

September 19, 2007

WORLD MARATHON MAJORS
BOSTON LONDON BERLIN CHICAGO NEW YORK

An interview with:

DAVE BEDFORD
MARY WITTENBERG
MARK MILDE
GUY MORSE
CAREY PINKOWSKI

JACK FLEMING: Thank you to everyone who has been able to join today. Welcome to our fall World Marathon Majors conference call with the race directors. Without further ado, I wanted to introduce everyone who is on the phone.

Dave Bedford, race director of the Flora London Marathon. Carey Pinkowski, the executive race director of The LaSalle Bank Chicago Marathon. Mark Milde, the race director of the real-Berlin-Marathon. Mary Wittenberg, the race director of the ING New York City Marathon. And Guy Morse, the executive race director of the Boston Marathon.

Dave Bedford, can you please give us a few opening remarks and tell us where we stand in the World Marathon Majors leading into these last three races of the year.

DAVE BEDFORD: Yes, I can. First of all, my sympathies for those marathons who are about to take place. Boston, London -- of course -- took place in the spring, and it's our off-season, but it's still vivid in our minds the work and the jobs that you in Berlin, Chicago and New York have to go through. So good luck to you all.

The first World Marathon Majors Series is starting to move towards a conclusion. This series, of course, is an amalgamation of events that took place in 2006 throughout five races, in 2007 with five races, and of course the World Championships in Osaka. We were delighted to host a press reception in Osaka on the morning of the men's race. It was great to see some of you there.

I think as we start to look at the 2006/2007 series coming to a conclusion, we can just start to see some interesting scenarios. I thought that

Paul Christman in Running Stats a couple weeks ago indicated some interesting possibilities. I think when we look at it at the moment, most people think that Robert Cheruiyot might as well be out spending his money at the moment. And, of course, the women's challenge is still very, very open.

I think the key thing to remember with this, and I think as we start to close down this first series of two years, we need to remember that everything that happens this year is the first year of the 2007/2008 series. I think already we're just starting to see some impact on the way that athletes are running and racing starting to change slightly.

The fact we have Gete Wami entered in both Berlin and New York tells you some stories. I'm sure someone else, as we go through this call, will talk more about that. But I think that from what we've seen so far, we believe that we have been telling a story, we have been linking our five events together. And I think the way they're linked in with the World Championships this summer indicates we do have a property here of value. I hope we feel exactly the same way when we come to New York on the Monday after New York at our presentation lunch. Thank you.

JACK FLEMING: Thank you, Dave.

Carey Pinkowski, the The LaSalle Bank Chicago Marathon is quickly approaching on October 7th. Can you touch on that and also the men's leader board.

CAREY PINKOWSKI: Thanks, Jack.

Obviously here in Chicago we are preparing for our 30th running, our 30th anniversary, which we're very excited about. We have a record number of participants this year. A lot of wonderful things are happening in the city. Obviously there's some excitement that's resonating with our Olympic bid efforts that's complemented the visibility of the sport in our community.

As always, traditionally in Chicago, we're afforded the ability to bring some very talented athletic marathon runners to Chicago. Obviously Robert Cheruiyot has what appears to be an insurmountable lead. There's some interesting scenarios that could factor into this. You can give

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some thought to it and break it down. But his consistency in Boston and Chicago has really vaulted him into, I think, the primary position.

Obviously when we created the World Marathon Majors Series and, really this was the first visible collaboration of the five of us, what we attempted to do, I think we've achieved the goal of creating -- connecting these five great events with the elite athletes. It has created some interest, 'what if' scenarios. I think we've accomplished our first goal and we'll continue to stage some great races and some great events as the plot thickens through Berlin, Chicago into New York. It makes it very, very interesting. I think we've hit our first plateau, first level as a group.

JACK FLEMING: Thank you.

Mark Milde, the next race of the World Marathon Majors Series is the real,-Berlin-Marathon on September 30th. You have your defending champion back. Can you pick up on that and also begin to touch on the women's race.

MARK MILDE: Thank you, Jack. We are getting all excited. It's only about 10 days to go to the start of our race. Yeah, we are all waiting anxiously what Haile can do in Berlin this year. In the summer he did some very good racing on the shorter distances. The question I always ask myself is, Did he also do his long runs? His management and he himself were answering me, 'yes, he's also doing the long runs.' I'm sure he will be well-prepared going into Berlin. We will see the outcome on the 30th of September.

But it's not only Haile in the mix. We have Sammy Korir, the second fastest runner ever, and Phillip Manyim, the former winner of 2005. They still want to prove that they are the marathon runners of the highest caliber. The German focus will be on Falk Cierpinski, son of Waldemar Cierpinski, the double Olympic champion, who is a successful triathlete, the son. He's trying to improve on his marathon times to eventually qualify for the next Olympic Games in Beijing in the spring.

On the women's side we with we have the defending champion Gete Wami participating. She will be eager to take back her Ethiopian record she lost to Berhane Adere. Her largest challengers will be Naoko Sakamoto from Japan with a 2:21 best, and Irina Timofeyewa from Russia. And also in the mix is Irina Mikitenko of Germany, who will be running her debut. It's indicated with her

performances she can run the 2:25 time. We're very excited about this.

Also joining the women's field will be Sonia O'Sullivan and Fernanda Ribeiro. I think the most exciting thing, which we have already mentioned on the call, is that Gete, if she scores the 25 points with the victory in Berlin, she will be the leader in the World Marathon Majors leader board. She would then be leading with one race or two races to go. She has not won yet. Yeah, the possibilities of her winning in New York or scoring the extra point that's needed, that's a tough question.

With this I want to hand it over to Mary.

JACK FLEMING: Thank you, Mark.

The ING New York City Marathon is on November 4th. Mary Wittenberg is the race director. It will conclude the World Marathon Majors year and also the first World Marathon Majors Series. Mary.

MARY WITTENBERG: Hello to all the media. Thank you so much for joining us.

We're thrilled. I think we're exactly where we would have hoped to have been. On the men's side, absent an unexpected turn of events, we'll be able to salute a champion that's won three majors in two years. That's a big deal. On the women's side, it is a horse race, and we have no foregone conclusion here. Technically, we have six women in the race. Jeptoo and Zhou are not currently planning to run. That brings us to four athletes. Adere, who is expected to run Chicago, would need to win Chicago and then have Gete Wami win less than 15 points over the next two races in Berlin and New York. Jelena would have to win no points. Crazy things have happened. Athletes get hurt. Weather turns. Races can be difficult. You never know. But our full expectation is we've got three women in the race today.

Gete sits in the drivers seat. Jelena is probably best positioned to win. But Gete has the luxury of controlling her own destiny. If she can win Berlin and then come back and win New York, she wins it all. We all know there's nothing easy about that combination, but she has been preparing for months to run this double.

Catherine Ndereba is in the challenging position that we often see in sport of sitting on the sideline to determine if she'll get a swing at it or not. She needs Gete to come in second or worse in Berlin in order for Catherine to get into the race. And then Jelena gets to come into New York with fresh legs. Catherine is obviously coming off the

World Championships. Gete will be coming off Berlin. Jelena has been taking it slow and steady all summer believing there to a big New York [finish for her]. She'll come into New York I think with unprecedented pressure on her shoulders. She could be our first woman since Grete Waitz to win more than two ING New York City Marathons. Really the first time she comes in as the favorite in the race, and we have an absolutely packed field of women, and we aren't finished with our announcements yet.

So it's really going to be quite fascinating. It's where we hoped to be. We look forward to entertaining your questions.

JACK FLEMING: Thank you, Mary.

Guy Morse, executive race director of the Boston Marathon. We're planning on ending the first World Marathon Majors Series in fine fashion. How?

GUY MORSE: As has been stated earlier, we are very happy and pleased with the success of our first series and we are planning a very special celebration the day after the ING New York City Marathon, that is Monday, November 5, in Central Park at the Boathouse. We will have a fitting tribute for our new winners of the first series. It really looks to be an exciting day, not only because of the culmination of the three former marathons having been completed, but also to appropriately recognize our winning athletes. It really is going to be something spectacular, something you'll want to be a part of. It will be, as I said, a fitting tribute not only to the athletes who have won the big prize but also for the World Marathon Majors Series which really has been quite successful and very positively positioned to move forward. You'll get to hear more about that in the coming call, as well.

Again, we look forward to seeing you for the celebration on Monday, November 5, at noontime.

JACK FLEMING: Thank you, Guy. Let's get right to the questions.

Q. Any progress on finding a title sponsor and how have sponsors overall reacted to the World Marathon Majors Series?

DAVE BEDFORD: We've had a number of nibbles, but we haven't yet put ourselves into a position where we are able to announce a sponsor. Clearly with the second year of the first series coming to a conclusion, this is probably not the perfect time for us to be announcing.

But we've put it in the near future to be able to announce not only a title sponsor but where that takes the series going forward.

Q. How have your title sponsors and others reacted to the World Marathon Majors Series?

GUY MORSE: For the most part, specifically for Boston, our sponsors and our other title sponsors have been very supportive of this idea. They believe and understand the incremental value that everyone is receiving in the process. They've been as cooperative as I think they can be.

To pick up on what Dave said, we entered this for the long-term, for the long haul. It really is, like our events, a marathon not a sprint. We expect it to take the appropriate time, whatever length of time that is, to make this work.

It has to be a good fit. It will be a good fit with a series sponsor. We're very enthusiastic about being able to have that sponsor whenever it's appropriate and as soon as it's appropriate.

MARY WITTENBERG: I would add I think we've also seen from a number of our sponsors is they only wish they could have at it and have the full five. We have ING in New York that would love to have more. We have adidas across three of the races. They'd love to have five. Several of us, when we talk about that, we already have great partners that are already part of it. They only wish they could be in the running to take it. That's another perspective we've seen a lot of.

I think what we've seen is that our partners have across the board really supported it in that this is an effort to continue to lift our sport globally throughout the year, continue to build a fan base, continue to build a consumer base, and that benefits every one of our individual sponsors.

Q. Obviously this collaboration has been a good one for the five marathons and the directors, and sounds like the sponsors. Certainly I'm getting a lot of feedback from athletes as they make their schedules. One area that you have tried to bolster is some fan interest in this. Personally I just am not hearing that out there. Do you have any comments, any of the five race directors, about how to turn this into more of a fan-friendly type of event to be watching?

DAVE BEDFORD: I'd like to give you at

least one example of where I think we have already benefited. The London Marathon in April for the first time was available via WCSN in the USA online. We had 220,000 people click on to watch.

Now, the fact that we were only able to tell people that that was available five days before the event indicates to me that what we are starting to do is start fulfilling obligations to existing fans who in the past have not been able to follow our marathons. And I think that in itself is the start of a process.

The London Marathon is 27 years old. I think we will really start to see the benefits of all this activity, of this collaboration, and the thinking that's going on behind the scenes in years to come. I think Guy is right, this is not about an instant fix or an instant step forward. But I think as long as we go step by step and continue to build on the foundations of our relationship as we go forward, we will start to see this.

We are not going to change the world overnight. But all of our marathons are here a long time. We all have history. We will continue to be having these conversations in future years. As time goes forward, we will all start to see the benefits.

Q. Mark, have you done promotions now with Gete with this new information? If so, I'm wondering what the reaction you've gotten from the other athletes is? If there's so much talk about Gete doing a double, how do the other women feel who are contesting her in the race?

MARK MILDE: Well, I mean, I haven't communicated this information back, not talking personally to the athletes. But I think obviously even Gete will go into this race, she will have New York in her mind, maybe not be pushing herself as hard as she could have been doing it before because it will be in the back of her head. That maybe gives a better chance, yeah, a better chance for the other athletes, that they have chances of having a go at her that will be getting bigger.

I think it will make it a closer race, more exciting.

Q. A bit about your course. Why does your course really suit the way Gete runs?

MARK MILDE: Well, we believe that our course is, yeah, -- difficult to tell -- it's the fastest in

the world because we have other fast courses, and race directors of the other fast courses on this call. It's generally flat. We have an incline of about 20 meters stretching for about 10 kilometers. You don't really feel the incline. I think one other reason is that we don't have that many turns as other races. So our curves are smoother than the ones you find in the U.S. for example.

Q. As far as Gete's running style, what did you see of her last year?

MARK MILDE: I think it's a part that does not only relate to Gete but in general to most of the runners. I mean, taking a corner with 22 meters an hour can be hard on your legs and your hips.

Q. Similarly, with Haile, obviously he's going in there hoping to break the world record. Is this part of your promotion? In your recent talks with him, how excited is he about that prospect?

MARK MILDE: Well, I mean, Haile is collecting records like no other runner in the world. I mean, I think his total is now 23. So for him I think this is the highest goal, to get the record of the distance running event. He had some problems in the beginning with the marathon. I think he has conquered the marathon the last few races he ran, with the exception of London, of course, where he had to go out.

I believe, yeah, he will do everything that he can do to get this record.

MARY WITTENBERG: I would add on the major side, in terms of Gete, I think what's interesting is the flat course will ease the demands on her body. I think she's ideally suited for the New York course. She has a rich cross-country background. I think what's playing in her favor is coming off the flat into where she really thrives on the tougher course. That's I think going to be an interesting component. She comes in with some positive advantage when she looks at the tougher course in New York.

DAVE BEDFORD: I think it's also worth saying that one of the things that we shouldn't underestimate in the women's race is the impact and toll that running in Osaka would have had on athletes. Catherine had a great victory there. But the conditions were very, very hard. It will be interesting to see whether she is able to bounce back quickly from that grueling performance there.

MARY WITTENBERG: I think that's going

to be fascinating because Catherine will have to effectively win, absent some very unusual circumstances in New York, to capture this. I think we saw her run in Osaka as well, in Boston a few years ago when it was so hot, and she bounced back.

But I think to Dave's point about Osaka this year, the race was highly competitive with a lot of people almost all the way through. It appears, talking to her after, from those that were there, it took a greater toll on race day than any race has ever taken on her.

DAVE BEDFORD: I think it's possible to argue that the Osaka women's race, it's certainly in the top three all-time women's races I've ever seen if not the best. It was astounding in incredibly difficult conditions.

Q. Obviously you have a great challenge with what's happening before the New York City Marathon with the trials. Can you talk about organizationally how difficult that has been. I understand this is a World Marathon Majors teleconference, but one way to ask the question would be: How are you making sure the New York City Marathon doesn't get lost in the spotlight and get overshadowed by the trials the day before?

MARY WITTENBERG: I'm not worried about the ING New York City Marathon getting lost. What we're doing, to me this is going to be the greatest weekend marathon running's ever seen, certainly till we get to next April. And I think every single component of it will benefit from the other components being strong.

What's so compelling about the weekend, Americans race at the trials on Saturday at a moment when our men, our international class runners, fans around the world are going to care who is making that team because we expect those men to be factors in Beijing.

With the ING New York City Marathon, our commitment was to ensure that the race was as strong as ever. The budget is actually higher than it's ever been. The fields on the men's and women's side, once you hear them fully announced, I think you'll agree are arguably the best we've ever had.

To me the World Marathon Majors is just a beautiful icing on the cake because we're going to have a really compelling race, and I think, again, the entire weekend brings attention to not only the ING New York City Marathon but all five of our

races and to the dramatic and exciting sport that we have in marathon running.

To talk tactics for a minute to you. What we're doing is we have combined, took our advertising campaign, which runs largely in New York, then five markets in the United States, and we have -- instead of promoting just the ING New York City Marathon -- we've included the trials and the majors, the whole promotion is based on two spectacular races, three spectacular races, one giant weekend of running. We tied it all together in our advertising.

JACK FLEMING: Guy, could you follow up on that.

GUY MORSE: As Mary said, we are approaching this with both events being organized obviously independent of each other, but they will both be tied very closely together. It will be a weekend-long series of celebrations, both which highlight each event, then collectively they will be bundled together where appropriate, especially in the areas as Mary mentioned of advertising and promotion.

As you recall, that was the reason that the USA Track and Field organization chose New York and Boston in the first place: to take advantage of that excitement that will take place both at the marathons themselves, but also collectively carry on to the entire weekend.

Q. Have you had to hire extra people or has your organization been able to handle the double load?

MARY WITTENBERG: No, we've definitely hired extra people. We've welcomed our partners throughout the industry to come be part of this, especially Saturday. I think this is an industry celebration. As discussed with the other U.S. directors on the call, we all sat a few years ago and said, "This has to go to a higher level, the trials." We'll all be working together.

What we've done, we've supplemented our team in every single area, both on Saturday, and on Sunday. Our friends at the Boston Marathon will be helping us at the start of the ING New York City Marathon. John Hughes, his EMI group down from Florida, will be helping us with our Friendship Run on Saturday, which is run for all the international runners. Carey and his team have committed to come out at 2 a.m. and help us in parts of Saturday and Sunday. We have definitely shored up every aspect of the events before the

weekend, that week, and certainly race day.

I think all of us on the call, on the organizing side, we're a lot like the athletes. We get up for the biggest games. This is a real charge. As I said, we had a boot camp, so to speak, with our first and second year staffers yesterday. I think all the staff that are in the organization today are the luckiest in the world. They're going to get to work on this event. They'll get up for it. We've been training for it just like the athletes.

I forgot. My goodness. I'm sitting down the hall from our friends in London who are shoring up our whole IT program, scoring, everything over the whole weekend, as well as working with the timing company that has worked with all the major marathons. Literally every single one of our colleagues is playing some role in supporting and ensuring we pull off a spectacular weekend.

Q. If you look at the standings on the men's side, it looks like it's pretty well set up. You have seven of the top ten runners all from Kenya. The women's side still up for grabs. You have 15 out of the top 20 women all from different countries. I'd be curious to see how that ended up that way this year. Do the five race directors have any plans to make it more competitive or more inclusive in terms of numbers of countries for next year?

DAVE BEDFORD: It would certainly make it far more competitive if we didn't let Kenya take part in the men's. That, however, is not the way world athletics works. What we are not doing is limiting where people can run and who runs where. It's just the way it is at the moment. And it doesn't mean to say that it will always be there. Who would have said this time last year that there would be a Brazilian athlete in fourth place? No one would have seen that happening. There is no question about it, on the men's side, the Kenyans are a massive force. That's the way it is at the moment. In five years' time, it may be different. What we can't do is start manipulating the way the marathon market is.

MARY WITTENBERG: That's exactly right. I would only add that the men's leader board doesn't tell a full story either of the state of the sport today. Remember, the men's trials have in this series, next series, altered the playing field a bit for the Americans. We certainly have talked about Americans now that can be on this leader board at the top end as they were when they came

out of the first spring of the series. Also the Japanese men we can absolutely look to be getting on this leader board, especially as we head to Beijing. We know they will be a force, as we expect their women to be.

Also I would only comment that, as Dave said, Osaka was an amazing women's marathon. I think when you look at the diversity in women's marathoning, the strength, now we have the Chinese coming, so many countries are strong, it's really something to look at. This is at a moment when Paula Radcliffe and Deena Kastor haven't gotten fully in the fray yet. Women's marathoning, I think it's as strong as we have ever seen it.

Q. I'd be interested to know if you think the World Marathon Majors will be able to build on the name recognition that the winner is obviously going to get from winning this first season.

CAREY PINKOWSKI: I think the key is the more visibility we can get and obviously consistency with the champions. Obviously in the U.S. people are attracted to champions, whether it's the traditional sports of basketball or tennis. If there's a dominant athlete that wins, you know, people can connect with them. I think it's so competitive, as we were talking about before, that on any given day you can have a different champion. There's not one dominant athlete.

It's something that we'll try to do and move forward. I think collectively our media relations group, our PR people, have done their work in our markets to elevate the awareness of these athletes. We've got a lot of different champions. I think Robert Cheruiyot winning Boston three times, then winning Chicago, he's starting to get a presence in the U.S.

Q. How is the World Marathon Majors fitting in with the World Championships, which sometimes takes a backseat to the majors? As we look ahead to next year, we have the Olympics being also included in the series, how that might affect it. The Olympics is usually a top event.

MARK MILDE: I didn't quite understand the background of the question.

JACK FLEMING: The nature of the question is, how does the World Championships and next year the Olympics affect your assembly of your field?

MARK MILDE: Sorry about that.

Well, the World Championships were I think not such a strong factor this year. That was also because of the conditions that the long distance events or long distance athletes had to face over there. Not many of these were prepared to run under these conditions. For us, of course, it was a good choice, but also a situation that I do understand quite well.

With the Olympics, of course we know it's tough to compete with a city marathon against the title of an Olympic champion. I think there will be some more people going to the Olympics than to the World Championships this year, but still there's so much talent out there of runners, as we have the case with Gete doubling this year, I also see possibilities of somebody who is running in the Olympic Games try to run another fall marathon to get more World Marathon Majors points.

It will be a little bit tougher next year, but in general I think it's good to include these championship races into our ranking.

CAREY PINKOWSKI: I think if you put this in perspective, two years ago we wouldn't have been having this conversation. I think it ties the whole thing together, marathon running with the championships. Obviously that creates, for recruiting, pure recruiting, it creates a few challenges because some of the countries are obviously focused on the championships, whether it's the Olympics, the World Championships, but it just creates scenarios.

What it has done is created a broad-based interest where we're talking about these five events and the World Championships and the Olympics and 'what if' scenarios, which I think is great. Just to reiterate what I said before, that's what we set out to do, try to tie these events together with the most visible elements, which are the elite athletes.

I think for the aficionados, I think you can break this down, but for what the objective was -- visibility and connecting the five events together along with the championships -- I think we've accomplished that.

JACK FLEMING: We thank everyone for participating, and to those who had the opportunity to contribute to it. Please feel free to follow up either with any of the race directors or their PR/media people. We look forward to seeing you this fall.

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