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Three Elite Athletes to Run in the Kansas City Marathon presented by Garmin

KANSAS CITY, MO (September 11, 2017) – The Kansas City Marathon presented by Garmin will host three of America’s top athletes on Saturday, October 21. Alexi Pappas, Ben True and Ben Collins will all run the race, and there will also be opportunities for participants to engage with them during the marathon festivities. Pappas, True and Collins are all Garmin® sponsored athletes, and their presence at this year’s race is another example of the significant integration of the Garmin brand in all aspects of the Kansas City Marathon.

Pappas has been described as a “Renaissance woman.” She is not only an elite athlete, but also a filmmaker, actor, artist and poet. A Greek-American distance runner, Alexi is a Greek national record holder in the 10,000 meters (31:36) and competed in the 2016 Olympic Games. Alexi was named the female face of the "New Boom" in running by Runner's World Magazine and also one of the Top Eight Olympians to follow on Social Media by the New York Times.

True excelled in Nordic skiing and running throughout high school and college, but had to make a difficult decision and select one sport to focus on. The decision to put all of his efforts into running paid off, as True is the U.S. 5K road record holder after running a 13:20 in Boston earlier this year.

Collins was an Ivy-League champion swimmer who began his career as a robotics engineer before becoming a professional triathlete in 2007. Since then, Collins has competed for the US National Team and has won races around the world, including the New York City Triathlon (three times), and the Garmin Israman (twice), where he also holds course records. In 2016, he competed with Team USA at the Rio Paralympics, piloting for a blind cyclist.

“I’m beyond excited to run Kansas City in October,” Pappas said. “I can’t wait to see everyone out there and hopefully we can all run a PR.”

“Needless to say, we are thrilled to have these three elite athletes coming to run the 2017 Kansas City Marathon,” said Race Director Dave Borchardt. “We are working hard to grow our race both regionally and nationally, and we expect that Alexi, Ben and Ben will come to Kansas City and find out what all of our local runners already know - that we have an incredibly unique race experience and one of the most beautiful courses in the country.”

“This race is Kansas City’s largest annual running event giving runners a tour of some of our most prominent neighborhoods and landmarks, so we invited some of our elite athletes to experience it for themselves,” said Susan Lyman, Garmin vice president of global consumer marketing. “Pappas, True and Collins are all such inspiring athletes, and we are excited to have them participate in this year’s race to not only keep other runners motivated, but also help them run their best race yet.”

The announcement of Pappas, True and Collins coming to run in the Kansas City Marathon is not the only big news around this year's race:

- In April, [Garmin was announced](#) as the new title sponsor of the Kansas City Marathon.
- The Kansas City Marathon unveiled a reversed course for 2017. This change allows runners to tackle the hardest hills during the first half of the race, which will make the second half of the race much easier than in years past. The new course also provides a very fast downhill finish that includes a breathtaking view of the Kansas City Skyline.
- The Kansas City Marathon presented by Garmin launched a monthly podcast. Check out the [new September edition](#) of the podcast, which features an interview with Alexi Pappas.
- A 10K distance option was added for the 2017 Kansas City Marathon presented by Garmin.
- The Health & Fitness Expo presented by Blue Cross Blue Shield is moving to Kansas City's iconic Union Station.
- Westport has come on board as the official spectator zone of the 2017 Kansas City Marathon. Runners will encounter a party atmosphere as they enter Westport at Mile 24 of the full marathon and Mile 11 of the half marathon as spectators enjoy vendors selling food and beverages and bands playing live music.
- Speaking of spectators, the Kansas City Marathon presented by Garmin has launched its inaugural spectator contest! After the race, runners will vote on the most memorable neighborhood cheer zone. The neighborhood association representing the winning cheer zone will receive a \$1,000 gift card to Johnny's Tavern.
- This year the Kansas City Marathon has [a new charity component](#). New local non-profit partners include KC Pet Project, Team Fidelis and Cancer Action, and Team World Vision returns as a national/international charity partner.

To register for the 2017 Kansas City Marathon - full marathon, half marathon, 10K or 5K distance - visit kcmarathon.org.

About The Kansas City Sports Commission and Foundation

The mission of the Kansas City Sports Commission & Foundation is to drive Kansas City's overall sports strategy, to enrich the quality of life, create economic impact and raise visibility for our region, with the vision of making a better Kansas City through Sports.. For the latest on Kansas City Sports Commission news, follow on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#). Also follow the Kansas City Marathon presented by Garmin on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). www.sportkc.org

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