



Virgin London Marathon 2011

For immediate release: Saturday 16 April 2011

Sir Richard Branson to start the Virgin London Marathon

Virgin Group founder Sir Richard Branson will set 36,500 runners on their way in the 2011 Virgin London Marathon tomorrow morning.

Sir Richard will drop the starter's flag at the 'blue start' on Shooters Hill Road in Blackheath to set the 31st London Marathon's three elite races for men, women and wheelchair athletes underway. They will be followed by more than 36,000 UK championships competitors, club runners, joggers, charity fund raisers and fancy dress costume wearers.

"Once again it's a great privilege to be starting this fantastic event," said Sir Richard, who ran part of the route in 2010. "I wish everybody in this, the second Virgin London Marathon the very best of luck with the race.

"After taking part last year I know what a special event it is. I know the atmosphere will be fantastic and hope everyone has a wonderful day. The weather looks great and I'm sure we'll raise even more money than we did in 2010."

Meanwhile, 23.2 miles away in Old Billingsgate, Sir Richard's daughter Holly will start the Virgin Money Giving Mini London Marathon together with world and European triple jump champion Phillips Idowu.

More than 2,500 11-17 year-old boys and girls representing London Boroughs, English regions and home countries will compete over the final three miles of the London Marathon course in the UK's first official road running championships for young athletes. There will also be mini wheelchair races for under-14 and under-17 youngsters.

Twelve months ago Holly Branson, plus her brother Sam and Princess Beatrice, formed a 34-person human caterpillar which broke the Guinness World Record for the most linked runners to complete a marathon course.

Holly Branson said: “The Mini Marathon is a great event for young runners and a perfect introduction to distance running. It gives youngsters a first taste of competition and a chance to experience the thrill of London’s big day. I am delighted to be involved this year and wish all the runners the best of luck.”

The full list of official starters and medal presenters for Sunday’s event is below.

The **official starters** of the Virgin London Marathon on Sunday 17 April will be:

Holly Branson, Sir Richard Branson’s daughter

Phillips Idowu, World and European triple jump champion

08.55 Virgin Mini London Marathon Old Billingsgate

Sir Richard Branson, founder of the Virgin Group

09.00 Elite Women Blue start

09.20 Wheelchair races Blue start

09.45 Elite Men Blue start

Sir Steve Bullock, Mayor of the London Borough of Lewisham

09.45 Mass race Green start

Councillor Barbara Barwick, Mayor of the London Borough of Greenwich

09.45 Mass race Red start

The **medal presenters** of the Virgin London Marathon on Sunday 17 April will be:

10.30 Virgin Money Giving Mini
London Marathon

Holly Branson
Phillips Idowu, World and European
triple jump champion

12.15 Virgin London Marathon

John Spurling, Chairman of the
London Marathon
Jayne-Anne Gadhia, Chief
Executive of Virgin Money

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