



PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

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THE WOODLANDS MARATHON WELCOMES BACK THREE OF ITS FOUR DEFENDING CHAMPIONS

THE WOODLANDS, TX (January 16, 2013) – The second edition of the Fidelity Investments The Woodlands Marathon and the St. Luke's The Woodlands Half Marathon will feature three of its four defending champions from a year ago – joining a growing list of elite commitments that will compete for a combined prize purse of \$26,000.

"It is great to see our champions returning, which says something about the event's success in its first year back," said race director **Willie Fowlkes**. "We welcome a deep field of talented women and men from across the nation with some international runners joining the crowd."

Elite athlete coordinator **Adrienne Langelier** continues to proactively work to finalize an impressive field for this year's events.

"I'm thrilled to have such a talented and deep elite field in both races," said Langelier. "We should expect a fast, highly competitive and exciting race and perhaps a new course record or two when it's all said and done".

Last year's women's marathon champion **Camille Herron**, 30, who finished third two Sundays ago at the Mississippi Blues Marathon in Jackson, Mississippi in what she called the "toughest course of the 18 marathons I've run", will return to defend her crown against a field that will be led by fellow 2012 United States Olympic Marathon Trials participant Mary Akor.

Herron followed up The Woodlands last year with her sixth and seventh career wins in Oklahoma City (2:45:13) and Tulsa (Route 66; 2:48:51) while Mary Akor, 36, who calls Hawthorne, California home, recorded a pair of wins in Cleveland (May; 2:39:49) and Des Moines (October; 2:35:01) and runners-up showings in Vancouver (2:46:01) and Quad Cities (2:36:27).

Last year's men's marathon champion **Jeffrey Eggleston**, 28, of Tucson, Arizona, will return to run the half marathon against defending champion **Sammy Kiplagat**, 39, of Hildago.

Eggleston was second in Pittsburgh (2:14:26), eighth in San Diego at the Rock 'N' Roll Marathon (2:13:13) and 16th in Chicago in October in 2:12:03, but won the Wipro San Francisco Second Half Marathon in 1:03:54 followed by a 1:04:57 second place showing three weeks later at the America's Finest City Half Marathon in San Diego.

Kiplagat was second and third, respectively, at Rock 'N' Roll half marathon events in Dallas (1:05:44) and San Antonio (1:13:32), respectively, in March and November, and closed 2012 with an impressive 24-second, 1:42:17 win at the 25th annual Finish Line Sports 25K in early December in Sugar Land.

The two will be challenged by Kenyan **Benson Cheriuyot**, 30, who ran a pair of personal-best 1:03:07 half marathon times in 2011 in Indianapolis and Duluth, and Flagstaff, Arizona's **Jonny Wilson**, 25, who was third in last October's ING Hartford Half Marathon in 1:06:24.

While last year's St. Luke's The Woodlands Half Marathon champion **Mattie Suver** left the Houston area to Colorado, the 25-year-old, who won the USATF Club Cross Country National Championship in Louisville last month, was primed to return until her American Distance Project coaches decided to have her race in a team competition the same weekend.

The current field is led by 34-year-old professional triathlete **Kelly Williamson** of Austin and Minneapolis, Minnesota chiropractor **Jenna Boren**.

Williamson, the defending U.S. Ironman 70.3 champion, holds a 1:14:42 half marathon personal best, set at the 2012 edition of 3M Half Marathon in Austin, and was second at the Ironman 70.3 World Championship last September just outside of Las Vegas. She defended her 3M Half Marathon title on Sunday with a winning time of 1:16:19 as she prepares for her first triathlon of the year in Panama.

The 36-year-old Boren is the two-time defending champion of the Des Moines Half Marathon with a career PR of 1:16:03 and ran in the United States Olympic Trails Marathon last January in Houston in 2:43:04.

Top male and female marathoners may earn an additional \$750 for a course record and \$1,250 in total if 2:15 and 2:35, respectively, is broken on top of the \$3,000 winning prize. Half marathoners may earn an additional \$500 for a course record and \$1,000 in total if 1:05 and 1:15, respectively, for men and women, are eclipsed.

The sub primes in both races will be paid up to the top three finishers.

Winners at the 13.1-mile distance will take home a winning prize of \$1,750.

About The Woodlands Marathon Management

The Woodlands Marathon Management is an event production company that operates with a primary goal of providing individuals the opportunity to participate in a running event that promotes the advancement of running. The directors of The Woodlands Marathon Management share a passion for The Woodlands community, the Houston region and the active sport lifestyle. They have teamed up to produce this premier event that will provide The Woodlands and surrounding communities options for living a healthy lifestyle with purpose.

About The Woodlands

Located just 30 minutes north of Houston, Texas and minutes from George Bush Intercontinental Airport, The Woodlands is an emerging destination for leisure guests, individual business travelers and groups of all sizes. Visitors to The Woodlands enjoy more than five million square feet of world-class shopping, dining and entertainment options; more than 185 miles of hike-and-bike trails; the 1,700-acre Mitchell Preserve; the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion, one of the top five outdoor amphitheatres in the world; kayaking on The Woodlands Waterway and Lake Woodlands; and 115 parks. The Woodlands features world-class golf and is home to more than 1,400 guestrooms in upscale and boutique properties, select service, limited service, conference and convention centers and a resort. For more information, go to www.visitthewoodlands.com.

For more information, please visit the event website at <http://www.thewoodlandsmarathon.com/>.