



2008 Olympian Shalane Flanagan and 2009 20K Champion Brett Gotcher to Debut in Houston

*Three-time American Record Holder Flanagan to run first half marathon;
first marathon for Gotcher*

HOUSTON (Dec. 9, 2009) - American **Shalane Flanagan** (Pittsboro, N.C.), who won a bronze medal in the 10,000 meters at the 2008 Olympics, will make her half-marathon debut in January at the 2010 USA Half Marathon Championships hosted by the Aramco Houston Half Marathon.

The 28-year-old Flanagan has been one of the best middle-distance runners in the U.S. over the past six years, making two Olympic teams and setting American records on the track at 3,000, 5,000 and 10,000 meters. Flanagan was the USA champion at 5,000 meters in 2005 and 2007, before winning the USA Olympic Trials at 10,000 meters in 2008. That victory sent her to Beijing, where she became only the second American woman in history to medal in the event at the Olympic Games. Her American Record of 30:22 run in China still stands.

"Having an athlete with Shalane's credentials run in Houston is a tremendous boost to our race," said Brant Kotch, race director of the Chevron Houston Marathon and companion Aramco Houston Half Marathon. "We have a long history of hosting competitive and exciting national championship races, and we believe the women's and men's half marathon events next month will be no exception."

Joining Flanagan on the starting line January 17, 2010 will be the top two finishers from the 2009 national championships. **Magdalena Lewy Boulet** (Oakland, Calif.), who crossed the finish line in 1:11:47, will be back to defend her title. Runner-up **Kelly Jaske** (Portland, Ore.) will also be among the top seeds in the race.

Among the men currently committed to run in the national championship race are 2008 half marathon champion **James Carney** (Lafayette, Colo.), along with **Josh Moen** and **Patrick Smyth** (both Minneapolis, Minn.), who finished second and third, respectively, in the 2009 USA 10 Mile Championships.

Gotcher steps up to marathon

Brett Gotcher (Flagstaff, Ariz.), who finished third in the 2009 USA Half Marathon Championships, will return to Houston in January but move up in distance. The 25-year-old Gotcher will make his marathon debut as one of the top seeds in the 38th running of the Chevron Houston Marathon.

The former Stanford University All-American at 10,000 meters won his first national road title in September, claiming the 20K crown in 58:57 in New Haven, Conn.

Houston is hosting the men's half marathon championships for the sixth consecutive year, while the city is home to the women's title race for the fourth straight time.

The Chevron Houston Marathon, a Running USA founding member, is the nation's premier winter marathon, annually attracting participants from all 50 U.S. states and more than 20 foreign countries. In 2009, more than 26,000 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 in the nation by *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.

More information is available at www.chevronhoustonmarathon.com or 713-957-3453.