

Marine Corps Marathon Issues Third-Ever Lifetime Ban for Cheating *Rightful Age-Award Recipient to Be Presented Award Following Investigation*

QUANTICO, VA (January 17, 2020) – The Marine Corps Marathon Organization (MCMO) recently concluded an investigation into the running history of a 55-year-old female participant at both the Marine Corps 17.75K and the Marine Corps Marathon (MCM). The research, including photographic evidence and timing data, indicates that the runner had cheated over multiple years by not running the entire course and then claiming the rewards of a finisher.

This investigation was launched when the runner applied for membership in the MCM Runners Club, an exclusive group of runners who have officially completed five MCMs. As a result, this runner has been permanently banned from participating in any event organized by the MCMO.

“Marines pride themselves on their Corps Values of honor, courage and commitment. The Marine Corps Marathon Organization shares these values,” said MCMO Director Rick Nealis, “and holds our participants to those same standards.”

The MCMO exercises multiple punishments for cheating during running events. Punishments range from short-term bans, such as one year from participating in events, to lifetime bans. Runners can expect the most severe punishment when their cheating results in an award win.

“In such an instance, the expectation is that the runner will demonstrate personal integrity and immediately surrender the award that was based on fraudulent results,” adds Nealis. Additional scenarios for more serious punishment includes cheating in events that serve as a qualifier for other races or a repeated pattern of habitual cheating.

The evidence in the most recent case indicated that the runner cheated during multiple events over four years. One such incident of cheating, in which the runner only crossed the start and finish timing mats and posted no on-course data, resulted in an age category win during the 2018 17.75K. Additionally, during the 44th MCM, the runner only crossed the finish line mat and photographic evidence was not consistent with a runner who completed the marathon.

The runner has acknowledged these findings and accepted the punishment. She has also been given an opportunity to appeal as is the practice with all bans issued by the MCMO.

The 2018 Marine Corps 17.75K results have been updated to indicate the correct standings of female finishers, including the rightful age-award winner who Nealis has invited to receive the award at the upcoming 17.75K Motivational Dinner aboard Marine Corps Base Quantico on March 27.



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“Cheaters have no place in our sport and they should receive the stiffest penalties a Race Director can deliver. Integrity and personal accomplishment will be rewarded even if it takes us years to bestow the award to the true winner.”

For media information please contact Jheanel Walters, Marine Corps Marathon Public Relations Coordinator at 703-432-1840 or 703-987-3191.

About the Marine Corps Marathon:

The Marine Corps Marathon (MCM), known as “The People’s Marathon,” promotes physical fitness and generates community goodwill while showcasing the high standards and discipline of the United States Marine Corps. Annually ranked as one of the largest marathons in the US and the world, the MCM welcomes runners from all 50 states and more than 60 countries. The MCM is presented by Arlington County, Brooks, Cigna and Leidos. No federal or Marine Corps endorsement is implied. Connect with the Marine Corps Marathon on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [Flickr](#). #RunWithTheMarines