

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release



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Revamped Olympic Trials Marathon Course Unveiled in Houston

HOUSTON (May 9, 2011) – The Houston Marathon Committee and USA Track & Field have announced that the **2012 U.S. Olympic Team Trials – Marathon** course has been modified based on feedback received from athletes and coaches after a first run of the course at the USA Half Marathon Championships last January where the top U.S. men and women “test drove” the multi-loop course. Houston will host the 2012 U.S. Olympic Team Trials – Marathon on Saturday, January 14, 2012, a first for a single city to host both the men’s and women’s Olympic Trials races at the same event.

“The first iteration of the Olympic Trials Marathon course used in the USA Half Marathon Championships was a balance between the request for an eight-mile loop to emulate London and ever-present city traffic concerns,” said Brant Kotch, president and race director of the Houston Marathon Committee. “We have now modified the route to minimize and reconfigure the out-and-back sections, and we believe that the revised course will be very positively received by athletes and spectators alike. Moreover, the new route should be even faster than the Champs version, which actually produced finishing times that were faster than had been predicted by statisticians.”

The improved 2012 course will feature a one-time 2.2-mile inner loop followed by an eight-mile loop traversed three times. With only one broad u-turn on the eight-mile loop, faster marathon times are expected. The relatively flat course has a similar configuration to the 2012 Olympic Marathon multi-loop, multi-turn eight-mile course in London.

One additional change from 2011 will have the Olympic hopefuls in 2012 running counterclockwise over the entire course. This will result in a roughly 190-meter straightaway leading to the finish line, also a benefit to both athletes and spectators. The course will start and finish in front of the George R. Brown Convention Center, the home base for the Houston Marathon weekend events (January 14-15). The Olympic Trials will start at 8:00 a.m.

For a look at the new 2012 Olympic Trials Marathon course map, visit houstonmarathon.com.

To-date, 109 U.S. men and 143 U.S. women have qualified for the 2012 Olympic Trials Marathon. The top 150 male and female distance runners are expected to compete in Houston January 2012 to qualify for the six coveted spots on the U.S. Olympic marathon team for the London 2012 Olympic Games next summer.

About the Houston Marathon Committee, Inc.

Established in 1972, the Houston Marathon Committee, Inc. (HMC), a Running USA Founding Member, annually organizes the nation’s premier winter marathon, half-marathon, 5K and kids’ fun run. In 2011, more than 30,000 runners participated in four race weekend events organized by 7,500 volunteers, creating Houston’s largest single-day sporting event. In addition to hosting numerous world-renowned road races, including the USA Men’s and Women’s Half Marathon Championships since 2005 and the 1992 U.S. Women’s Olympic Marathon Trials, HMC will host the 2012 U.S. Men’s and Women’s Olympic Marathon Trials on January 14, 2012.

For more information, visit houstonmarathon.com or call (713) 957-3453.

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About USA Track & Field

USA Track & Field (USATF) is the National Governing Body for track and field, long-distance running and race walking in the United States. USATF encompasses the world's oldest organized sports, some of the most-watched events of Olympic broadcasts, the #1 high school and junior high school participatory sport and more than 30 million adult runners in the United States.

For more information on USATF, visit www.usatf.org.

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