

2026 Boston Marathon (Watch Online, Live Stream/Complete Guide)

The 2026 Boston Marathon is one of the most searched and prestigious running events in the world right now. Whether you are a runner, sports fan, or just curious, this complete guide covers everything you need to know about the Boston Marathon 2026 and where to watch its live stream.



20 April,2026

Introduction: A Historic Milestone on Boylston Street

The **2026 Boston Marathon** is not just a race — it is a living monument to human endurance, athletic excellence, and community spirit. Taking place on **Monday, April 20, 2026 — Patriots' Day** — this year's event marks the **130th running of the Boston Marathon**, making it one of the most historic and celebrated editions in the race's illustrious history. Organized by the **Boston Athletic Association (B.A.A.)** and presented by **Bank of America**, the 2026 Boston

Marathon promises to deliver heart-pounding competition, record-chasing performances, and unforgettable moments that will reverberate through the running world for years to come.

From the starting line in the quiet town of **Hopkinton, Massachusetts**, to the famous final stretch on **Boylston Street** in the heart of Boston, the 26.2-mile (42.195-kilometer) course winds through history, community, and unmatched athletic drama. As the second of seven events in the prestigious **Abbott World Marathon Majors** series for 2026 — and a certified **World Athletics Platinum Label** road race — the Boston Marathon stands in a class of its own.

Whether you are a seasoned marathoner, a passionate running fan, or simply someone who admires the greatest human athletic achievements, the **Boston Marathon 2026** has something for everyone. This comprehensive guide covers the elite field, defending champions, course details, start times, broadcast information, weather forecast, historical milestones, and the inspiring stories behind the world's oldest annual marathon.

The 130th Boston Marathon: A Race Steeped in Tradition

The **Boston Marathon** first took place in **1897**, making it the world's oldest annually held marathon. In its 130 years of continuous running, the race has survived world wars, economic hardships, pandemics, and tragedies — always returning stronger, more resilient, and more meaningful. The **130th Boston Marathon** is therefore not just a race day; it is a celebration of an unbroken tradition that transcends sport.

The 2026 edition is particularly rich with anniversaries and milestones. Most notably, **2026 marks the 60th anniversary of Bobbi Gibb's legendary run**, when the trailblazing athlete snuck onto the course in 1966 to become the first woman on record to complete the Boston Marathon — at a time when women were officially banned from the event. To honor this milestone, the **26.2 Foundation** commissioned Gibb — a talented painter and sculptor — to create a bronze statue of herself, which was unveiled earlier this year near the finish line on Boylston Street. It is a powerful tribute to the courage and perseverance that define the Boston Marathon's spirit.

The running community is also reflecting on the legacy of **Bob Hall**, a pioneer of wheelchair racing who died earlier this month. At the **1975 Boston Marathon**, Hall made history as the first competitor to complete the race in a wheelchair, forever changing the landscape of adaptive athletics. His legacy lives on in the world-class **wheelchair and para athletics divisions** that are now a celebrated centerpiece of every Boston Marathon.

The **2026 Boston Marathon** welcomes **30,000 athletes** from **137 countries** and all **50 U.S. states** — a stunning global gathering that underlines the race's status as one of the most inclusive and internationally recognized sporting events on the planet. To earn a spot in this year's race, runners had to beat their qualifying time by at least **4 minutes and 34 seconds** — a testament to the incredible caliber of the field.

Start Times, Course, and Race Day Logistics

The 2026 Boston Marathon begins in **Hopkinton, Massachusetts**, with a schedule designed to accommodate elite athletes, wheelchair competitors, para athletes, and tens of thousands of open-division runners across **six staggered wave starts** — an expansion from the four waves of previous years.

2026 Boston Marathon Start Times (ET)

- **9:06 a.m.** — Men's Wheelchair Division
- **9:09 a.m.** — Women's Wheelchair Division
- **9:30 a.m.** — Handcycles & Duos
- **9:37 a.m.** — Professional Men
- **9:47 a.m.** — Professional Women
- **9:50 a.m.** — Para Athletics Division
- **10:00 a.m.** — Wave 1
- **10:15 a.m.** — Wave 2
- **10:28 a.m.** — Wave 3
- **10:41 a.m.** — Wave 4
- **11:01 a.m.** — Wave 5
- **11:21 a.m.** — Wave 6

The **Boston Marathon course** begins on Main Street in Hopkinton's town center and travels east through **Ashland, Framingham, and Natick** along Route 135. It continues along Route 16 from **Wellesley** into **Newton**, where the legendary **Newton Hills** — including the dreaded **Heartbreak Hill** — challenge even the most seasoned marathoners. After cresting into Boston near **Boston College**, the route transitions through **Cleveland Circle** and **Kenmore Square** before arriving at the iconic right turn on **Hereford Street** and the triumphant left onto **Boylston Street** — a moment that every runner who has ever trained for this race has visualized in their dreams.

The finish line sits in front of the **Boston Public Library** at **Copley Square**, where tens of thousands of spectators line the streets to cheer the finishers home. It is one of the most electric atmospheres in all of sports.

The Elite Men's Race: Can Anyone Stop John Korir or Benson Kipruto?

The **2026 Boston Marathon elite men's field** is being described by many running experts as one of the deepest and most competitive in the race's 130-year history. An extraordinary **25 competitors have broken the 2:07 mark** in their careers, and **10 men have gone sub-2:05** — setting the stage for a potentially record-shattering performance on Boylston Street.

John Korir — The Defending Champion

John Korir of Kenya arrives at the 2026 Boston Marathon as the defending champion, looking to build on his remarkable 2025 victory. In an epic display of mental and physical toughness, Korir lost his bib number during last year's race but fought through to win the men's elite title with a time of **2:04:45**. The achievement made Korir and his brother **Wesley Korir** — the 2012 Boston Marathon champion — the only siblings in history to win this legendary race.

Since his 2025 Boston triumph, Korir has continued his extraordinary form. He went on to win the **Valencia Marathon** later that year, clocking a career-best **2:02:24** — a time that places him among the fastest marathoners in the world. The 29-year-old also has a **Chicago Marathon** title to his name from 2024. Korir enters 2026 in peak condition and fully motivated to defend his crown.

Benson Kipruto — The Fastest Man in the Field

If Korir is the defending champion, then **Benson Kipruto** is the man every runner in the 2026 Boston Marathon field fears. The Kenyan star holds the fastest personal best of any competitor in this year's race — a blistering **2:02:16** at the **2024 Tokyo Marathon**. That performance alone places Kipruto among the global marathon elite.

Kipruto is no stranger to Boston glory. He won the **2021 Boston Marathon** and has four Abbott World Marathon Majors victories to his name, including the **2025 New York City Marathon**. He is also the **Olympic bronze medallist from the Paris 2024 Games**, cementing his status as one of the finest marathon runners of his generation. A victory in Boston in 2026 would mark a stunning return to the city where his major marathon career began.

Alphonse Felix Simbu — The World Champion

Alphonse Felix Simbu of Tanzania comes into the 2026 Boston Marathon riding an incredible wave of momentum. The 28-year-old finished runner-up in Boston in 2025 in a thrilling three-way sprint to the finish, and he returns now as the **2025 World Athletics Marathon Championships gold medallist**. Simbu is a warrior competitor whose tactical intelligence and finishing speed make him a genuine podium contender on any course in the world.

American Contenders

The American men's marathon scene is buzzing with energy heading into 2026 Boston.

Moroccan-American Zouhair Talbi is one of the most intriguing names in the field — he became the **third-fastest American marathoner in history** at the Houston Marathon earlier

this year with a time of **2:05:45** and previously finished fifth at the 2023 Boston Marathon. Other American hopefuls are eager to break the podium drought that has frustrated U.S. men at Boston for years.

Note that **Conner Mantz** — the fastest American man in last year's field, who finished fourth in 2:05:08 — has been forced to withdraw due to injury, leaving the American men's podium challenge to a determined group of emerging talents.

The Elite Women's Race: Lokedi vs. The World

The **2026 Boston Marathon elite women's field** may be the most star-studded in the event's history. Defending champion **Sharon Lokedi** smashed the women's course record in 2025, and now she faces a fearsome group of challengers eager to take her crown.

Sharon Lokedi — The Course Record Holder

Sharon Lokedi of Kenya is the reigning women's champion and current **Boston Marathon course record holder** with a time of **2:17:22** — a staggering improvement of more than two minutes over the previous record. Her 2025 victory was a masterclass in patient racing and devastating finishing pace. Lokedi held back with the lead pack before surging in the final miles to leave former champion **Hellen Obiri** in her wake.

Speaking after her record-breaking win, Lokedi said she focused specifically on her late-race strength: working hard through those final miles to finish faster and faster. She returns to Boston in 2026 determined to prove her performance was no fluke.

The Competition: A Kenyan and Ethiopian Powerhouse

Lokedi's toughest challengers on paper include some of the fastest women's marathon runners in the world. **Irine Cheptai of Kenya** arrives fresh off a **2:17:51 performance at the Chicago Marathon** in 2024. **Workenesh Edesa of Ethiopia** ran **2:17:55 at the 2025 Hamburg Marathon**. **Loice Chemnung of Kenya** and **Bedatu Hirpa of Ethiopia** are also in the mix with sub-2:19 personal bests.

American Women: McClain, Frisbie, and Sisson

The American women's contingent is one of the strongest fields the U.S. has fielded at Boston in years. **Jess McClain** and **Annie Frisbie** — who finished as the top two American women in 2025 with times of **2:22:43** and **2:23:21** respectively — both return to take another shot at a breakthrough result. Perhaps most excitingly, **Emily Sisson** enters the race as a serious contender. The American record holder ran **2:18:29 at the 2022 Chicago Marathon** — a time

that makes her one of only a handful of U.S. women capable of competing with the global elite at the front of the women's field.

Wheelchair and Para Athletics: Legend-Making Performances

The **wheelchair and para athletics divisions** of the 2026 Boston Marathon are fiercely competitive, featuring some of the most decorated adaptive athletes in the world.

Marcel Hug: Chasing a Ninth Boston Title

Marcel Hug of Switzerland — nicknamed "The Silver Bullet" — is the undisputed king of the Boston Marathon wheelchair division. The **seven-time Paralympic gold medallist** won his eighth Boston title in 2025, capturing his **fourth consecutive crown** at the race. In 2026, Hug is chasing an extraordinary **ninth Boston Marathon title** — a record that would be nearly incomprehensible in any sporting context.

Hug is the three-time and reigning **Paralympic marathon champion**, and his combination of power, technique, and racing intelligence makes him virtually unbeatable on the Boston course. His main challenger will be **American Daniel Romanchuk**, a two-time Boston champion (2019, 2022) who is among the top wheelchair racers in the world.

Women's Wheelchair Division

With **Susannah Scaroni** — last year's women's wheelchair champion — withdrawing from this year's race as she is expecting a child, the women's division is wide open. **Manuela Schar of Switzerland**, a three-time Paralympic champion, enters as a heavy favorite. Schar is chasing her **fifth Boston Marathon wheelchair title** and her first since 2021.

Weather: Cold, Breezy, and Potentially Historic

The **2026 Boston Marathon weather forecast** is generating significant conversation among athletes, coaches, and running fans. A powerful cold front is moving through New England on race day, bringing with it some of the most extreme weather conditions Boston has seen on Marathon Monday in decades.

Temperatures at the **Hopkinton starting line** are expected to be in the **upper 20s to mid-30s°F** (approximately -2°C to 2°C), with wind chill making conditions feel even colder for runners waiting to start. By the time the final wave runners reach the Boston finish line,

temperatures will have climbed to the **mid-40s to low 50s°F** — still well below the mid-April average.

Stiff **northwesterly winds of 10 to 25 mph** will create a significant crosswind effect across much of the course, which could be both a challenge and a boon — runners heading east may benefit from a partial tailwind in the final miles. Conditions are expected to remain mostly dry, though late starters in Wave 6 may encounter some light rain near the finish.

Running experts note that cold and breezy conditions often produce fast times at the Boston Marathon — most notably in 2018, when temperatures plummeted and strong headwinds made the race brutal. That year, **Des Linden** became the first American woman to win Boston in 33 years, in a performance that has become the stuff of legend. Linden, who announced before last year's race that it would be her final professional marathon, will be participating this year in **Wave 1** as a recreational runner — a touching send-off for one of American distance running's greatest champions.

Notable Participants Beyond the Elite Field

The 2026 Boston Marathon features an extraordinary collection of stories beyond the elite competitors. Among the most notable entries:

Jack Fultz, the **1976 Boston Marathon champion** who famously won in "The Run for the Hoses" — a day when temperatures neared triple digits — will serve as the race's **Grand Marshal**. His 2:20:19 winning time from 50 years ago represents one of the most courageous performances in the race's history.

Amby Burfoot, the **1968 Boston Marathon champion**, is once again taking part in the race as he approaches his 80th birthday — a remarkable demonstration of the Boston Marathon's power to keep its champions coming back decade after decade.

The athlete field also includes well-known figures from other sports, including **former Boston Bruins captain Zdeno Chara**, **former Boston Celtics player Chris Herren**, and **former U.S. Soccer star Kristine Lilly** — each trading in their respective sports arenas for 26.2 miles of Boston roads.

Charity: The Heart of the Boston Marathon

Beyond the competition, the **2026 Boston Marathon** is a philanthropic powerhouse. A record **193 nonprofit organizations** have been selected for the 2026 official charity program — up

from 176 in the previous year. These organizations collectively aim to raise more than **\$50.4 million** from their charity runners this year alone.

Since the charity program's inception in **1989**, the Boston Marathon has raised well in excess of **\$600 million** for charitable causes — an astonishing figure that makes the race one of the most impactful annual charity fundraising events in the United States. The 2025 race alone broke records with more than \$50 million raised, and organizers are optimistic the 2026 edition will surpass even that total.

For the thousands of runners who are racing in honor of loved ones, supporting medical research, or raising awareness for causes close to their hearts, the **Boston Marathon 2026** is far more than a personal athletic achievement — it is an act of community, compassion, and service.

How to Watch the 2026 Boston Marathon

The 2026 Boston Marathon will be broadcast across multiple platforms in the United States and internationally, ensuring that fans around the world can follow every step of the race.

In the United States:

- **Local (Boston area):** WCVB Channel 5 — coverage begins at 4:00 a.m. ET on race day
- **National:** ESPN2 — coverage begins at 9:00 a.m. ET
- **Streaming:** ESPN+ and the Very Local app

In the United Kingdom:

- TNT Sports and HBO Max — live coverage from 2:00 p.m. BST

International:

- Olympic Channel via Olympics.com in select regions
- Eurosport, FloSports, and other regional broadcasters

Fans who wish to track individual runners in real time can download the **B.A.A. Racing App**, which provides live GPS tracking, split times, and finishing updates for all 30,000 participants. In-person spectator viewing is available along the entire 26.2-mile course from Hopkinton to Copley Square.

For those attending in person, the **Family Meeting Area** is located on Stuart Street between Berkeley Street and Clarendon Street, with alphabetical signs to help families reconnect after the finish.

Prize Money and What's at Stake

The **2026 Boston Marathon** offers a total prize purse of **\$1,484,500**, distributed across the open elite, wheelchair, and para athletics divisions. This prize structure reflects the race's commitment to recognizing excellence across all categories of competition and ensuring that the very best athletes in the world have compelling incentive to compete.

For the elite runners, the combination of financial reward, global prestige, career-defining recognition, and the honor of joining the ranks of **Boston Marathon champions** creates a motivational cocktail unlike any other race in the world. A Boston Marathon title is widely considered the most prestigious individual victory in marathon running — a distinction that transcends prize money or rankings.

The Course: 26.2 Miles of History and Challenge

The **Boston Marathon course** is legendary for its unique character and challenges — chief among them the infamous **Newton Hills**, a series of four significant inclines between miles 16 and 21 that have broken the spirits and legs of countless hopeful champions. The final hill in this series, **Heartbreak Hill** — located near Boston College — rises approximately 88 feet over a quarter mile and arrives precisely when runners' glycogen stores are beginning to deplete.

Yet the course's challenges are also its gifts. The combination of rolling hills, passionate spectators along every mile, the roar of the **Wellesley College Scream Tunnel** at mile 12, and the electric energy of **Kenmore Square** in the final miles create an experience that veteran Boston runners describe as unlike anything else in the sport.

The course drops approximately 459 feet in net elevation from Hopkinton to Copley Square — a characteristic that has made Boston ineligible for official world record attempts, but has also produced some of the fastest and most breathtaking racing in marathon history.

A New Medal for a New Era

One of the most talked-about changes for the **130th Boston Marathon** is the introduction of a **newly redesigned finisher's medal**. The 2026 medal features a golden design on a blue and gold ribbon and was manufactured by **Ashworth Awards**, a North Attleborough, Massachusetts-based company with deep roots in the region. For the 30,000 runners who will cross the finish line on Boylston Street this year, the medal represents far more than a piece of metal — it is a symbol of months of sacrifice, early mornings, long runs, and unwavering dedication to the dream of being a **Boston Marathon finisher**.

Conclusion: More Than a Race

The **2026 Boston Marathon** is the convergence of history, athleticism, community, and human potential at their highest levels. From the world-class performances of **John Korir**, **Benson Kipruto**, **Sharon Lokedi**, and **Marcel Hug** to the 30,000 everyday runners who have worked for months or years to earn their spot on the starting line in Hopkinton — every participant, every spectator, and every story is part of something far greater than a footrace.

As the **130th edition of the world's oldest annual marathon** takes shape on the streets of Boston on **Patriots' Day, April 20, 2026**, the city will once again become the global capital of marathon running. The cold air, the roaring crowds, the hills of Newton, and the magnificent turn onto Boylston Street will deliver the unforgettable spectacle that only the **Boston Marathon** can produce.

Whether you are watching from the sidelines, following on ESPN2 or ESPN+, tracking a friend through the B.A.A. Racing App, or digging deep somewhere between miles 18 and 26, the message of the **2026 Boston Marathon** is timeless: the road is hard, the finish line is beautiful, and the human spirit is unbreakable.

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