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World Record-Holders and Defending Champions Lead 40th Anniversary Bank of America Chicago Marathon International Elite Athlete Field

Marathon world and course record-holder Dennis Kimetto, half marathon world record-holder Zersenay Tadese, three-time Olympic gold medalist and 5,000m world record-holder Tirunesh Dibaba, and defending champions Abel Kirui and Florence Kiplagat return to the Windy City to race to the top of the podium

CHICAGO – The Bank of America Chicago Marathon announced today that several international running stars are joining its 40th anniversary elite athlete field. Leading the charge are defending champions Abel Kirui (KEN) and Florence Kiplagat (KEN). Their strongest challengers are current marathon and course record-holder Dennis Kimetto (KEN); current half marathon world record-holder Zersenay Tadese (ERI); and three-time Olympic gold medalist, current 5000m world record-holder, and the third-fastest woman in history over 42K, Tirunesh Dibaba (ETH).

“We wanted to put together a field this year that combined some of the best international and American athletes competing on the global stage today,” said Bank of America Chicago Marathon Executive Race Director Carey Pinkowski. “We have our defending champions back, the marathon and half marathon world record-holders, and a woman who has stood on top of more podiums than anyone else in the field. I expect to see some great performances that will continue the longstanding tradition of elite racing in Chicago.”

Men’s international field

Abel Kirui put on a show for fans in 2016 in a tactical race that witnessed extreme pace swings from 4:33 per mile to 5:24. After enduring more than 23 miles of erratic running, Kirui made a strong move that shook everyone in the field except 2015 champion Dickson Chumba (2015). Kirui held off Chumba by three seconds down the homestretch to claim his first Abbott World Marathon Majors win. Kirui boasts a personal best of 2:05:04 and a résumé that lends itself to thriving in tactical races without the use of “rabbits” or pacesetters. He took home a silver medal in the marathon from the 2012 London Olympic Games, and he won both the 2009 and 2011 IAAF World Marathon Championships. In addition to his major championship wins, he



won the 2008 Vienna Marathon, and he finished as the runner-up at the 2007 Berlin Marathon. He started his 2017 season with a fourth-place finish in London in 2:07:45.

Dennis Kimetto returns to Chicago for the first time since demolishing its course record in 2013. He clocked 2:03:45 to officially write himself into the record books and to continue his meteoric rise to the top. Prior to winning in Chicago, he ran the fastest marathon debut in history in Berlin in 2012 (2:04:16). And in 2014, he became the first athlete in history to break two hours and three minutes in the marathon. He clocked a head-turning 2:02:57 to set a new world record in Berlin. Kimetto has struggled to reach the podium since his world record performance, but a top finish in Chicago could revive his confidence and his career. Prior to making his global debut in 2011, he worked as a farmer.

Zersenay Tadese arrives in Chicago, beaming with untapped marathon potential. He reigns as the current half marathon world record-holder (58:23), and he is a four-time Olympian, a four-time IAAF World Half Marathon champion, a one-time IAAF World 20K champion (2006) and a one-time IAAF World Cross Country champion (2007). He won the bronze medal at the 2004 Athens Olympic Games in the 10,000m and he is the eighth-fastest man in history over the distance (26:37.25). Tadese has only finished three marathons: London in 2010 and 2012 and the Nike Breaking2 marathon this past spring (he recorded a DNF in Chicago in 2013 and Boston in 2015). While his official personal best is 2:10:41, he ran 2:06:51 in the Breaking2 marathon (times from the Nike Breaking2 marathon were not eligible for records). Given his speed over 10,000m and the half marathon, he should be in the hunt for a top finish.

Stephen Sambu (KEN) made his marathon debut in Chicago in 2016, finishing fifth in 2:13:35 (the winning time in 2016 was the slowest since 1993). He enters this year's race with more experience and with another Bank of America Shamrock Shuffle 8K title to his name – he scored the hat trick in April when he claimed victory for the third time in a row. Sambu, the fastest man in the world over 8K, now owns the fourth-, sixth- and 14th-fastest times in Shamrock Shuffle 8K history. He is on a roll in 2017, opening his season with a fourth-place finish at the competitive NYC Half Marathon, and then claiming second at the Boston B.A.A. 5K and 10K, third at the San Juan World's Best 10K, and third at the NY Healthy Kidney 10K. Sambu regularly performs well, and after picking up back-to-back-to-back Shamrock Shuffle 8K titles, he is treated like a hometown hero by Chicago fans.

Kohei Mastsumura (JPN), **Yuki Takamiya** (JPN), **Chihiro Miyawaki** (JPN) and **Ryoichi Matsuo** (JPN) bring strong PRs to this year's field. Toshihiko Seko was the last and only runner from Japan to ever win the Chicago Marathon (1986), but Mastsumura has the potential to compete with the best athletes in this year's field. He gained international notoriety in 2014 when he was the first runner from Japan across the line at the Tokyo Marathon, finishing eighth in 2:08:09. He made his international marathon debut at the e32014 Incheon Asian Games, where he finished second by just one second. He started his year with a fifth-place finish at the Otsu Lake Biwa Marathon in 2:11:04. This October marks his first time competing outside of Asia.



Takamiya set his personal best, 2:10:57, at the 2016 Tokyo Marathon, and he started his season with a 2:11:05 at the 2017 Tokyo Marathon. The Chicago Marathon will be his fifth marathon and his first time competing in America. Miyawaki has strong half marathon speed with a personal best of 1:00:53, and he remains a relative novice at the marathon distance. He made his debut in 2014 in 2:11:50, and he didn't run another marathon until this year. He should be ripe for a new personal best. Matsuo returns to Chicago after a disappointing run in 2016 that saw him finish 14th in 2:18:50. He owns a personal best of 2:12:11, and he has won three marathons in Japan: Otawara (2012) and Nobeoka (2016, 2017). Since making his marathon debut in 2012, he has run 14 marathons.

Jordan Chipangama (ZAM) started competing internationally for Zambia in 2005 as a junior athlete. Since then, he has represented Zambia at the 2013 IAAF World Marathon Championships and the 2016 Rio Olympics. He competed collegiately for Northern Arizona University and then made a smooth transition to the roads. In 2015, he won the San Jose and San Diego Rock 'n' Roll half marathons and finished third at Grandma's Marathon, setting his current personal best of 2:11:35. He started 2017 with a pair of ninth-place finishes at the Daegu Marathon and Grandma's Marathon.

Women's international field

Florence Kiplagat returns to chase her third title in a row and her fourth podium finish (she finished second in 2014 and won in 2015 and 2016). She is the 15th-fastest woman in history over the marathon distance, with a personal best of 2:19:44. For the past two years, she dazzled fans in Chicago with an aggressive running style that saw her put in 26.2 miles of hard work; her winning time from last fall, 2:21:32, was the 13th-fastest women's time in Chicago Marathon history. Kiplagat, the 2010 IAAF World Half Marathon champion, held the half marathon world record until earlier this year. Her accolades include wins in Berlin in 2011 and 2013, and an IAAF World Cross Country title in 2009. She faces an exceptionally strong contender in Tirunesh Dibaba, but Kiplagat has more experience on Chicago's flat and fast course and at the marathon distance; she has finished in the top 10 of her 11 career marathons.

Tirunesh Dibaba – a legend on the track and over the grass – started 2017 by becoming the third-fastest female marathon runner of all time when she finished second in London in 2:17:56. Her recent performance and her stellar track record could put Paula Radcliffe's 2002 course record, 2:17:18, in jeopardy. Dibaba is a three-time Olympic gold medalist, a three-time Olympic bronze medalist, a three-time world champion in the 10,000m, a two-time world champion in the 5,000m, a nine-time Golden League champion, a seven-time Diamond League champion, a five-time World Champion in cross-country (including one junior championship), and the current 5,000m world record-holder (14:11.15). She made her marathon debut in 2014 with a third-place finish in London in 2:20:35. She has set four career world records, and she has a personal best of 1:06:50 in the half marathon. Dibaba, who was 18 years old when she won her first world title, took 2015 off to welcome her first child; she announced her comeback in Rio with a bronze medal on the track in the 10,000m. Most recently, she won the silver



medal in the 10,000m at the IAAF World Championships. At the age of 32, Dibaba is one of the best runners in history, and her marathon career is just getting started.

Valentine Kipkeeter (KEN) returns to the Windy City after finishing third last year in 2:23:41 (her personal best is 2:23:02). She valiantly hung on to the lead pack until Kiplagat's endurance and fitness proved insurmountable. Kipkeeter made her international debut as a junior competitor in 2008, and, as an 18-year-old in 2011, she took her talents to the road and won three of the five half marathons she competed in. She made her marathon debut a year later in Hamburg, and she followed her debut with a win and a course record at the Mumbai Marathon, 2:24:33. After a maternity break in 2015, last year marked a comeback year for Kipkeeter. She proved her resilience in Chicago, and she started 2017 on a positive note with a sixth-place finish in Boston.

Lisa Weightman (AUS) comes to Chicago on the heels of her best career performance to date, a 2:25:15 fifth-place finish in London. She is a three-time Olympian in the marathon (2008, 2012, and 2016); her best Olympic showing came in London when she finished 16th in 2:27:31. She has competed in several World Championships: the marathon (2009), half marathon (2007), 20K (2006) and cross-country (2007, 2008, 2009). She won the bronze medal in the marathon at the 2010 Commonwealth Games. She made her marathon debut in 2008 in 2:32:22, tying the fastest marathon debut record by an Australian woman, and she has banked a dozen career marathons since. She should be in the running for a top-five finish on October 8.

Karolina Nadolska (POL) set her personal best, 2:26:31, at the 2014 Osaka Marathon, and she consistently performs in the 2:26–2:30 range. She finished 14th at the 2013 IAAF World Championships 10,000m, 20th at the 2012 IAAF World Half Marathon Championships and 17th at the 2010 IAAF World Half Marathon Championships. She represented Poland at the 2012 London Olympic Games in the marathon, and she is a two-time national champion in the 5,000m. She has spent her 2017 season racing prolifically on the roads in distances ranging from the 10K to the half marathon. She was third at the Lilac Bloomsday 15K, fifth at the Cherry Blossom 10 mile and first at the Poznan Half Marathon in Poland.

Madaí Pérez (MEX) made her marathon debut in Chicago 14 years ago, and she returned in 2006 to set her still-standing personal best, 2:22:59. She is a two-time Olympian in the marathon (2008 and 2016) and a two-time national champion in the 10,000m (2003, 2010). She finished seventh at the 2013 IAAF World Marathon Championships (she also competed in 2005 and 2007) and sixth at the 2005 IAAF World Half Marathon Championships. She finally climbed toward the top in 2011 when she picked up a silver medal in the marathon at the Pan American Games. Pérez did not race in 2014 and 2015, but her times in 2016 and 2017 suggest she is an athlete who is ready to be back on the global stage.

Jessica Draskau Petersson (DEN) finished 40th in the Rio Olympic marathon and 39th in the London Olympic marathon. She set her personal best, 2:30:07, at the 2015 Chicago Marathon, and she will line up this fall as a newly established masters runner (she turns 40 in September). Draskau Petersson is the most versatile athlete in this year's field; prior to focusing her



attention on running, she was an elite duathlete and triathlete. She has collected 11 Ironman finishes and competed in five Duathlon World Championships, winning three individual silver medals, and a team silver and gold.

Rocio Cantara Rojas (PER) has run four career marathons with a personal best of 2:37:05, set in New York in 2015 for an 11th-place finish. She has competed in two IAAF World Half Marathon Championships, and she won the 2013 Peru National Championships in the 10,000m. In addition, she has finished fourth and seventh in the South American 10,000m Championships (2009, 2013). She started her 2017 campaign with an eighth-place finish at the Houston Marathon.

Men's International Field

Name	Personal Best
Dennis Kimetto (KEN)	2:02:57 (Berlin, 2014)
Abel Kirui (KEN)	2:05:04 (Rotterdam, 2009)
Kohei Matsumura (JPN)	2:08:09 (Tokyo, 2014)
Zersenay Tadese (ERI)	2:10:41 (London, 2012)
Yuki Takamiya (JPN)	2:10:57 (Tokyo, 2016)
Jordan Chipangama (ZAM)	2:11:35 (Duluth, 2015)
Chihiro Miyawaki (JPN)	2:11:50 (Tokyo, 2014)
Ryoichi Matsuo (JPN)	2:12:11 (Nobeoka, 2014)
Stephen Sambu (KEN)	2:13:35 (Chicago, 2016)

Women's International Field

Name	Personal Best
Tirunesh Dibaba (ETH)	2:17:56 (London, 2017)
Florence Kiplagat (KEN)	2:19:44 (Berlin, 2011)
Madaí Pérez (MEX)	2:22:59 (Chicago, 2006)
Valentine Kipketer (KEN)	2:23:02 (Amsterdam, 2013)
Lisa Weightman (AUS)	2:25:15 (London, 2017)
Karolina Nadolska (POL)	2:26:31 (Osaka, 2014)
Jessica Draskau Petersson (DEN)	2:30:07 (Chicago, 2015)
Rocio Cantara Rojas (PER)	2:37:05 (New York, 2015)

About the Bank of America Chicago Marathon

In its 40th year, the Bank of America Chicago Marathon welcomes thousands of runners from more than 100 countries and all 50 states, including a world-class elite field, top regional and Masters runners, race veterans, debut marathoners and charity runners. The race's iconic course takes runners through 29 vibrant neighborhoods on an architectural and cultural tour of Chicago. Annually, an estimated 1.7 million spectators line the streets cheering on more than

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40,000 runners from the start line to the final stretch down Columbus Drive. As a result of the race's national and international draw, the Chicago Marathon assists in raising millions of dollars for a variety of charitable causes while generating \$277 million in annual economic impact to its host city. The 2017 Bank of America Chicago Marathon, a member of the Abbott World Marathon Majors, will start and finish in Grant Park beginning at 7:30 a.m. on Sunday, October 8. In advance of the race, a two-day Abbott Health & Fitness Expo will be held at McCormick Place Convention Center on Friday, October 6, and Saturday, October 7. For more information about the event and how to get involved, go to chicagomarathon.com.

Visit the Bank of America newsroom for more [Bank of America news](#).

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