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Stephen Sambu to Make His 26.2-Mile Debut at the Bank of America Chicago Marathon

Sambu Holds the Record for the World's Fastest 8K

CHICAGO – The Bank of America Chicago Marathon today announced that the world's fastest 8K road runner and back-to-back Bank of America Shamrock Shuffle champion, Stephen Sambu (Tucson, Ariz.), will make his highly anticipated marathon debut in Chicago on October 9.

Sambu follows in the footsteps of some of racing's biggest legends who made their running debuts in Chicago. Fearless and aggressive from the start, runner Steve Jones burst onto the marathon scene in 1984 to set a world record in his debut with a time of 2:08:05. Former world record-holder Khalid Khannouchi toed the line for the first time in 1997, running 2:07:10 to set a course, debut and North American record. Ondoro Orso followed in 1998 to crack Khannouchi's time with a finish of 2:06:54 to set a new course, debut, North American and Kenyan national record. In 2005, Evans Rutto elevated the running game with a new debut record of 2:05:50, and Ethiopian Ejegayehu Dibaba ran the second-fastest debut for women in 2011 at 2:22:09.

"The Bank of America Chicago Marathon has a long tradition of featuring the world's best athletes making their marathon debuts right here," said Bank of America Chicago Marathon Executive Race Director Carey Pinkowski. "To have Stephen Sambu, a person with deep integrity on top of being a talented athlete, add his name to that legacy is truly exciting. He's one of the most highly rated athletes on the road today who isn't afraid to go to the well and put in the work. He loves the energy of racing in our city."

Sambu, a native of Kenya living and training in Arizona, stands out as one of the best competitors on the road racing circuit today. He entered the record books in 2014 when he posted a time of 22:01 in the 8K en route to a 10K victory at the Boston Athletic Association 10K. He made his debut in the Windy City at the 2015 Bank of America Shamrock Shuffle, running uncontested with the fastest time in more than a decade and the 12th-fastest time in the event's history. He returned in 2016 on the heels of capturing a victory at the New York City Half Marathon to run the fourth-fastest time in that event's history with a time of 22:46, beating his nearest challenger by 66 seconds.

“I’m excited to make my first marathon appearance in Chicago because of the strong history of runners making their debut here,” says Sambu. “I’m training very hard and can’t wait to race in front of the fans. I love the flat streets of the city, and I look forward to coming back.”

Prior to his professional running career, Sambu spent some time in Illinois at Rend Lake Junior College, where he captured 10 individual national championships, including two National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) national cross country titles. He finished his career at the University of Arizona, where he emerged as a seven-time National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) All-American. He was the 2011 PAC 10 10,000m champion and the 2012 PAC 12 10,000m champion. Sambu holds personal records of 13:13 in the 5,000m, 26:54 in the 10,000m, and 1:00:41 in the half marathon. His 10K best on the road, 27:25, is the 18th fastest time in history.

About the Bank of America Chicago Marathon

In its 39th year, the Bank of America Chicago Marathon welcomes thousands of runners from more than 100 countries and all 50 states, including a world-class elite field, top regional and Masters runners, race veterans, debut marathoners and charity runners. The race’s iconic course takes runners through 29 vibrant neighborhoods on an architectural and cultural tour of Chicago. In 2015, an estimated 1.7 million spectators lined the streets, cheering on 37,459 runners from the start line to the final stretch down Columbus Drive. As a result of the race’s national and international draw, the Chicago Marathon assists in raising millions of dollars for a variety of charitable causes while generating \$254 million in annual economic impact to its host city. The 2016 Bank of America Chicago Marathon, a member of the Abbott World Marathon Majors, will start and finish in Grant Park beginning at 7:30 a.m. on Sunday, October 9. In advance of the race, a two-day Abbott Health & Fitness Expo will be held at McCormick Place Convention Center on Friday, October 7, and Saturday, October 8. For more information about the event and how to get involved, go to chicagomarathon.com.

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