



Marathon Watching Hot Spots

Top 10 Places to Watch the Chevron Houston Marathon

The Chevron Houston Marathon is much more than a vast herd of lean-limbed athletes who pound Houston's streets for 26.2 miles every January. While thousands come to the Bayou City annually to compete in what has become a premier national and international event, the color and excitement of the marathon would not be complete without the hundreds of thousands of cheering spectators who line the course.

For many, the only thing more challenging than actually running the marathon is deciding where to watch it. After consulting with veteran marathon mavens and observers, here are the 10 best places to watch the race, along with the approximate times runners are expected to pass these landmarks. Please note that any of the locations within the first nine miles also provides a view of Aramco Houston Half Marathon participants – as do viewing spots within three miles of the finish. All times are based on a 7:00 a.m. start time of the first wave and a 7:10 a.m. start time of the second wave.

Top 10 Places to Watch the Marathon:

1. Start/ Finish Line

The George R. Brown Convention Center is the hub of race-day excitement both before the starting gun and after the winners break the finish line tape. From this vantage point, the true "thrill of victory and agony of defeat" can be seen up close and personal as runners start and complete the grueling 26.2-mile course.

Finish - Front Runners: 9:10 a.m. / The Pack: 10:30 a.m.

2. Water Stations (located at each mile and a half)

These areas are perennial crowd favorites because of the jockeying among the runners as each tries to gain the best position for a smooth water hand-off. Like most Chevron Houston Marathon activities, the water stations are staffed completely by volunteers. The brave and committed souls who dash onto the course to hand a hot, thirsty runner a cool, refreshing drink adds a lot of color and competitive drama to the event. The water stations are also a popular scene for many of the marathon's "Hoopla" happenings.

3. Mile 18 - Tanglewood Boulevard

For the sixth year, the marathon course will take participants along Tanglewood Boulevard. As they run through what may be the prettiest single mile of the course, runners are greeted with banners, flags and hundreds of cheering residents.

Front Runners: 8:25 a.m. / The Pack: 9:25 a.m.

4. Mile 12 - University Boulevard and the City of West University Place

An area filled with upscale homes and some of Houston's trendiest shops, "West U" residents traditionally turn out in large numbers to cheer on the marathon runners. The entire community takes on a festive air with many holding block parties and other marathon-related social events.

Front Runners: 8:00 a.m. / The Pack: 8:35 a.m.

5. Miles 21 & 22 - Memorial Park

Houston's running mecca, with its miles of beautifully maintained jogging trails and physical fitness stations, attracts thousands of Houstonians daily. The Memorial Park area also is the site of every marathoner's nemesis — the infamous "wall." An invisible barrier at the 20-mile mark, the "wall" drains many runners' physical, emotional and psychological will. Once through the "wall," the marathon becomes a 6.2-mile race to the finish.

Front Runners: 8:40 a.m. / The Pack: 9:50 a.m.

6. Mile 10 - Main Street and the Rice University area

The line of magnificent old oaks arching over Main Street, the picture-postcard beauty of the Rice University campus and the elegance of the Museum District is a superb setting for race watching. There is plenty of parking on nearby streets and at Hermann Park.

Front Runners: 7:50 a.m. / The Pack: 8:20 a.m.

7. Mile 13 (halfway there!) - University and Wesleyan

One of the key milestone checkpoints that runners reach on their way to the finish line, the halfway point is a great place to see how runners are holding up to the challenge of 26.2 miles.

Front Runners: 8:05 a.m. / The Pack: 8:45 a.m.

8. Mile 16.5 - Post Oak and San Felipe in the Galleria area

This venue offers race spectators varied viewing posts with nearby amenities, such as the Galleria's many shops and restaurants. Post Oak's wide sidewalks and numerous street-level parking areas are great places to pitch a lawn chair, park your favorite cooler and cheer on the runners.

Front Runners: 8:30 a.m. / The Pack: 9:30 a.m.

9. Miles 3-6 - Woodland Heights Neighborhood (White Oak)

While going through one of Houston's oldest historic neighborhoods, runners will travel between beautiful homes on one side and White Oak Bayou and Stude Park on the other. At Michaux, they turn north into the neighborhood before turning west on Merrill for one block. The runners then go south on Norhill until reaching White Oak, where they go west for one more block before turning south onto Studewood. Miles 6 and 7 then see runners continue to head south on Studewood/Studemont, re-crossing the bayou and going cross-town on Montrose.

Front Runners: 7:15 a.m. / The Pack: 7:25 a.m.

10. Mile 2 - The Elysian Viaduct

Most of the runners are still tightly bunched, offering great visuals for camera buffs as a sea of humanity surges forward in seemingly endless waves from the start lines.

Front Runners: 7:10 a.m. / The Pack: 7:15 a.m.