



## **2008 Olympians Ritzenhein and Lewy Boulet to Run Houston** *Aramco Houston Half Marathon to host USA Half Marathon Championships*

**HOUSTON (Dec. 9, 2008)** – A pair of Olympians headline deep fields set for the eighth-annual Aramco Houston Half Marathon on January 18, 2009.

**Dathan Ritzenhein** (Eugene, Ore.), ninth in the 2008 Olympic Marathon, will run the Aramco Houston Half Marathon for the first time and will do so as the race's No. 2 seed.

The 25-year-old Ritzenhein set several state and national records while running for Rockford High School in Michigan and was part of the sensational prep class of 2001, which also produced American mile record holder Alan Webb and 2008 USA Olympic Marathon Trials winner Ryan Hall.

“Ritz” was second to Hall at the 2008 trials in 2:11:07 and was the first American across the line in Beijing in 2:11:59. Earlier in 2008, he won the USA Cross Country Championships. Ritzenhein will head a field of the country's top runners vying for the 2009 USA Half Marathon Championship, which is being hosted in Houston for the fifth consecutive year.

Returning to defend his title is top-seeded **James Carney** (Lafayette, Colo.) who took the 2008 crown in 1:02:21. **Jason Lehmkuhle** (Minneapolis), 11 seconds behind Carney in the '08 race, also will return. That pair will be joined by 2004 Olympian and 2005 USA Half Marathon champ **Dan Browne** (Beaverton, Ore.), **Andrew Carlson** (Flagstaff, Ariz.), **Peter Gilmore** (San Mateo, Calif.), and **Max King** (Bend, Ore.), among many other elite Americans.

The women's field for the Aramco Houston Half Marathon, host of the women's USA Half Marathon Championship for the third year in a row, will include 2008 Olympian **Magdalena Lewy Boulet**. The 35-year-old Lewy Boulet (Oakland, Calif.) finished second at the USA Olympic Trials Marathon in a PR of 2:30:19, but she was forced to drop out of the marathon in Beijing due to a knee injury.

Lewy Boulet, a naturalized U.S. citizen from Poland, will be joined on the starting line in Houston by defending champion **Kate O'Neill** (Palo Alto, Calif.). O'Neill won the national half marathon title in 2008 in 1:11:57, after finishing second to Elva Dryer in Houston in 2007.

**Desiree Davila** (Rochester Hills, Mich.), runner-up to O'Neill at the '08 half championship, will return to Houston, along with four-time Olympian **Colleen De Reuck** (Boulder, Colo.), 2008 national 8K champion **Sara Slattery** (Mammoth Lakes, Calif.), and twins **Tara and Kara Storage** (Beavercreek, Ohio).

“We have tremendous fields assembled for both championship races,” said Brant Kotch, race director. “With his American Record here in 2007, Ryan Hall showed that the Houston half marathon course can help runners produce record-setting times, and we are looking forward to a pair of fast and competitive races in January.”

More than \$59,000 in prize money will be at stake in the two USA championship races, with \$12,000 awaiting the winners of each.

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A record 18,000 runners have registered to run in the 2009 Chevron Houston Marathon and Aramco Houston Half Marathon, and an additional 8,000 hopefuls have signed up on the waiting list since the two races sold out on July 7, 2008.

The Chevron Houston Marathon, a Running USA founding member, is the nation's premier winter marathon, annually attracting participants from nearly all 50 U.S. states and more than 20 foreign countries. In 2008, more than 20,000 runners participated in four marathon weekend events (marathon, half marathon, 5K run and children's run). The Houston Marathon has been ranked among the top five marathons in the nation by the Ultimate Guide to Marathons for fastest course, organization and crowd support. More than 5,000 volunteers organize the race, which is Houston's largest single-day sporting event.

For more information, visit [www.chevronhoustonmarathon.com](http://www.chevronhoustonmarathon.com) or call 713-957-3453.

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