



## **PRESS RELEASE**

## **CONTACT**

**For Immediate Release**

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# **THE WOODLANDS MARATHON HOST THE LARGEST RUNNING EVENT TO DATE SINCE THE START OF PANDEMIC**

THE WOODLANDS, TX (March 9, 2021) - The largest marathon in the United States to date since the start of the pandemic a year ago, the 10<sup>th</sup> annual The Woodlands Marathon welcomed runners from 40 states, Washington D.C., Puerto Rico and half of the states in Mexico and saw 3,945 finishers across five distances on two weekends.

Saturday, March 6 saw 937 runners start the marathon; however, The Woodlands Marathon Management determined after reviewing data from the event's timer and interviewing multiple athletes that seven (7) athletes – including the first and second place overall females - did not cross a turnaround mat located near the mile 13 marker.

As a result, New Orleans, Louisiana's Michelle Parks, 36, has been declared the event's official women's marathon champion in 2:38:39 and runners will move up accordingly in the standards.

The first and second place overall females, while they will be compensated by race management for their efforts, will be disqualified from the competition for not running the USATF and World Athletics certified course.

All seven affected runners were from the race's elite field, including five males and two females.

"Four male elites after realizing they got off course, turned around, returned to course and crossed the timing mat," said race director Willie Fowlkes. "The lead cyclist for the female race turned right when exiting the waterway portion of the run taking those runners westbound and missing the first turnaround mat. They continued in error following the lead cyclist.

"On the second loop of the portion of the course the runners made the left turn and were recorded on the timing mat."

The male athlete that did not complete the correct course on the first loop will also be disqualified.

The marathon still had 229 runners who recorded a Boston Marathon qualifying time – some 24.9% of all finishers (919), nearly twice as high of a percentage than in any previous year of the event.

Additionally, an all-time high 59 runners recorded a sub 3-hour marathon finish.

### **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.

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