A nearly perfect early Spring day greeted the over 300 runners at the Runnin’ of the Green on Saturday, March 12. Eric Macknight led the men over the 4-mile course in 19:57, while 17-year-old Julia Flower paced the women in 23:04. The Willow Street AC captured the Open Men’s title and Kinetic Running Club the Women’s title in the inaugural event of the USATF Club Championship.

The Runnin’ of the Green kicks off the Spring racing season, and 304 finishers enjoyed nearly ideal running conditions on Saturday, March 12. Ballston Lake’s 27-year-old Eric Macknight led the male finishers over the 4-mile course with a 19:57 time, a 5:00 minute pace. Albany’s Aaron Lozier finished second in 20:22, while Saratoga’s Alex Benway placed third in 20:52.

In the women’s race, teenager (17) Julia Flower ran 23:04 (a 5:46 pace) to hold off Clifton Park’s Renee Tolan (23:12) to capture first place. Emily Bryans placed third in 24:17.

Among Masters runners, 44-year-old Volker Burkowski ran to first place in 22:38, while the seemingly ageless Derrick Staley (57) was close behind in 22:42. Ray Webster (41) captured third in 22:49. Erin Corcoran (41) ran 24:30 to join Tolan (41) and Bryans (48) among the top finishers in the 40+ age group.

The Runnin’ of the Green was the inaugural event for the USATF’s new Club Championship Grand Prix Series. The Willow Street AC ran to victory in the Men’s Open Category (Benway, Lloyd, Terry, Jordy and Carroll) as well as the Men’s Masters (Burowski, Staley, Stadtlander, Irwin, and Horn). Kinetic Running Club won the Women's Open Category (Flower, Tolan, Corcoran and Bennice) while Willow Street won the Women's masters category (Drake, Bryans, Buck and Nicholson).

ROTG has yet to return to the numbers of competitors who formerly pounded the pavement in Green Island before the event was forced to move to Schalmont. But participation was up modestly over 2015. Encouragingly, USATF participation (111) was exactly the same as the last year in Green Island. As well the winning times were comparable to the winning times seen in Green Island. Race Director Brian Northan expects continued growth as runners become familiar with the new location.