



Tuesday, March 15, 1887

The Boston Athletic Association was established, and construction began soon after on the B.A.A. Clubhouse at the corner of Exeter and Blagden Streets.

Summer 1896

The marathon at the first modern Olympic Games in Athens in 1896 served as the inspiration for the B.A.A. Boston Marathon. John Graham, coach and manager of the B.A.A. athletes, was a keen observer of the Marathon-to-Athens Race and returned to Boston with plans to institute a strikingly similar long-distance run the following spring.

Monday, April 19, 1897

The Boston Marathon was originally called the American Marathon and was the final event of the B.A.A. Games. The first running of the Boston Marathon commenced at the site of Metcalf's Mill in Ashland and finished at the Irvington Oval near Copley Square. John J. McDermott, of New York, emerged from a 15-member starting field to capture the inaugural Boston Marathon.

Tuesday, April 19, 1898

In its second running, the Boston Marathon welcomed its first foreign champion when 22-year-old Boston College student Ronald J. MacDonald of Antigonish, Nova Scotia, won the race in 2:42:00. MacDonald's accomplishment foreshadowed the international appeal the race would later attract. Today, 24 countries can claim a Boston Marathon Open Division (men's and women's) champion. The United States leads the list with 53 triumphs.

Thursday, April 19, 1900

Race winner John P. Caffery was followed across the line by runner-up Bill Sheering and third-place finisher Fred Hughson, providing Canada with a sweep of the top three places. To date, only five nations have swept the top three places: Canada (1900), Korea (1950), Japan (1965 and 1966), Kenya (six times, including 2012 when it swept both the men's and women's races), and United States (35 times, which includes 29 times for men and six times for women). Kenya rounded out the list of nations in 1996 when that country's men swept the top six spots. Also, Kenyan men placed first through fourth in 2002; first through fifth in 2003; and first through fourth in 2004. The United States, which has swept the top three spots on 31 occasions, leads all nations. At the inaugural Boston Marathon in 1897, all 10 finishers were from the United States.

Wednesday, April 19, 1911

The legendary Clarence H. DeMar of Melrose, Massachusetts, won his first of seven Boston Marathon titles. However, on the advice of medical experts, DeMar initially "retired" from the sport following his first title. He later won six titles between 1922 and 1930, including three consecutive titles from 1922 through 1924. DeMar was 41 years old when he won his final title in 1930.



Friday, April 19, 1918

Due to American involvement in World War I, the traditional Patriots' Day race underwent a change of format but preserved its perennial nature. A 10-man military relay race was contested on the course, and the team from Camp Devens in Ayer, Massachusetts, bested the field in 2:24:53.

Saturday, April 19, 1924

The course was lengthened to 26 miles, 385 yards to conform to the Olympic standard, and the starting line was moved west from Ashland to Hopkinton.

Thursday, April 19, 1928

John A. Kelley made his Boston Marathon debut. Kelley, who won the race in 1935 and again in 1945, posted the record for most Boston Marathons started (61) and finished (58). His final race came in 1992 at the age of 84. Meanwhile, Clarence H. DeMar captured his second straight title. To date, only nine open division men's champions have returned to successfully defend their titles. DeMar is the only one to have recorded consecutive triumphs on more than one occasion (1922–24 and 1927–28).

Monday, April 20, 1936

The last of Newton's hills was given the nickname "Heartbreak Hill" by Boston Globe reporter Jerry Nason. When John A. Kelley caught eventual champion Ellison "Tarzan" Brown on the Newton hills, Kelley made a friendly gesture of tapping Brown on the shoulder. Brown responded by regaining the lead on the final hill, and as Nason reported, "breaking Kelley's heart."

Saturday, April 19, 1941

Leslie S. Pawson of Pawtucket, Rhode Island, joined Clarence H. DeMar as the only men to win the race three times or more. Pawson first won the race in 1933 and added a second title in 1938. The pair has since been joined by Gerard A. Cote, Bill Rodgers, Eino Oksanen, Ibrahim Hussein, Cosmas Ndeti, and Robert Kipkoech Cheruiyot.

Saturday, April 19, 1947

For the first time in the history of the men's open race, a world best was established at the Boston Marathon when Korean Yun Bok Suh turned in a 2:25:39 performance.

Monday, April 19, 1948

The Boston Marathon crowned its second four-time champion when Gerard A. Cote of Hyacinthe, Quebec, edged B.A.A. runner Ted Vogel. Cote's first triumph came in 1940, and he added back-to-back wins in 1943 and 1944. To date, only DeMar, Cote, Bill Rodgers, and Robert Kipkoech Cheruiyot have won the men's open race four or more times.



Saturday, April 20, 1957

John J. Kelley became the first and currently lone B.A.A. club member to win the Boston Marathon. In addition, from 1946 to 1967, Kelley was the only American to win the race.

Tuesday, April 19, 1966

Although not an official entrant, Roberta “Bobbi” Gibb became the first woman to run the Boston Marathon. Joining the starting field shortly after the gun had been fired, Gibb finished the race in 3:21:40 to place 126th overall. Gibb again claimed the “unofficial” title in 1967 and 1968.

Wednesday, April 19, 1967

By signing her entry form “K. V. Switzer,” Kathrine Switzer became the first woman to receive a number in the Boston Marathon. By her own estimate, Switzer finished in 4:20:00. In 2017, Switzer returned to Boston and ran on the 50th anniversary of her memorable 1967 race, finishing in 4:44:31. Her bib number 261 was retired in a ceremony on April 18, 2017.

Monday, April 21, 1969

The Boston Marathon has always been held on the holiday commemorating Patriots’ Day. Beginning in 1969, the holiday became officially recognized as the third Monday in April.

Monday, April 20, 1970

Qualifying standards were introduced. The official B.A.A. entry form stated, “A runner must submit the certification...that he has trained sufficiently to finish the course in less than four hours.”

Monday, April 17, 1972

Women were allowed to officially run the Boston Marathon, and Nina Kuscsik emerged from an eight-member field to win the race in 3:10:26.

Monday, April 21, 1975

A trio of stories emerged from this race, as Bill Rodgers collected his first of four titles, Bob Hall became the first officially recognized participant to complete the course in a wheelchair, and Liane Winter of West Germany established a women’s world best of 2:42:24. Hall was granted permission to enter the race provided that he covered the distance in under three hours. Hall finished in 2:58:00, signaling the start of the wheelchair division in the race.

Monday, April 19, 1982

Alberto Salazar and Dick Beardsley became the first two runners to break 2:09:00 in the same race after dueling one another for first place over the final nine miles. Salazar emerged victorious from the thrilling final sprint to the finish in 2:08:52, with Beardsley just two seconds behind.



Monday, April 18, 1983

Joan Benoit won her second Boston Marathon in a world best time of 2:22:43. Benoit, who won the inaugural women's Olympic Marathon the following year, became the first person to win the Boston and Olympic Marathons. Greg A. Meyer, a resident of Massachusetts at the time, won the men's race.

Monday, April 15, 1985

Lisa Larsen-Weidenbach, who placed fourth at the 1984, 1988, and 1992 U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials, handily won the women's race in 2:34:06.

Monday, April 21, 1986

Through the generous support of principal sponsor John Hancock, prize money was awarded for the first time, and Robert de Castella of Australia earned \$60,000 and a Mercedes-Benz for finishing first in a course record time of 2:07:51. On the women's side, Ingrid Kristiansen of Norway captured her first of two Boston Marathon titles in 2:24:55. She received \$39,000 and a Mercedes-Benz. (Kristiansen won her second title in 1989.)

Monday, April 18, 1988

Kenya's Ibrahim Hussein finished one second ahead of Tanzania's Juma Ikangaa, and became the first African to win the Boston Marathon, or any other major marathon.

Monday, April 16, 1990

Jean Driscoll of Champaign, Illinois, won her first of seven consecutive wheelchair division races. John Campbell of New Zealand established a world masters best of 2:11:04, finishing fourth overall.

Monday, April 18, 1994

World best performances were established in the men's and women's wheelchair divisions, while course records fell in the men's and women's open divisions. For the fifth consecutive year, Jean Driscoll posted a world best to win the women's wheelchair division, while Heinz Frei of Switzerland set the men's world best to mark the 12th time the record had been established at Boston. Cosmas Ndeti of Kenya lowered the course record to 2:07:15, while Uta Pippig set the women's standard at 2:21:45.

Monday, April 17, 1995

Cosmas Ndeti crossed the line first in 2:09:22 to join Bill Rodgers and Clarence H. DeMar as another champion to have won the race three consecutive years. Between 2006 and 2008, Robert Kipkoech Cheruiyot would also win three straight crowns.



Monday, April 15, 1996

The historic 100th running of the Boston Marathon attracted 38,708 entrants (36,748 starters) and had 35,868 official finishers, which stood as the largest field of finishers in the history of the sport until 2004 (New York City: 37,257 starters; 36,544 finishers). Uta Pippig overcame a 30-second deficit and severe dehydration, among other difficulties, to become the first woman of the official era to win the race three consecutive years.

Monday, April 21, 1997

Fatuma Roba of Ethiopia became the fourth person to win the Boston and Olympic Marathons, and the first African woman to win the Boston Marathon. Two years later, she would become the second woman of the official era to win the race three consecutive years.

Monday, April 17, 2000

After seven consecutive victories (1990–96) followed by three years as runner-up (1997–99), Jean Driscoll won an unprecedented eighth title in the wheelchair division, moving her past legendary Hall of Famer Clarence H. DeMar for most all-time victories at Boston. Catherine Ndereba became the first Kenyan woman to win the Boston Marathon; Elijah Lagat, also of Kenya, was first to the finish in the men's race, marking the 10th consecutive year a runner from his country won the title. Both the men's and women's races were the closest in history.

Monday, April 15, 2002

Two records were set in the women's race when Margaret Okayo of Kenya dethroned two-time defending champion Catherine Ndereba in 2:20:43, and Russian Firaya Sultanova-Zhdanova broke the 14-year-old masters record with her 2:27:58 victory.

Monday, April 21, 2003

The Boston Marathon qualifying times were adjusted for the first time since 1990, and the maximum field size was set at 20,000 official entrants.

Monday, April 19, 2004

To better showcase the women's elite field, the B.A.A. implemented a separate start for the top female runners. In a dramatic change to race format, 35 national- and international-caliber women began at 11:31 a.m. (29 minutes before the rest of the field and the traditional noon start). Also, Ernst van Dyk, of South Africa, made history in the push rim wheelchair division when he won for the fourth consecutive year in a world record time of 1:18:27, and he became the first person to ever crack the 1:20:00 barrier.

Monday, April 18, 2005

Catherine Ndereba became the first four-time winner of the women's open division. Ernst van Dyk added to his record for consecutive wins in the men's push rim wheelchair division, capturing his fifth straight title. In Tallil, Iraq, 41 U.S. servicemen and women completed the first-ever Boston Marathon in Iraq that same day.



Monday, April 17, 2006

In one of the most significant changes in Boston Marathon history, the field was divided into two starting waves, with 10,000 runners beginning at the traditional noon starting time, and the remainder of the runners starting at 12:30 p.m. In addition to the two-wave start, the Marathon for the first time scored the event by net (chip) time. Robert Kipkoech Cheruiyot beat Cosmas Ndeti's 12-year-old course record by one second, while Rita Jeptoo, Jelena Prokopcuka, and Reiko Tosa provided the women's division's closest-ever 1-2-3 finish.

Monday, April 16, 2007

For the second year in a row the start of the race underwent a major change, this time with the start time being rolled back to 10:00 a.m. The push rim wheelchair race featured the first two Japanese champions in the history of that division, with Masazumi Soejima and Wakako Tsuchida winning the men's and women's titles, respectively.

Monday, April 21, 2008

Robert Kipkoech Cheruiyot won his fourth total, and third consecutive, Boston title, joining Clarence H. DeMar, Gerard Cote, and Bill Rodgers as the only men to have won the race at least four times.

Monday, April 19, 2010

Robert Kiprono Cheruiyot from Kenya established a new men's course record by 82 seconds with a time of 2:05:52. In the men's push rim wheelchair division, Ernst van Dyk of South Africa won in 1:26:53 and became the most successful Boston Marathon competitor of all time, with his ninth title. The race marked 25 years of partnership between principal sponsor John Hancock and the B.A.A. The official charity program surpassed the \$100 million mark in 2010.

Monday, April 18, 2011

Geoffrey Mutai from Kenya set a new course record, as well as a new world's best time of 2:03:02. The top four men all finished under the old course record. Caroline Kilel of Kenya just outlasted Desiree Davila of the United States to win in 2:22:36. The push rim wheelchair division had an emotional element all its own, with both men's and women's victories going to Japan — this just after the earthquake that had struck that country. Masazumi Soejima finished ahead of Kurt Fearnley and Ernst van Dyk in a winning time of 1:18:50. Once again, records were set for female entrants (11,462) and finishers (10,074).



Monday, April 16, 2012

Weather conditions reached almost 90 degrees along the course. The heat did not affect Canada's Josh Cassidy, who pulled away early to win the push rim wheelchair division in 1:18:25, breaking Ernst van Dyk's course record by two seconds. Due to the warm-weather forecast, anyone who decided to pick up a bib but chose not to run the race was given automatic deferment to the 2013 Boston Marathon. After timing adjudication post-race, 2,160 runners became eligible for this offer. The 500,000th finisher in the 116-year history of the Boston Marathon crossed the finish line.

Monday, April 15, 2013

On a glorious day for racing, Ethiopia's Lelisa Desisa and Kenya's Rita Jeptoo ran to victories with times of 2:10:22 and 2:26:25, while Hiroyuki Yamamoto (Japan) and Tatyana McFadden (USA) won the pushrim wheelchair titles. During the afternoon, as runners were still racing toward the finish line, tragedy struck when two explosions went off in the final stretch of Boylston Street. Responding heroically, medical personnel, volunteers, law enforcement, and spectators quickly came to the aid of the many injured. Tragically, four lives were lost surrounding the explosions and attacks in Boston. In the aftermath of April 15, 2013, runners and citizens from around the globe united as one to celebrate the strength and resiliency of the community. "Boston Strong" became a rallying cry for all to gather around, exemplifying our determination to prevail stronger through adversity.

Monday, April 21, 2014

In a triumphant victory, American Mebrahtom (Meb) Keflezighi crossed the finish first on Boylston Street in a personal best of 2:08:37. Keflezighi was spurred on by the memories of those impacted by the tragic events at the 2013 Boston Marathon, becoming the first American man to win the open race since Greg Meyer in 1983. Rita Jeptoo of Kenya appeared to have ran a course record of 2:18:57 to finish first, though her result was later dismissed in 2016 due to a ruling by the Court of Arbitration for Sport. Thus, Buzunesh Deba was declared champion and the new course record holder thanks to her time of 2:19:59. In the men's push rim wheelchair division, Ernst van Dyk of South Africa won his 10th Boston Marathon title, while Tatyana McFadden of the United States retained the women's crown.

Monday, April 18, 2016

Celebrating the 50th anniversary of Roberta "Bobbi" Gibb's 1966 run to become the first woman to complete the Boston Marathon, officials announced that the era between 1966 and 1971 would no longer be known as the "Unofficial Era." Rather, this time period would be known as the "Pioneer Era" going forward. As a symbol of appreciation and thanks for her role in the women's running movement, women's winner Atsede Baysa gifted her Champion's Trophy to Gibb. Gibb served as the 2016 Boston Marathon Grand Marshal.



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John Hancock

Marathon Milestones

Monday, April 16, 2018

Prevailing in some of the worst weather conditions in race history were American Desiree Linden and Japan's Yuki Kawauchi. Driving rain and very strong winds made it tough for all participants, yet did not stop Linden from becoming the first U.S. woman in 33 years to win the open division. Kawauchi was the first Japanese men's champion since 1987. In recognition of the B.A.A.'s Year of Service, a Military Relay team of 16 servicemen and women passed a baton from Hopkinton to Boston in honor of the centennial anniversary of the 1918 Boston Marathon Military Relay.