

# PRESS RELEASE

## For Immediate Release



Contact:

Jennifer Smollen Carmouche  
Houston Marathon Committee  
713.957.3453  
[jennifer@chevronhoustonmarathon.com](mailto:jennifer@chevronhoustonmarathon.com)

Jim Estes  
USA Track & Field  
317.713.4661  
[Jim.Estes@usatf.org](mailto:Jim.Estes@usatf.org)

## Olympic Hopefuls to Test Drive 2012 Olympic Trials Marathon Course in Houston

*Eight-mile loop route for 2011 USA Men's and Women's Championships on January 29 similar to London 2012 Olympic Marathon course*

**HOUSTON** (Nov. 17, 2010) – The Houston Marathon Committee, in conjunction with presenting sponsor Aramco Services Company, has announced that the country's best distance runners and Olympic hopefuls will compete at the 2011 USA Half Marathon Championships on Saturday, January 29, 2011, one day prior to the 39th Chevron Houston Marathon. The championships will give athletes a chance to preview the course for the 2012 U.S. Olympic Team Trials – Marathon, which will be held on January 14, 2012.

"We had some very basic information about early versions of the proposed Olympic course in London that proved beneficial to our course design," said Brant Kotch, Race Director and President of the Houston Marathon Committee. "Of course, the confluence of the already-awarded 2011 USA Half Marathon Championships together with the awarding of the 2012 U.S. Olympic Team Trials – Marathon was just too great an opportunity to pass up. This preview should bring out the country's strongest Olympic marathon hopefuls en masse."

The eight-mile loop route will give U.S. athletes a "test drive" of the 2012 U.S. Olympic Team Trials course which is similar to the 2012 Olympic marathon multi-loop eight-mile course in London. The national championships will also allow athletes to experience the Houston Marathon Committee's operating plans for the 2012 Trials.

"Getting a preview of the course while in race mode will be an invaluable experience for anyone hoping to run in the 2012 Olympic Marathon Trials," said 2009 USA Half Marathon champion and 2008 Olympian Magdalena Lewy Boulet. "There's no better way to begin to mentally prepare for a race than to actually race it. I'm excited to return to Houston to run another USA Half Marathon Championship."

The 2011 USA Half Marathon Championships will mark Houston's seventh and fifth year to host the men's and women's national half marathon championships respectively. Last January, Antonio Vega and 2008 Olympic bronze medalist Shalane Flanagan won U.S. titles in 1:01:54 and 1:09:41, respectively.

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 events at the same Olympic Trials. To-date, 93 U.S. men and 111 U.S. women have qualified for the 2012 Trials. The top 150 male and female distance runners are expected to compete in Houston January 2012 to qualify six marathon runners for the U.S. Olympic Team at the London Olympic Games.

The general public has been given an exciting opportunity to run with elite athletes competing in the 2011 USA Half Marathon Championships on the same course that will determine the U.S. Olympic Marathon Team in 2012. A limited number of "Olympic experience" VIP packages are available to the public through the event website ([houstonmarathon.com](http://houstonmarathon.com)).

Additional details about the USA Half Marathon Championships including a course map can also be found on the event website under "Half Marathon" ([houstonmarathon.com/halfmarathon](http://houstonmarathon.com/halfmarathon)).

---more---

**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 2010, 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 2007 respectively, and the 1992 U.S. Women's Olympic Marathon Trials, HMC will host the 2012 U.S. Men's and Women's Olympic Team Trials – Marathon on January 14, 2012.

For more information, visit [houstonmarathon.com](http://houstonmarathon.com) or call 713.957.3453.

**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](http://www.usatf.org).

###