

PLEASE NOTE: STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 12 NOON ON MONDAY 23RD JANUARY

World's Five Premier Marathons Unite to Form "World Marathon Majors"

First World Marathon Majors Series will commence in April 2006 and culminate in November 2007 with a \$1 million prize.

BOSTON and LONDON (January 23, 2006) – The world's five premier international marathons – the Boston Marathon, the Flora London Marathon, the real-Berlin-Marathon, the LaSalle Bank Chicago Marathon, and the ING New York City Marathon – have joined forces to collectively present the top echelon in the sport of marathon running. These five events now present themselves as the World Marathon Majors® (WMM).

The directors of the five races also have formed and will launch the World Marathon Majors Series (WMM Series) this spring at the 110th Boston Marathon on Monday, April 17. The series will culminate at the 2007 ING New York City Marathon on November 4 with the award of a total \$1 million prize purse split evenly between the top male and female series finishers. Over the two-year scoring period, the world's best marathoners will earn points when they finish among the top five places at the individual WMM races, the IAAF World Marathon Championships, and the Olympic Marathons.

"This is one of the most significant changes in the history of our sport," said Dave Bedford, race director of the Flora London Marathon. "The World Marathon Majors Series marks the start of a new era of growth and excitement for our sport."

"The World Marathon Majors marks the first time in the sport's history that the world's top five races have joined together for the common good and promotion of the sport by creating a unified global circuit of the sport's best and most prestigious 26.2-mile championships," said Guy Morse, executive director of the Boston Marathon.

The announcement of the WMM Series was made today in joint news conferences in Boston and London and included the endorsement and backing of many of the world's best athletes, including world record-holder Paul Tergat of Kenya and Olympic marathon silver medalist Meb Keflezighi of the United States.

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WORLD MARATHON MAJORS

BOSTON LONDON BERLIN CHICAGO NEW YORK

“Our races are to our sport what Wimbledon and the Australian, U.S., and French Opens are to tennis, and what the Masters, U.S., and British Opens and PGA Championship are to golf,” said Mary Wittenberg, race director of the ING New York City Marathon. “Each race has the history, the tradition, the honor roll of legendary champions, and a special place in the eyes of all to make them stand apart from the other events.”

After the WMM Series commences this spring at Boston and at the Flora London Marathon on April 23, the competition will continue in the autumn at the real, Berlin-Marathon on September 24, the LaSalle Bank Chicago Marathon on October 22, and the ING New York City Marathon on November 5.

Other details of the WMM Series are:

- Men and women are scored separately.
- In addition to the five WMM marathons, the WMM Series also includes any IAAF World Championships and Olympic Marathons held during the two-year period. The series events are known as the Qualifying Races.
- Athletes earn points by placing among the top five at qualifying races: 25 points for a first-place finish, 15 points for second place, 10 points for third place, five points for fourth place, and one point for fifth place;
- During the two-year scoring period, an athlete must finish at least one qualifying race in each year of the series. If an athlete runs more than four qualifying races, only the top four results will be counted.
- In the case of tie, the first tiebreaker is the winner of any head-to-head competition between the contending athletes in a qualifying race. The ultimate tiebreaker is by majority vote of the five WMM race directors.

The WMM Series is designed to further elevate the sport of marathon running in the public eye. Helping to focus the world’s best marathoners on the world’s premier marathons will create a platform that is intriguing and simple to follow.

The scoring system makes all WMM events equal in terms of the athletes’ pursuit of the grand prize jackpot and acknowledges that all marathon courses are not the same. The scoring system is based on points, rather than on performance times or strength of competition, to take into account the unique challenges involved in performing well over a sustained period of time. The winner of the WMM Series unquestionably will be the best performer during the competition period, and additional marathons could be added to a subsequent WMM Series.

Two-year scoring periods will overlap, allowing the WMM to award a grand prize jackpot on an annual basis following the inaugural presentation in 2007. That is, after the 2006-2007 series, the subsequent series will include the WMM races during the calendar years 2007 and 2008.

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"The creation of this series will generate collective interest and excitement at a level that has not existed between our great events in the past," remarked Carey Pinkowski, executive race director of the LaSalle Bank Chicago Marathon. "The result of these marathons partnering together is increased visibility, exposure, and growth for the sport of marathon running on a national and international scale."

It is the intention of the WMM by seeking sponsorship support to double the prize money purse to \$2 million in future years for a \$1 million prize for both the men's and women's champion. Athletics Management & Services (AMS) has been exclusively appointed by the WMM to secure a title sponsor.

"In fact, we are the championship events of the sport of marathon running," said Mark Milde, race director of the real,- Berlin-Marathon. "Like the championship events of tennis and golf, we are now positioning ourselves to work together rather than individually, which will be a venture attractive to runners and non-runners, athletics enthusiasts, and casual observers of sport."

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