



May 9, 2019

**Defending Champions Sir Mo Farah, Daniel Romanchuk, Manuela Schär and Top Americans Galen Rupp and Jordan Hasay Ready to Compete in the 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Bank of America Chicago Marathon Elite Athlete Field**

CHICAGO – The Bank of America Chicago Marathon announced today that several top athletes are joining the 42<sup>nd</sup> annual Bank of America Chicago Marathon elite athlete competition. Past champions Sir Mo Farah (GBR) and Galen Rupp (USA) lead the charge on the men’s side, and 2017 podium finisher and American marathon debut record-holder Jordan Hasay (USA) headlines the women’s race. In the elite wheelchair competition, defending champions Daniel Romanchuk (USA) and Manuela Schär (SUI) are returning to capture back-to-back victories.

“We are thrilled to have so many champions in this year’s field. Every elite field we put together tells a broader story about the sport – about the pressure to defend a title, the day in and day out commitment and grit of the world’s best athletes, and the pain and beauty of a comeback,” said Bank of America Chicago Marathon Executive Race Director Carey Pinkowski. “Mo is an Olympic champion and he put on quite a show here last year, and we are excited that Galen has chosen the Bank of America Chicago Marathon as his comeback race. The American record is in play with Jordan, and Daniel and Manuela are unstoppable. I’m confident we are going to see great races up front on October 13.”

Farah’s last performance in Chicago delighted fans across the globe as he dismantled the European record to run the eighth-fastest time in Bank of America Chicago Marathon history, 2:05:11. Farah, a four-time Olympic gold medalist, shook his final competitor in the 26<sup>th</sup> mile and pumped his fists down Columbus Drive as the newly crowned champion. He returns to Chicago after starting his 2019 season with a fifth-place finish in 2:05:39 at the London Marathon.

“Winning the Chicago Marathon last year was very special for me,” said Farah. “It was my first time to win a World Marathon Major and my time was a European and British record. I am looking forward to returning in 2019 to defend my title on the streets of Chicago. It is a fast course with good organisation. I expect they will recruit a strong field to make it a great race.”

Rupp, a two-time Olympic medalist in the marathon (bronze) and 10,000m (silver) and the current holder of four American records, ran into history at the 2017 Bank of America Chicago Marathon, becoming the first American male to claim victory since Khalid Khannouchi broke the tape in 2002. Rupp finished fifth last fall by running the fifth-fastest time in American history on a record-eligible course, 2:06:21 (he ran the third fastest time, 2:06:07, in Prague in 2018). This year’s race marks a significant comeback for Rupp – he underwent Achilles tendon surgery following last year’s race.

"I am thrilled to announce that I will be running the 2019 Bank of America Chicago Marathon," said Rupp. "I could not be more excited to return to a city and marathon that is so special to me. After undergoing surgery following last year's race, I have been pouring all of my energy into my recovery and returning strong in 2019. I look forward to being at my best again and giving it all I have in October."

Rupp's Nike Oregon Project teammate, Jordan Hasay, offers incredible inspiration when it comes to successful comebacks. After a storybook 2017 season that saw her run the American debut marathon record, 2:23:00, for a third-place finish in Boston and then post the second-fastest time ever run by an American woman in Chicago (2:20:57), she shut down her 2018 season due to two stress fractures in her foot. She announced her comeback with confidence this spring in Boston, acquiring another podium finish and posting a swift time, 2:25:20. Hasay hopes to take down Deena Kastor's long-standing American record of 2:19:36.

"I am honored to return to the streets of Chicago," said Hasay. "I love the fast course and exciting atmosphere, which I believe can lead to an attempt at the American record. I look forward to being at my best again and giving it all I have in October."

Romanchuk seized his first Abbott World Marathon Major (AbbottWMM) win in Chicago last fall, and he has been winning ever since. He finished 2018 by becoming the first American male and the youngest athlete to win the wheelchair competition at the New York City Marathon. He welcomed 2019 with a runner-up finish in Tokyo and a pair of crowns at both the Boston and London marathons. The London Marathon doubled as the World Para-athletics Marathon Championships, so Romanchuk added "marathon world champion" to his long list of accomplishments.

"The Chicago Marathon is so special to me," said Romanchuk. "It was the first Marathon Major I ever did, so I use it to gauge my progress over the years. I was shocked to win it in 2018, and I'm so excited to be returning again this October!"

Schär collected her sixth consecutive AbbottWMM victory in London, so she will enter this year's race as the reigning champion of the Berlin, New York, Tokyo, Boston and London marathons. She is the fastest female marathon racer of all time with a 1:28:17 personal best, and she holds the official world record. Schär spent five years on Chicago's podium as either the runner-up (four times) or third-place finisher (once), but that all changed last fall when she crushed a talented field by almost two minutes to win her first Chicago Marathon. She lives by the motto: "never hope for it more than you work for it."

"When I first started doing marathons in 2013, I remember a conversation I had with my coach," said Schär. "We talked about all the Majors and the different courses. We said if I ever achieve my goal of winning one of the big marathons, it would most likely be Chicago. It is a fast, flat course, exactly how I like it. Now it turns out that I did achieve my goal and win a

Major marathon, but Chicago was the last of all the Majors. So it is a special relationship that I have to Chicago. My win last year was a very, very special moment.”

The 42<sup>nd</sup> annual Bank of America Chicago Marathon will take place on Sunday, October 13. More than 40,000 runners – led by a pack of world-class elite athletes – are expected to cross the finish line in Grant Park.

#### About the Bank of America Chicago Marathon

In its 42<sup>nd</sup> year on Sunday, October 13, 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 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 \$338 million in annual economic impact to its host city. The 2019 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 13. In advance of the race, a two-day Abbott Health & Fitness Expo will be held at McCormick Place Convention Center on Friday, October 11, and Saturday, October 12. For more information about the event and how to get involved, go to [chicagomarathon.com](http://chicagomarathon.com).

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#### Reporters May Contact:

Alex Sawyer, Bank of America Chicago Marathon, 1.312.992.6618  
[alex.sawyer@cemevent.com](mailto:alex.sawyer@cemevent.com)

Diane Wagner, Bank of America, 1.312.992.2370  
[diane.wagner@bankofamerica.com](mailto:diane.wagner@bankofamerica.com)