

“Plug in!” Portland Marathon remains a MP3 player-friendly event
PORTLAND, Ore.

6 Oct. 2008

The Portland Marathon, which will host its 38th event on Oct. 4, 2009, is again encouraging participants to “plug in” and use their MP3 players, iPods and cell phones despite recent controversy surrounding the use of electronic devices in long-distance running and walking events.

In December 2006, a policy was issued by USA Track & Field (USATF), the national governing body for running and walking events, banning electronic devices, such as portable audio players (iPods, MP3 players, Walkmans), headphones, including cell phones, from road runs or walking events.

The New York Times ran an article on the issue that stated:

“While race officials could not cite specific incidents caused by headphone users, they did say that the new rule would make races safer because it improves communication. Still, they fear that banning headphones may alienate some recreational runners.” A USATF spokesperson was also quoted in the article as saying the ban was “basically an insurance issue.”

In response to this, Les Smith, Portland Marathon Event Director said:

“The USATF’s ban on electronic devices makes sense for events where walkers and runners share the road with cars or traffic, but this does not apply to our event. Our course is closed to cars, bikes, skateboards, dogs, and all other traffic, so we welcome participants to use their devices in a sensible way and encourage them to “plug in” to the Portland Marathon.”

In addition to safety, the Portland Marathon is also committed to the satisfaction and happiness of their participants. The event, which had nearly 9,500 entries this year with 58 percent women, has been ranked as one of the country’s top marathons. Runner's World magazine has called the event one of the “friendliest, best organized most family-oriented events in the country.” Seventy-eight entertainment acts along the route, a marathoner celebration lounge, and the greenness of the event, which includes giving all finishers a tree seedling, are a few features that make the event unique from others in the country.