Games. He will become the oldest distance runner in American Olympic history when he races this summer in Rio. Meb is the only person to have won the New York City Marathon, the Boston Marathon, and an Olympic medal. In 2012, he was 4th at the London Games. Testament to his durability, between 2004-2015 he has 12 top ten finishes in World Marathon Majors which are widely acknowledged as premiere global events.

The Eritrean-born Keflezighi and his family have lived the American Dream. Meb was born in war-torn Eritrea. He witnessed the ravages of conflict at an early age while also enduring famine and drought. When Meb was only five years old, his father made the courageous decision to leave Eritrea in search of a better future for his family abroad. Meb’s mother had the foresight and wisdom to support this choice. Five years later, with the help of a generous Italian benefactor, the entire Keflezighi family immigrated first to Italy and then subsequently to the United States – the land of opportunity. Meb and his brothers and sisters routinely started their days at 4:30am to practice their English. One day in 7th grade, the physical education instructor announced that a sub 6:15 mile would earn an “A” and a t-shirt. Meb ran that mile in 5:20, uncovering his God-given talent and his powerful ability to inspire. The shy recent arrival to the United States was suddenly receiving smiles and high fives from his classmates. His prophetic gym teacher proclaimed the 7th grade Meb a future Olympian. Meb was unfamiliar with that term (Olympian) until his father explained it to him that evening. He had found his calling.

Meb received an athletic scholarship to UCLA and earned a Communication degree with a Business specialization. Although he was more “student” than “athlete” the UCLA Daily Bruin touted Meb the greatest distance runner in UCLA history before he had even graduated. Meb earned numerous All-American certificates, won individual national championships and also began a mentor/protégé relationship with Coach Bob Larsen that continues today. Meb’s collegiate experience formed the framework for his future charitable entity, The MEB Foundation (Maintaining Excellent Balance). Meb is not the only Keflezighi sibling to enjoy academic success. All 10 first-generation
siblings have earned bachelor degrees at institutions such as Cal-Berkeley, Stanford, UCLA, and San Diego State. They are doctors, lawyers, MBA’s, educators, and engineers living the American Dream.

Meb is a husband, father, best-selling author, and highly sought-after speaker. He and brother/agent Merhawi (an attorney) have revolutionized the running industry sponsorship model and percolated into the mainstream. Meb has appeared in television commercials for Skechers, Sony, MasterCard, and Citibank; he has been nominated for Sports Illustrated Sportsman of the Year; he has been seen on David Letterman, CNBC, Bloomberg TV, ESPN, Live with Kelly and Michael, and he has been featured in numerous other television and print outlets. Throughout his life, Meb has overcome extraordinary barriers and continuously emerged a champion. His themes of perseverance, discipline, graciousness, inclusiveness, teamwork, support, and acceptance resonate with all audiences. His personable and approachable nature relate to all ages and backgrounds. Most importantly, Meb embraces the honor of being called a role model and being called to serve as an ambassador of sport. He draws energy and inspiration from his public interactions and believes that his life story and message can change lives for the better.