

= Chicago Marathon =

The Chicago Marathon is a major marathon held yearly in Chicago in Cook County , Illinois , United States . Alongside the Boston , New York , London , Berlin , and Tokyo Marathons , it is one of the six World Marathon Majors . Thus , it is also an IAAF Gold Label race . The October 9 , 2016 running will be the 39th anniversary of the race . The first race was held on September 25 , 1977 under the original name the Mayor Daley Marathon , which drew a field of 4 @, @ 200 runners . The race has been held every year since , except in 1987 when only a half @-@ marathon was run . It is among the fastest growing marathon road races in the world , due in part to its largely fast and flat course which facilitates the pursuit of personal records and world record performances . The race has achieved its elite status among marathons by developing relationship with sponsors who provide prize money to lure elite runners who have produced American and world record performances . Since 2008 the race has been sponsored by Bank of America , and is officially known as the Bank of America Chicago Marathon .

The race is limited to 45 @, @ 000 runners and only runners who finish within 6 ½ hours are officially timed . Those wishing to participate can register after either meeting a time qualifying standard or being selected through a general lottery . Although the race has limited registration , exceptions include elite runners and charity representatives . Increasingly , local (e.g. , Chicago 's Children 's Memorial Hospital) , national (e.g. , American Cancer Society) and global (e.g. , Global Business Assist , Team World Vision) charities and humanitarian organizations encourage sponsored participation in the event as a means of fund raising .

= = History = =

The first marathon at the 1896 Games of the I Olympiad generated interest in the sport which led to similar races throughout most western countries and across the United States . While marathons sporadically occurred in New York City and St. Louis , the Boston Marathon had established an annual marathon in 1897 , soon to be followed by Chicago . Beginning in 1905 , the Chicago Marathon (organized first by the Illinois Athletic Club 1905 to 1909 , then sponsored by the Chicago Daily News after 1910) was held annually , with significant community and spectator support , until the early 1920s .

The First Chicago Marathon was run on Saturday , September 23 , 1905 . That first race began in Evanston and finished in front of a standing @-@ room @-@ only paying crowd at Washington Park race track . In a stunning upset , a reported 100 @, @ 000 or more spectators watched Rhud Metzner come from behind to steal a late @-@ race victory from the favored Louis Marks . With that first race , the Chicago Marathon began an annual run of epic races that continued until the early 1920s on a revised course that largely resembles today 's marathon route . Over the years elite fields included Olympic champions , world records were continually sought , and the marathon continued to inspire Chicago communities and spectators until challenges of the early 1920s sidelined the event .

It was not until the health consciousness of the 1960s that marathon growth gained traction in the eyes of the nation . Frank Shorter 's 1972 Games of the XX Olympiad marathon victory represented the convergence of many middle @-@ class American ideals . Then the 1976 New York City Marathon , which was the first New York City Marathon to embrace the five borough course , popularized the big city marathon . As the New York marathon began to grow exponentially in the 1970s , the Chicago Marathon was established as a rival to the New York City Marathon . By the mid @-@ 1980s , the Chicago Marathon was ensconced as one of the big four marathons . During the mid @-@ 1980s , it was named America 's Marathon / Chicago and opened up the way for appearance payments . Joan Benoit Samuelson described the Chicago Marathon 's of the mid @-@ 1980s as " The World 's Marathon " . The Bank of America Chicago Marathon is an open race with no qualifying time to participate .

The Modern Era Chicago Marathon was founded over the objection of Ed Kelly , Chicago Parks Superintendent who refused permission to run in the parks or along the Lake Michigan lakefront .

With the help of Lee Flaherty , the event 's founder who operated out of Flair House in the Near North Side community area of Chicago , Chicago Mayor Richard J. Daley 's support for the marathon was enlisted . Although Mayor Daley died , his successor Michael Anthony Bilandic approved the race and got Kelly on board . Michael Bilandic , a runner , and his wife actually passed out medals at the first marathon on September 25 , 1977 . This first edition of the modern Chicago Marathon was called the Mayor Daley Marathon . Flaherty footed the bill for the first race , which had no sponsors . He again footed the bill in 1978 when the race was again called the Mayor Daley Marathon . In 1979 , however , Beatrice Foods became the first race sponsor .

In the early years the Chicago Marathon was held in August . It has from its inception with 4 @, @ 200 runners and 2 @, @ 128 finishers been one of the nation 's largest marathons . The 2000 running was second only to New York . The 1979 and 1980 events , however , continued to be gatherings of amateur runners . By 1982 , the race finally had sufficient prize money to attract world class athletes . The 1982 was the first with world class times such as the 2 : 10 : 59 by Greg Meyer , the last American @-@ born male to win the race . By 1983 , the Chicago Marathon had achieved its status as one of America 's most important marathons . In 1984 , Beatrice raised the purse to \$ 250 @, @ 000 (\$ 50 @, @ 000 more than New York 's) . The race had become a legitimate rival to New York and continues to vie for top runners . The 1985 race was spectacular with Steve Jones breaking his own course record (2 seconds short of the world record) and Joan Benoit Samuelson the 1984 Olympic Champion , two @-@ time defending Chicago Marathon Champion and Olympic Bronze Medalist , Rosa Mota and the fourth place Olympic finisher and world record setting Ingrid Kristiansen . Benoit set a record that stood nearly a generation . At that time , it was considered the premier marathon in the United States , if not the world . Although 1986 had 40 world @-@ class runners among the 8 @, @ 000 participants the times paled in comparison . Beatrice dropped out as a sponsor in 1987 . Because of this only a half @-@ marathon race was held that year and the marathon was moved to the spring of 1988 and attracted Heileman Brewing Company to sponsor the 1988 Old Style Chicago Marathon . The race resulted in three women who had been passed over for the 1988 Games of the XXIV Olympiad placing in the top positions . In 1991 , Heileman discontinued its sponsorship and both the prize money and performances waned . In 1992 , the race again had no sponsorship , but 1993 brought new sponsor LaSalle Bank . In 1994 , the race became the LaSalle Bank Chicago Marathon . In 1996 , LaSalle Bank purchased the Chicago Marathon from Major Events , Inc . , who had purchased the race three years prior from Flaherty . In 1998 , the race began using transponder timing . In 2001 , when Catherine Ndereba broke the women 's world record marathon time , both the men 's and women 's then @-@ current world records had been set at the Chicago Marathon . For 2008 , the race was sponsored by Bank of America following the purchase of LaSalle Bank from ABN Amro to Bank of America , and the new title will be in use .

In 2007 Bank of America acquired LaSalle Bank 's parent company ABN AMRO North America in 2007 and assumed the races title sponsorship . The 2007 race made history with the first ever CEO Marathon Challenge . The race featured a special competition among the CEOs , presidents , company owners and c @-@ suite executives of companies with at least \$ 5 million in annual gross revenue (\$ 2 @. @ 5 million for women) . The 2007 race also made history for having three (men 's , women 's & men 's wheelchair) of its four races decided in the final 100 meters in a day of record setting heat . The race was partially shut down early (after three and a half hours) as temperatures rose to an unseasonably hot 88 ° F (31 ° C) , which surpassed both the temperature records for the Chicago Marathon and official Chicago records for October 7 . Over 10 @, @ 000 registrants chose not to run in the record temperatures , while 10 @, @ 934 people did not finish (many were called after the course closed early for safety) . One runner died , over 30 were hospitalized , and over 400 others sought medical attention . Marathon owner and sponsor Bank of America , which had just acquired LaSalle Bank , has denied culpability . Similar hot conditions have been experienced in other city centre races . In London in 2003 The British 10K also had extremely hot weather that affected many runners .

= = Course = =

The marathon course is a loop course , starting and ending at Grant Park . From here , the current course winds through 29 of the city 's neighborhoods . The course loop can be generally divided into three sections : North , West , and South . Near each of these directions , three of the city 's main stadiums are nearby at their turning points . Wrigley Field is near the north . The United Center is to the west . US Cellular Field is to the south . On the other hand , Soldier Field is located near the start / finish area .

For the first three miles , runners wind through Chicago 's downtown area . Eventually , they head north along LaSalle Street .

Runners are supported by 20 aid stations . Each are spread about 1 ? 3 miles from each other . In addition , medical staff is available at each of the stations , and ambulatory services are scattered throughout the course .

Digital timers are positioned every 5 kilometers , as well as the halfway point .

= = Runner statistics = =

The Bank of America Chicago Marathon has grown significantly from its beginnings . In 1905 , 20 runners registered for the first Chicago Marathon , 15 actually started the race , and 7 finished . For the first " modern " marathon race in 1977 , just over 1 @, @ 000 people signed up for the race , with expected numbers of just 200 ? 300 . In 1995 , 9 @, @ 000 people registered , and in 1999 , over 29 @, @ 000 people registered . The 2001 marathon run on October 7 reached its cap of 37 @, @ 500 , which was instituted after the 2000 race drew 33 @, @ 171 runners , just prior to the entry deadline on September 19 . In 2003 , 2004 , 2005 , and 2006 it reached its cap of 40 @, @ 000 . The October 10 , 2004 , October 9 , 2005 and October 22 , 2006 races reached their 40 @, @ 000 entrant caps on August 16 , July 14 , and May 26 respectively . On April 18 , 2007 , the 2007 race run on October 7 reached its cap of 45 @, @ 000 entrants . There was a late registration exemption whereby elite runners (marathon times of less than 2 : 31 / 3 : 01 or half marathon times of 1 : 11 / 1 : 21 for (men / women)) could register until September 1 even though the race had reached its registration cap in the spring . The 40 @, @ 000 registrants and 33 @, @ 000 finishers in 2003 made the Chicago Marathon the third or fourth largest marathon depending on which metric (registrants or finishers) is used .

The Chicago Marathon is entered by predominantly Caucasian entrants from middle- to upper @-@ middle @-@ class affluence with a wide range in age and near equality in the sexes . The Chicago Marathon has never excluded women . Historically , however , the women 's field has been smaller than the men 's . This seems to be the result of older age categories having large multiples of men to women , but the women are beginning to outnumber the men in the 20s age group of the field .

= = = Records = = =

World records have been broken at Chicago four times . In 1984 , Steve Jones broke the world record with 2 : 08 : 05 . In 1999 , Khalid Khannouchi was the first to surpass 2 : 06 : 00 with 2 : 05 : 42 . The women 's record was broken in two consecutive years . In 2001 , Catherine Ndereba broke the record in 2 : 18 : 47 , and Paula Radcliffe surpassed that mark with 2 : 17 : 18 the year after .

Radcliffe 's world record is also the course record ; while the men 's record is 2 : 03 : 45 , set in the 2013 race by Dennis Kimetto .

= = Economic impact = =

Much of the marathon 's impact is derived from the tourism industry . More than 10 @, @ 000 of the runners in 2010 have indicated their first visit to Chicago . Of that , 6 @, @ 000 have come from 100 countries . Due to the travelers , the event increases hotel occupancy rates during the marathon . In the 2009 edition , the marathon contributed \$ 150 million worth of activity . The local economy produced 1 @, @ 310 jobs .

== Charity program ==

Although entrants have registered on a first @-@ come first @-@ served basis and elite runners have an extended deadline , numerous official charities have additional late registration rights to award . The 2007 event had 85 charity partners . The 2006 event raised US \$ 9 @. @ 2 million for charity . Charity fundraising is now closely intertwined with the event as the runners now raise money for research , aid the suffering and heighten public awareness of different causes . The marathon offers all registrants the opportunity to sign up to run with a charity partner . The marathon recognizes four levels of charities based on the number of participants recruited . The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society required participants to raise \$ 1 @, @ 400 to be a team member in 2004 . Children 's Memorial Hospital has a \$ 500 requirement . This program has existed since 2001 . 2013 marked the first year ever (since data was available in 2002) that the total number of charities had dropped , however the number of participants and the amount of funds raised continued to climb .

== Deaths ==

2011 ? William Caviness , 35 , Greensboro , North Carolina ? Believed to have died from cardiac arrest five hundred yards from finish line .

2007 ? Chad Schieber , 35 , Midland , Michigan ? Mitral valve prolapse

2003 ? Rachael Townsend , 29 , The Plains , Ohio ? Mitral valve prolapse

2001 ? Luke Roach , 22 , Seattle , Washington ? Collapsed near finish line . Body temperature reached 107 ° F (42 ° C) (heat stroke)

2000 ? Danny Towns , 45 , Edmond , Oklahoma ? Cardiac arrest

1998 ? Kelly Barrett , 43 , Littleton , Colorado ? Believed to be caused by hyponatremia

== Gallery ==