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Past Champions Brigid Kosgei and Dickson Chumba Lead International Elite Field Set to Run the 42nd Annual Bank of America Chicago Marathon

2019 Boston champion Lawrence Cherono, 2019 Dubai champion Getaneh Molla and 2018 Paris champion Betsy Saina prepare for Chicago debuts

CHICAGO – The Bank of America Chicago Marathon announced today that several international running stars are joining the 42nd annual Bank of America Chicago Marathon elite athlete competition. Past champions Brigid Kosgei (KEN) and Dickson Chumba (KEN) headline this year’s field. They will be joined at the front of the pack by some of the world’s best elite athletes, including previously announced 2018 Bank of America Chicago Marathon champion Mo Farah.

This year’s elite field includes 10 men who have run 2:07 or faster and six women (including two Americans) who have run 2:25 or faster. Abbott World Marathon Majors Series XIII also kicks off in Chicago, offering athletes an opportunity to put their names on the leaderboard.

“It is always exciting to welcome our champions back, and with so many athletes competing in Doha at the IAAF World Championships marathon, we are proud of the field we have assembled,” said Bank of America Chicago Marathon Executive Race Director Carey Pinkowski. “This year is a critical year for athletes trying to punch their tickets to Tokyo so we anticipate inspiring races all around.”

Women’s International Field

Kosgei, a two-time winner of the Honolulu Marathon, finished second in 2017 and then returned last fall, winning with the third fastest time in Chicago’s history, 2:18:35. She continued her momentum this spring when she won the London Marathon in a personal best, 2:18:20, making her the seventh fastest woman in the history of marathon running. Her dominance in 2019 also extends to winning the Peachtree 10K, two half marathons and a 5K. Kosgei has finished first or second in nine of her ten career marathons.

Betsy Saina (KEN), a 2016 Olympian in the 10,000m, enjoyed a flash of brilliance in the marathon when she won the 2018 Paris Marathon in 2:22:56. After spending her career on the track, she experienced a rocky transition to the marathon in 2017, failing to finish both the Tokyo and New York City marathons. However, she delivered in Paris and a few months later, she finished eighth in Frankfurt in 2:24:35. She finished 10th in Boston this spring in 2:30:32. Earlier in the year, she defended her title at the Marugame Half Marathon in a PR, 1:07:49. Saina was an 11-time NCAA All-American at Iowa State.

Madai Perez (MEX), a two-time Olympian and the 2011 Pan American Games marathon silver medalist, made her marathon debut in Chicago 16 years ago (2003), and she returned in 2006

to set her still-standing personal best, 2:22:59. Her performance in 2006 catapulted her into the national spotlight as she became the fastest female marathon runner ever from Mexico; she still holds the national record, and she has run Mexico's all-time 4th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 13th and 16th fastest times. She had a noteworthy performance in Chicago in 2017, finishing fourth in 2:24:44 – her best time in more than a decade. She didn't finish the 2018 Boston Marathon, but she ran a 2:30:04 this spring at the Hamburg Marathon.

Lisa Weightman (AUS), a three-time Olympian, comes to Chicago on the heels of one of her best career performances to date. In her build up to this fall, she set the Australian all-comers record in the half marathon to win the Sunshine Coast Half Marathon in 1:08:48. She ran well in Chicago in 2017, finishing sixth overall in 2:28:45. One of the most significant highlights of her marathon career happened at the 2017 London Marathon where she ran her personal best, 2:25:15, making her the fourth fastest Australian woman in history.

Fionnuala McCormack (IRL) is best known for her exploits on the grass: she is a two-time European Cross Country champion (2011, 2012), and she has finished in the top 16 of the IAAF World Cross Country Championships three times. An extremely versatile runner, she represented Ireland on the track in the steeplechase at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, in the 5000m and 10,000m at the 2012 London Olympics and in the marathon at the 2016 Rio Olympics. She competed in the 2015 Bank of America Chicago Marathon, finishing 13th in 2:33:15. She welcomed 2019 with an 11th place finish in Boston in a personal best, 2:30:38.

Other notable athletes include Jovana de la Cruz (PER), Natasha LaBeaud (CAN) and, making her marathon debut, Alice Wright (GBR).

Name	Country	Marathon PR
Brigid Kosgei	KEN	2:18:20
Betsy Saina	KEN	2:22:56
Madai Perez	MEX	2:22:59
Lisa Weightman	AUS	2:25:15
Fionnuala McCormack	IRL	2:30:38
Jovana de la Cruz	PER	2:31:33
Natasha LaBeaud	CAN	2:35:33
Chirine Njeim	LBN	2:39:21
Anke Esser	GER	2:43:14
Alice Wright	GBR	<i>Debut</i>

Men's International Field

Chumba set his personal best, 2:04:32, in Chicago in 2014 when he finished third on a historic day that witnessed three of the top five times ever run in Chicago. He made a triumphant return in 2015 to take the crown in 2:09:25. He tried to defend his title in 2016, but he came up three seconds short, finishing second to Abel Kirui. He came into the Windy City with high

hopes last year, but he did not finish the race – a rarity in Chumba’s consistent career. Since he embarked on his marathon journey in 2010, he has finished 18 marathons and he boasts an impressive record: five wins, five runner-ups and five third place finishes. He lines up this fall after opening his 2019 season with a third place finish in Tokyo in 2:08:44.

Lawrence Cherono (KEN) enters this year’s Bank of America Chicago Marathon as the reigning Boston Marathon champion, and as someone with a steady record, including seven victories over 14 career marathons. This spring he battled two-time Boston Marathon champion Lelisa Desisa down Boylston Street in an epic duel that produced one of Boston’s closest finishes in history. Prior to gaining worldwide fame after seizing the laurel wreath, Cherono, a two-time champion of both the Honolulu and Amsterdam marathons, destroyed course records in both Hawaii and the Netherlands. He holds a personal best of 2:04:06.

Getaneh Molla (ETH) started 2019 by running the fastest marathon debut in history while smashing the course record in Dubai by 26 seconds. His time, 2:03:34, stands out as the first sub-2:04 time ever run in Dubai, and it makes him the eighth fastest man in history. Molla pulled away from compatriot Herpasa Negasa with 700m to go, beating him to the line by six seconds in an awe-inspiring finish. Molla made his international debut on the track in 2014. Since then, he has won four national titles in the 5000m, two national titles in cross country and finished fifth at the 2018 IAAF World Championships half marathon.

Kenneth Kipkemoi (KEN) is the 22nd fastest man in history over the half marathon with a personal best of 59:01. In just his second marathon last fall, he finished fourth in Chicago in 2:05:57 (and just missed breaking his PR). He hung with Farah, Mosinet Geremew and Suguru Osako until almost the 40K mark. He finished on the podium in third place this spring at the Boston Marathon in 2:08:07. Kipkemoi enjoyed a successful marathon debut in 2018, running 2:05:44 to win the Rotterdam Marathon.

Herpasa Negasa (ETH) followed Molla across the finish line in Dubai to finish second, clocking the second fastest time ever run on Dubai’s notoriously fast and flat course, 2:03:40. Prior to the race, Negasa flew under the radar; with a 2:09:14 personal best and a marathon career compiled of 2:10-2:14 finishes, he seemed like an unlikely candidate to make history. The Bank of America Chicago Marathon marks his first AbbottWMM competition.

This year’s field also includes Bedan Karoki (KEN), Hassan El Abbassi (BRN), Minato Oishi (JPN), Shoya Osaki (JPN) and, making his marathon debut, Emmanuel Roudolff-Levisse (FRA).

Name	Country	Marathon PR
Getaneh Molla	ETH	2:03:34
Herpasa Negasa	ETH	2:03:40
Lawrence Cherono	KEN	2:04:06
Dickson Chumba	KEN	2:04:32

Hassan El Abbassi	BRN	2:04:43
Mo Farah	GBR	2:05:11
Kenneth Kipkemoi	KEN	2:05:44
Bedan Karoki	KEN	2:06:48
Minato Oishi	JPN	2:10:39
Shoya Osaki	JPN	2:10:48
Ryoma Takeuchi	JPN	2:11:20
Yuta Takahashi	JPN	2:11:25
Tsubasa Hayakawa	JPN	2:12:01
Joel Tobin-White	AUS	<i>Debut</i>
Emmanuel Roudolff-Lévisse	FRA	<i>Debut</i>

Elite Field Updates

Previously announced athletes Amy Cragg (USA), Brogan Austin (USA) and Chris Derrick (USA) have withdrawn from the 2019 event.

About the Bank of America Chicago Marathon

In its 42nd 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 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.

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Reporters May Contact:

Alex Sawyer, Bank of America Chicago Marathon, 1.312.992.6618
alex.sawyer@cemevent.com

Diane Wagner, Bank of America, 1.312.992.2370
diane.wagner@bankofamerica.com