



NEWS

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For Immediate Release

Olympic Hopefuls Bobby Curtis and Chris Thompson Headline Athlete Additions in NYC Half

Two-time World Marathon Majors series champion Liliya Shobukhova withdraws from field due to injury

Race to be broadcast live on WABC-TV and streamed live at tv.nyrr.org beginning at 7:00 a.m.

New York, March 7, 2012—Former NCAA champion and American Olympic 10,000-meter hopeful Bobby Curtis and 2011 NYRR Dash to the Finish Line 5K champion and British Olympic hopeful Chris Thompson lead a talented group of additions to the professional field for the NYC Half on Sunday, March 18, it was announced today by New York Road Runners officials.

Two-time World Marathon Majors series champion Liliya Shobukhova of Russia was forced to withdraw from the race due to a hamstring injury. Shobukhova, an early favorite for the Olympic Marathon in London this summer, was set to open her 2012 season at the NYC Half.

Curtis, 27, of Ardmore, PA, became the seventh-fastest American of all time at 10,000 meters when he ran 27:24.67 to finish second at the Stanford Payton Jordan Cardinal Invitational in April 2011. He is a two-time Team USA member for the IAAF World Cross Country Championships and won the 2008 NCAA Championship at 5000 meters in 13:33.93. Curtis made his marathon debut at the ING New York City Marathon 2011, finishing 15th in a time of 2:16:44. He has a half-marathon best of 1:01:52, set in September 2011.

Thompson, 30, of Great Britain, was the 10,000-meter silver medalist at the 2010 European Athletics Championships in Barcelona. At the 2011 Stanford Payton Jordan Cardinal Invitational, he ran 27:27.36 for 10,000 meters, the third-fastest time in British history. Thompson won the 2011 NYRR Dash to the Finish Line 5K during ING New York City Marathon weekend. The NYC Half will be his debut at the distance.

Additional athletes on the men's side include:

- Collis Birmingham, 27, of Australia, a former Australian 10,000-meter record-holder and 2012 London Olympics hopeful. The NYC Half will be his half-marathon debut.
- Ben St. Lawrence, 30, the Australian 10,000-meter record-holder and a recently announced member of his nation's 2012 Olympic team. Like his training partner Birmingham, he will be making his half-marathon debut.
- Michael Shelley, 28, of Australia, the 2010 Commonwealth Games marathon silver medalist.

Additional athletes in the women's field include:

- Freya Murray, 28, of Great Britain, who is currently vying for the third and last spot on the British Olympic women's marathon team.
- Diane Nukuri-Johnson, 28, of Burundi, a 2000 Olympian and holder of several national records. She was a star runner at the University of Iowa.
- Irvette Van Blerk, 24, of South Africa, who finished ninth at the NYC Half 2011 in a personal best time of 1:10:56.
- Karolina Jarzynska, 30, Poland's best women's distance runner and a likely member of her country's Olympic marathon team.
- Lisa Weightman, 33, of Australia, a 2008 Olympian and the 2010 Commonwealth Games bronze medalist in the marathon.

NYRR's flagship half-marathon, in its seventh running, will feature a race-record field of 15,000 runners and a thrilling new course. Also new this year, WABC-TV will be airing the NYC Half live, beginning at 7:00 a.m., as part of NYRR's recently announced comprehensive television agreement with ESPN/WABC-TV. The race will also be broadcast live on the New York Road Runners website. Viewers can tune in at 7:00–9:00 a.m. EDT on Sunday, March 18 to tv.nyrr.org to watch the race coverage. The NYC Half will again offer a prize purse of \$100,000—the largest half-marathon purse in the United States. The men's and women's champions will each earn \$20,000. The race continues to attract prominent professional athletes and recreational runners from around the world.

The previously announced men's field includes three world-class Americans: 2012 Olympic Trials Marathon champion Meb Keflezighi, two-time Olympian Dathan Ritzenhein, and 2011 World Championships 10,000-meter runner Scott Bauhs. Also announced were Moroccan Olympian Abderrahime Bouramdane; Kenyan Peter Kirui, who competed in the 10,000 meters at the 2011 IAAF World Championships in Daegu, South Korea; Canadian Olympian Eric Gillis; Wesley Korir of Kenya, runner-up at the 2011 Bank of American Chicago Marathon; Ethiopian Olympian Deriba Merga, the 2009 Boston Marathon champion; and Kenyan Samuel Chelanga, the NCAA 10,000-meter record-holder.

The women's pro field includes previously announced top American runners Kara Goucher and Desiree Davila (both members of this year's U.S. Olympic Marathon team), Janet Cherobon-Bawcom, Julie Culley, Jeannette Faber, and Stephanie Pezzullo. Molly Pritz, the top American female finisher in the ING New York City Marathon 2011, was forced to withdraw from the race due to illness. Also announced were Mexican Olympian Madaí Pérez, British Olympian Jo Pavey, Dutch Olympian Hilda Kibet, and Claire Hallissey, a contender for the British Olympic marathon team.

The NYC Half will offer runners a spectacular tour of Manhattan as they race through Central Park, Times Square, the Hudson River waterfront, and lower Manhattan, en route to the scenic South Street Seaport finish line. At the Post-Race Festival Presented by Poland Spring, there will be refreshments, entertainment by Irish rockers Black 47 and the Shinbone Alley Stilt Band, treatments supplied by the Swedish Institute of Massage, and much more. The Festival is free and open to the public.

About NYRR

New York Road Runners was founded in 1958 when a small group of passionate runners vowed to bring running to the people. Over the past 53 years, NYRR has grown from a local running club to the world's premier community running organization. NYRR's mission is to empower everyone, of all ages and abilities—beginners and competitive athletes, the young and the elderly, adult professionals and underserved schoolchildren—to improve their health and well-being through the power of running and fitness.

NYRR's races, community events, instruction and training resources, and youth programs give hundreds of thousands of people each year the motivation, know-how, and opportunity to start running and keep running for life. NYRR's premier event, the famed ING New York City Marathon, attracts the world's top pro runners and committed amateurs alike while also raising millions of dollars annually for charity and driving economic impact for the City. But NYRR is equally committed to the runners of tomorrow, passionately providing youth fitness programs that educate and inspire more than 100,000 kids in underserved communities in New York City, all 50 states, and around the world.

Headquartered in New York City, NYRR implements a unique nonprofit model that teams contributed and earned income to make all its efforts possible. To learn more, please visit www.nyrr.org.