Houston: ‘we have no problem’

By Vicky Oddi

On every third Sunday in January, 25,000 runners from across the USA and around the world line up to run one of the flattest, fastest marathons in North America.

Houston Marathon race weekend starts with the expo, where over 60,000 runners come to pick up their race number and goodies, and then browse among 125 exhibitors showcasing the latest in running gear, health, fitness and nutrition products, clothing, and more. In all 31,000 runners participate in the title race and its associated events: the Aramco Houston Half Marathon and ABB 5km.

On Saturday morning 6,000 take part in the ABB 5km, some to shake their legs in preparation for the main events on Sunday, but the race also provides an opportunity for new runners, families, and charity fund raisers to strut their stuff.

On Sunday morning runners converge on the capacious George R. Brown Convention Center to check their gear in and warm up in a bright, climate-controlled environment until it’s time for them to head to the start. The first gun goes off at 06:45 for the wheelchair and handcyclist races; at 07:00 the gun fires again as the Marathon and Half Marathon runners get underway.

The course takes runners through some of Houston’s most interesting and historical neighborhoods, allowing them to enjoy the diversity and energy of the fourth largest city in the United States. Over 200,000 spectators line the route, which starts downtown and continues along the Washington Corridor, an eclectic mix of lounges, honky-tokns, wine bars and restaurants. From 6–10km runners wind their way through a luxury neighborhood which contains some of the most coveted real estate in the city.

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The Telesia City Trophy International has one of the fastest and most famous urban routes of Italy. Over the traditional distance (10 km), the international elite and male and female club athletes in the Senior, Amateur and Master categories compete in a race at an extremely high standard.
Chevron Houston Marathon, USA

Result

MEN:
1. Birhanu GEDefa ETH 2:08:03
2. Gebo BURKA ETH 2:08:12
3. Debebe TOLossa ETH 2:09:07
4. Dominico ONDORO KEN 2:09:40
5. Silah LIMO KEN 2:10:37
6. Erick MOSE KEN 2:12:52
7. Aaron BRAUN USA 2:12:54
8. Gudisa SHUMIE ETH 2:14:03
9. Craig LEON USA 2:14:43
10. Pardon NDIOluVU USA 2:16:52

WOMEN:
1. Lane BOYER USA 1:08:52
2. Brianne NELSON USA 1:10:16
3. Janet BAWCO M USA 1:10:46
4. Girma ME CHESO USA 1:02:16
5. Jared WARD USA 1:02:27
6. Serena BURLA USA 1:03:14
7. Diegu ESTRADA USA 1:03:21
8. Kim CONLEY USA 1:03:22
9. Craig LEON USA 1:04:46
10. Taylor WARD USA 1:08:12

Aramco Half Marathon: US Championships

MEN:
1. Diego ESTRADA USA 1:00:51
2. Jared WARD USA 1:01:42
3. Girma MECHESO USA 1:02:16

WOMEN:
1. Kim CONLEY USA 1:09:44
2. Brianne NELSON USA 1:10:16
3. Janet BAWCOM USA 1:10:46

Open Half Marathon

MEN:
1. Lane BOYER USA 1:08:52
2. Roberto MORATILLA ESP 1:09:33
3. Maximo MENDOZA USA 1:10:20

WOMEN:
1. Angela SPADAFOINO USA 1:16:20
2. Megan SALOON USA 1:17:19
3. Colleen DE REUCK USA 1:17:56

Over the past 14 years race weekend has featured the Aramco Houston Half Marathon which over that period has seen an additional 100,000 runners cross the finish line, including a record 11,654 finishers in 2015. Over the past two years, the Aramco Houston Half Marathon has played host to the men’s and women’s USA Half Marathon Championships. In the past 10 years the race has hosted 16 national championships for USA Track & Field. This year Diego Estrada won the men’s race in the third-fastest time ever run by an American and also the third-fastest ever at Houston. Women’s winner Kim Conley ran the fifth-fastest time ever at Houston and the second fastest by an American woman.

Over 250,000 participants, volunteers and spectators make Chevron Houston Marathon the largest one-day sporting event in the city. Race weekend generates over $50 million in economic impact for the region annually, and runners have raised over $21 million for charities since 1995. The Houston Marathon Foundation directly supports national elite runners, local infrastructure projects for the running community and after-school running programs for at-risk youth.

On 17 January 2016 the 44th Chevron Houston Marathon and 15th Aramco Houston Half Marathon will host 27,000 runners. Each race will be capped at 13,500 entries. The ABB 5km will be capped at 6,000 participants. The overall total of 33,000 registrants will be the highest yet.

Both races have sold out over the last 10 years. Entries for 2016 will be accepted in a three-stage registration system that will replace the lottery that has been in operation since 2010. Early registration sold out 10,000 places in January 2015, while guaranteed registration will open during May for selected groups. The final registration period opens on 3 June and continues until all places are sold out.

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2015 JUBILEE YEAR OF RUNNING

18-19. APRIL 2015
30. TELEKOM VIVICITTA
SPRING HALF MARATHON
• 21 KM • 10 KM • 7 KM • 3.2 KM

17. MAY 2015
20. COCA-COLA WAKE YOUR BODY
WOMEN’S RUNNING GALA
• 10 KM • 5 KM • RELAY

13. SEPTEMBER 2015
30. WIZZ AIR BUDAPEST
HALF MARATHON
• 21 KM • RELAY • 3 KM

10-11. OCTOBER 2015
30. SPAR BUDAPEST
MARATHON®
• 42 KM • RELAY • 30 KM • 10 KM • 5 KM