



Press Release | 24 September 2026

Top Women Target Records at the BMW BERLIN-MARATHON 2026

- 84,000 participants across all events
- Record representation of 162 nations
- Tigst Assefa in pursuit of the world record
- Pfeiffer aims for the German record
- Earlier start time and cooling stations



More than 84,000 participants from 162 nations – a record figure – are expected this weekend across the various events of the BMW BERLIN-MARATHON. The packed programme ranges from youth events and the GENERALI 5K on Saturday to the weekend's main event on Sunday: the BMW BERLIN-MARATHON, featuring over 56,000 runners from around the globe.

"We are delighted to welcome such a diverse field of participants, showcasing the full spectrum of our sport. People of all ages and from all over the world come together here, turning the BMW BERLIN-MARATHON into a major international sporting event that truly unites nations," said Jürgen Lock, CEO of organiser SCC EVENTS.

Assefa targets world record, Pfeiffer aims for German record

Can Tigst Assefa put the icing on the cake once more at the BMW BERLIN-MARATHON? The Ethiopian long distance star wants to get the world record back on Sunday. Three years ago she moved the women's marathon into new dimensions when she clocked 2:11:53 at Berlin's Brandenburg Gate. But in the meantime the world record has been improved to 2:09:56. While Tigst Assefa eyes the 2:10:00 barrier, Germany's Esther Pfeiffer hopes to go sub 2:20:00 in an attempt to break the long-standing German record. It was back in 2008 when Irina Mikitenko won the BMW BERLIN-MARATHON with 2:19:19.

Berlin targets world record number 14

Berlin has recorded 13 world records during the race's history. This is a record in itself because there is no other marathon race worldwide that comes close to such a number. Tigst Assefa now goes for Berlin's world record number 14. However at the press conference the 29-year-old held back a bit. When the question about the world record came in English Tigst Assefa understood and smiled happily before she replied in Amharic with the help of the interpreter: "I am really looking forward to running on the fast course in Berlin again and hope that I can continue my success story here on Sunday. I am very well prepared and want to run a personal best." Her 2:11:53 PB is still the Berlin

course record as well. With that time she would have won the first eleven editions of the BMW BERLIN-MARATHON in the 1970s and 1980s – that shows the tremendous development of the world's leading female marathon runners.

Wanjiru targets 2:15, Ethiopian trio follows

In Berlin Tigist Assefa will face the defending champion Rosemary Wanjiru. However the Kenyan will not be following Assefa's world record pace. Her aim is to improve her PB of 2:16:14 to under 2:15:00. The Ethiopians Bedatu Hirpa (PB: 2:18:27), Dera Dida (2:18:32) and Zeineba Yimer (2:18:47) are also aiming for such a time. Dida is the wife of Olympic marathon champion Tamirat Tola and a training partner of Tigst Assefa. "We know each other very well of course and I expect us to produce strong performances," said Dera Dida.

Vainio targets first sub-2:20 marathon

The third women's group is expected to run sub 2:20:00 pace. Finnish European Champion Alisa Vainio (2:20:39), who is competing in Berlin despite the short interval since the continental championships in Birmingham on 16 August, will probably join this group. "My aim is to improve my personal best and hopefully run under 2:20," said Alisa Vainio, who also competed at the Finnish Championships' marathon in Jyväskylä just twelve days ago. She won this one as well with 2:27:47. "But for me this was just like a training run and it felt fine."

Pfeiffer begins her chase of the German record

Germany's Esther Pfeiffer is also aiming for a sub 2:20:00 time. "I plan to run a pace that will lead to the German record. This is my big goal and my chase begins on Sunday," said the 29-year-old, who has only run one marathon so far: In 2023 she won the Cologne Marathon in 2:37:00 and took the German title in a race without any significant challengers. Since then Esther Pfeiffer has strongly improved her personal bests at shorter distances. She clocked 67:25 at the GENERALI BERLIN HALF MARATHON in March and improved her 10 k time to 30:45 after that.

Record depth in the women's elite field

Berlin's elite field has got very good depth once more. Seven runners on the start list have personal bests of sub 2:20:00. There have never been more than that in Berlin. And a record number of 13 women have entered with PBs of under 2:22:00.

Kenenisa Bekele forced to withdraw through injury

There was bad luck for Ethiopia's running legend Kenenisa Bekele. In one of his last training sessions before the planned journey to Berlin he injured his left Achilles tendon. The two-time Berlin winner had to withdraw from the race.

Cheering Points and Free Grandstand Access

Spectators will have ample opportunities to soak up the unique atmosphere across the marathon weekend. Numerous Cheering Points situated along the entire course will generate a vibrant atmosphere. In the start and finish area, fans can watch the action from grandstands with free access and welcome loved ones across the finish line. An early highlight awaits on Friday evening

with the Opening Ceremony featuring "Meet the Legends", where national and international elite runners will be presented to the public. Marathon legend Haile Gebrselassie will be present, alongside world record holder Sabastian Sawe, who will attend despite being unable to compete on Sunday due to an injury.

Earlier Start Time and Additional Cooling Stations

In response to last year's high temperatures, the start time for Sunday's main race has been brought forward by 30 minutes. The first runners will now set off at 8:45 am. According to current forecasts, significantly milder conditions are expected this Sunday. Temperatures of around 13°C are predicted for the start, reaching approximately 17.5°C when the elite runners finish. As the day progresses, the German Weather Service indicates temperatures could rise up to 22°C. To provide optimum support for participants, additional safety measures have been introduced along the course. Cooling stations equipped with large water troughs will allow runners to refresh themselves using their own sponges or cooling towels. Jürgen Lock emphasized the importance of individual preparation: "Personal responsibility—such as adequate sun protection using appropriate headwear and sunscreen, as well as staying well-hydrated in the days leading up to the race—will help prevent heat-related health issues."

MARATHON EXPO and Event App

The official BMW BERLIN-MARATHON App provides participants and spectators with key event information at their fingertips, including live tracking for up to 25 runners, news, and schedule highlights. The MARATHON EXPO by BRITA opens today at 3:00 pm, returning to its venue at Tempelhof. Admission is free for all sports enthusiasts, offering exhibitor stands, products, and information covering all aspects of running.

Local Public Transport Details

The start and finish area is easily accessible via the S-Bahn as well as underground lines U5 and U6. Line U2 is operating as scheduled up to Potsdamer Platz. Additional trains will operate on line U3 throughout Saturday and Sunday. Spectators wishing to cheer on runners near Wittenbergplatz can reach the location directly via the U3 without restrictions. The Kurfürstendamm area is accessible via a short walk from Zoologischer Garten station (S-Bahn, regional trains, U9, and U2—the latter running from the west only), while Kurfürstendamm station can be reached using the U9. For the disrupted section of the U2, passengers can use the U3 or U9 and change at Spichernstraße station.

Media Schedule & Press Conferences

Friday, 25 September 2026

Elite Press Conference (Part 2): 11:00 AM

Panel: Men's Elite Runners, Elite Skaters, Elite Wheelchair Athletes, Jürgen Lock, Mark Milde.

Topics: Elite field presentations, EXPO, weekend preview, weather forecast.

Location: Hotel Berlin, Berlin.

Saturday, 26 September 2026

Post-Race Press Conference (Inline Skating): 3:30 PM

Panel: Inline Skating Winners.

Location: Hotel Berlin, Berlin.

Sunday, 27 September 2026

Post-Race Press Conference (Running & Wheelchair): 12:30 PM

Panel: Winners of Wheelchair, Handbike, and Running divisions.

Location: Hotel Berlin, Berlin.

Panel Talks

Two panel discussions will be held as part of the Abbott Big City Talks at the BMW BERLIN-MARATHON:

Thursday, 24 September 2026

5:30 PM, Panel 2: Closing the Type 2 Diabetes Care Gap

Featuring Maria-Lena Weiss MP and Volker Höttgen, politician and person living with type 2 diabetes, among others.

6:30 PM, Panel 3: Type 1 Diabetes & Ketones – Beyond Glucose

Featuring Sandra Starke (TBC), professional footballer and person living with type 1 diabetes; Dr. Ebert (TBC), healthcare professional; Kathi Korn, diabetes advocate; Ines Riefenstahl, 2026 marathon runner and person living with type 1 diabetes; Kristina Groos, athlete and person living with type 1 diabetes; Ulrike Thurm, diabetes expert and person living with type 1 diabetes; and Aleey, influencer and person living with type 1 diabetes, among others.

Attendance for both panels is strictly by prior registration via the following Abbott link:

[REGISTER NOW](#)

Thursday, 1 October 2026; 12:00 PM | Brandenburg Gate

On 1 October 2026, all eyes will turn to the future at the Brandenburg Gate. As part of the **REGISTRATION RUN for 2027**, members of the press are invited to a special event featuring high-profile guests – and a major announcement that is set to make headlines well beyond this autumn's marathon season.

Details of what will be announced on the day remain strictly under wraps.

To apply for press accreditation for this event, please contact: gerte.buchheit@scc-events.com

Downloading and using photos

The high-resolution photos may be used free of charge for editorial purposes, provided the source is credited. Further information and photos are available on our website.

[TO WEBSITE](#)

Media Guide & Accreditation

The official BMW BERLIN-MARATHON [Media Guide](#) – featuring detailed bios of national and international elite athletes – is available in the [Media section](#) of the official website. Accreditation collection times and Media Centre opening hours (Hotel Berlin, Berlin, Lützowplatz 17, 10785 Berlin) can also be accessed online.

For further information, please contact:

Jochen Schmitz

Team Leader Media Relations & Editorial

SCC EVENTS

Tel. +49-173-9721150

medien@scc-events.com

Robert Fekl

Team Leader Media Relations & Editorial

SCC EVENTS

Tel. +49-178-6829568

medien@scc-events.com

						
						
						

The BMW BERLIN-MARATHON is an event of SCC Berlin, organised by SCC EVENTS.



Facebook



Instagram



YouTube



LinkedIn



SCC EVENTS GmbH
Olympiapark Berlin
Hanns-Braun-Straße 4
14053 Berlin

www.scc-events.com
[Contact form](#)
[Privacy](#)

Geschäftsführer: Christian Jost, Jürgen Lock
Registergericht: AG Charlottenburg
Registernummer: HRB 20965 B
Umsatzsteuer-Identifikationsnummer: DE136599588
Inhaltlich Verantwortlicher gemäß § 18 Abs. 2 MStV: Christian Jost, Jürgen Lock