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|  | **For Release: Upon Receipt** |  |
| JOHN HANCOCK ANNOUNCES RETURN OFDEFENDING CHAMPIONS TO 2016 BOSTON MARATHON | | | |
| * ***Lelisa Desisa and Caroline Rotich Set To Defend Titles On April 18*** * ***2016 Marks 31st Year Of John Hancock’s Sponsorship Of The Boston Marathon*** | | | |

**BOSTON, MA, December, 16, 2015**—John Hancock Financial today announced the return of 2015 Boston Marathon champions Lelisa Desisa of Ethiopia and Caroline Rotich of Kenya for the 120th running of the race on April 18, 2016.

[](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NnKiEwYziY4)

Last year the chase for the men’s title was aggressive with a deep international field of Olympic medalists, IAAF World Marathon champions, and Abbott World Marathon Majors winners battling for the win in rainy and windy conditions. Experience proved the deciding factor, however, as Desisa broke away from Yemane Tsegay and Wilson Chebet in the closing mile to secure his second Boston Marathon title.

After Desisa’s first win in 2013, he gifted his champion’s medal back to the City of Boston to honor the victims and families affected by the April 15 race day tragedy. His sincere gesture earned him a place in the hearts of all who respect what the sport of marathon running exemplifies, and his repeat win has firmly placed him in the record books as the only Ethiopian man to have won the Boston Marathon twice. Named the #1 marathoner in the world by *Track & Field News* in 2013 for his Boston and Dubai Marathon wins and silver medal at the IAAF World Championships Marathon, Desisa has also finished second and third, respectively, at the TCS New York City Marathon the past two years.

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"I am so happy to return to Boston in 2016 to try to make history as a three-time champion of the world's most historic race and to do my best to represent Ethiopian running on the global stage,” said Desisa. “Boston has become more than a race to me; the city and its people are special and my wins in Boston are the most important moments in my athletic career. I am dreaming of crossing the finish line first for the third time."

In last year’s women’s race, there was another dramatic finish that hundreds of thousands of fans have come to expect at the Boston Marathon. In the final mile, three women pulled away from the lead pack: Caroline Rotich, Mare Dibaba and Buzunesh Deba. All brought Boston experience to the race and all were seeking their first Boston title. As Deba faded rounding the historic right on Hereford and left on Boylston, Rotich and Dibaba raced side-by-side down the finish stretch. Rotich called upon her inner reserves for a final surge and prevailed over Dibaba by four seconds for the win.

Rotich, two-time winner of the New York City Half Marathon and past winner of the Las Vegas and Prague Marathons, said, "Winning the 2015 Boston Marathon was my biggest and most treasured  
performance. For what Boston has given me and what Boston has endured, I would like to give back by defending my title on April 18. I cannot wait to line up with everyone else and give it 100 percent."

“John Hancock is thrilled to celebrate the return of our defending Boston Marathon champions Lelisa and Caroline,” said Rob Friedman, head of Sponsorship and Event Marketing at John Hancock. “When you become a champion at Boston, you become part of the Boston community and part of a tradition that is over a century in the making. We look forward to our defending champions joining the rest of the elite athlete field from around the world and the tens of thousands of runners who will line up at the start line in Hopkinton on April 18 to participate in the world’s most historic marathon.”

“Lelisa and Caroline are inspiring and popular champions of the streets of Boston that our fans and followers will surely be eager to see again,” said Tom Grilk, B.A.A. Executive Director. “They have not only proven themselves at the Boston Marathon, but they have returned to run other Boston road races, endearing themselves to our spectators and their fellow participants. We are always particularly proud to be able to welcome back our defending champions.”

The 2016 Boston Marathon marks the 31st year of John Hancock’s landmark sponsorship of the legendary race. The complete elite international field will be announced in January. For additional information about the elite athlete program and sponsorship, please visit [www.johnhancock.com/bostonmarathon/sportspartnerships.html](http://www.johnhancock.com/bostonmarathon/sportspartnerships.html) or follow us @jhboston26 on Twitter.

**About John Hancock Financial and Manulife**

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The John Hancock unit, through its insurance companies, comprises one of the largest life insurers in the United States. John Hancock offers and administers a broad range of financial products, including life insurance, annuities, investments, 401(k) plans, long-term care insurance, college savings, and other forms of business insurance. Additional information about John Hancock may be found at johnhancock.com.

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