



Kenyan Men, Defending Women's Champion Teyba Erkesso Among Top Seeds in 2010 Chevron Houston Marathon

*Jason Mbote and Charles Kibiwott look to challenge men's course record,
Erkesso aims to lower own standard in the women's race*

HOUSTON (Dec. 29, 2009) - Kenyans **Jason Mbote**, third at the 2008 Seoul International Marathon in 2:07:37, and **Charles Kibiwott**, fifth in the same race in 2:08:30, are among the top men's seeds in the 2010 Chevron Houston Marathon. The 38th edition of the country's premier winter marathon is scheduled for Sunday, January 17.

Joining Mbote and Kibiwott in Houston are countrymen **Benson** and **David Cheruiyot** (not related). Benson Cheruiyot ran a breakthrough race at the 2009 Chevron Houston Marathon by clocking a time of 2:11:33 - his best marathon effort by two and a half minutes. He also finished third in Houston in 2007. David Cheruiyot, one of only two men to win in Houston three times, won back-to-back marathons in 2005 and 2006, and took the top spot again in 2008.

Canada's **Andrew Smith**, fifth in the 2009 Chevron Houston Marathon in 2:16:14, is also expected to be in the lead pack.

In the women's field, **Teyba Erkesso** of Ethiopia is back to defend her title. Running in her first marathon in 2009, Erkesso not only won the Chevron Houston Marathon, but shaved 22 seconds off of the course record previously held by countrywoman Dire Tune. Erkesso's time of 2:24:18 is the fastest marathon ever run in Texas by a female.

Paige Higgins (Flagstaff, Ariz.) and **Erin Moeller** (Mt. Vernon, Iowa) are the top Americans entered in the Chevron Houston Marathon. Higgins brings a 2:33:06 personal record into the race. She qualified for the 2009 World Track & Field Championships in the marathon and finished 30th in 2:37:11. Moeller was 10th at the 2008 USA Olympic Trials Marathon in 2:36:51. In the nine marathons Moeller has completed, she has netted six top-10 finishes.

Tara Quinn-Smith of Canada, with a marathon best of 2:33:58, and Kenya's **Lydia Kurgat**, who ran 2:31:26 at Eindhoven this year, also have committed to the Chevron Houston Marathon.

Elite runners in both men's and women's marathons will be vying for \$130,000 in prize money, with a \$35,000 first-place award in both races.

Registration for the 2010 Chevron Houston Marathon and accompanying Aramco Houston Half Marathon closed in record time earlier this year. Both races sold out in less than 60 hours. A combined field of 22,000 runners is set for Chevron Houston Marathon Weekend 2010.

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.



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