

DISPOSABLE TIMING CHIPS ■ EARLY MORNING ■ BANANAS ■ NEW YORK CITY MARATHON

CEB VS. TERGAT ■ CHOCOLATE MILK ■ BADWATER ■ "CHARIOTS OF FIRE" ■ FALL WEATHER

# RUNNER'S WORLD

DECEMBER 2009

# 152

Inspiring Heroes, Must-Run Places, Unforgettable Events, & Ingenious Inventions

10 Foods You Should Eat AND 1 VITAMIN YOU'RE MISSING

New Shoe Reviews + HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE FOR RUNNERS

Train Smarter YOUR PERFECT WORKOUT (PAGE 34)

BEGINNERS Rules Of The Road

Bounce Back From Any Setback

Injured? THE RIGHT WAY TO ICE

4 Steps To Stronger Legs

WORLD'S LEADING RUNNING MAGAZINE RUNNERSWORLD.COM

← Pre, the Coolest Runner of All Time



■ BODYGLIDE ■ HAYWARD FIELD ■ "ONCE A RUNNER" ■ MILE REPEATS ■

**GEARING UP**  
Project Athena's next trip: a rim-to-rim hike of the Grand Canyon.



**THE LEADER**  
**Robyn Benincasa**

Text by JACQUELINE WINDH  
Photograph by MICHAEL DARTER

**WORLD-CLASS** adventure racer Robyn Benincasa has climbed the Himalayas in Nepal and trekked across lava fields in Fiji. So in 2007, when she was diagnosed with osteoarthritis and told she may never run again, Benincasa wasn't about to let a bad health report destroy her adventurous spirit. She underwent hip resurfacing surgery, and 16 weeks later, ran the Sedona Marathon with her friend Melissa Cleary by her side. "That made me think of how great it would be to bring that kind of confidence and support to other women," she says. Months later, she launched Project Athena, a nonprofit that helps women who have suffered a medical setback live out their athletic dreams. Benincasa, a 42-year-old San Diego firefighter, recruited a team of accomplished female athletes

to serve as coaches and mentors to the women who apply for and receive the foundation's "Athenaships." (Four have been awarded so far.) Sara Jones, a breast-cancer survivor, was one of the first recipients. In February, she raced a six-day ultramarathon in Costa Rica with the Project Athena team. "During the race I realized that the cancer can't stop me," she says. "I came away feeling powerful." Seeing that transformation is more rewarding for Benincasa and her team than medals and PRs. "All of our lives, we've been racing for spots on podiums," she says. "But now it's for something so different, so life-affirming. For some women who are battling a medical condition, being alive is not enough. They want their juju back! Doctors can cure their bodies, but we can cure their spirits."