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Reporters May Contact:  
Jon Schwartz, Bank of America, 1.646.855.3604  
[jon.schwartz@bankofamerica.com](mailto:jon.schwartz@bankofamerica.com)



Jeremy Borling, Bank of America Shamrock Shuffle 8K, 1.312.992.6614  
[jeremy.borling@bankofamerica.com](mailto:jeremy.borling@bankofamerica.com)

**Bank of America Shamrock Shuffle 8K to Feature U.S. Olympian Amy Yoder Begley  
and National Record Holder Simon Bairu**

*World's Largest 8K to Kick-Off Spring Running Season for Recreational and Elite Runners;  
USA Track & Field Running Clubs Vie for \$15,000 in Elite Club Competition*

CHICAGO – Not only is the Bank of America Shamrock Shuffle 8K a popular rite of spring amongst tens of thousands of recreational runners in Chicago, but the world's largest 8K is also a desirable event for some of the most promising distance runners in North America. Two of those elite athletes – U.S. Olympian Amy Yoder Begley and Canadian national record holder Simon Bairu – officially announced plans today to compete in the 2011 Bank of America Shamrock Shuffle 8K on April 10. For Begley and Bairu, Chicago's festive kick-off to the outdoor running season will ignite their spring and summer racing campaigns as they prepare for the IAAF World Track & Field Championships in August.

"The Bank of America Shamrock Shuffle marks the opening of the spring running season and celebrates the start of a long fundraising effort to support the Chicago community," said Executive Race Director Carey Pinkowski. "We're thrilled that Amy and Simon will be here to share our flat and fast course with a record field of 40,000 participants to jump start their 2011 seasons."

For the third consecutive year, the Bank of America Shamrock Shuffle 8K will feature an Elite Club Competition for USA Track & Field (USATF)-member running clubs. The Elite Club Competition is a unique opportunity for the top distance runners in the Midwest to compete head-to-head on the flat and fast streets of downtown Chicago for \$15,000 in team prize money. Last year's competition featured more than 20 teams from six states: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri and Wisconsin. The men's team champion was Wisconsin Runner (Madison, Wisc.) and the women's team champion was Runablaze Iowa (Des Moines, Iowa).

The Bank of America Shamrock Shuffle's 4.97-mile route, which mirrors segments of the famed Bank of America Chicago Marathon including the start and finish in Grant Park and a mile-long stretch on State Street, is known to produce record performances including Deena Kastor's American record of 24:36 set at the 2005 event. The men's course record stands at 22:35 set by Kenya's James Kariuki in 1998. Begley and Bairu have the speed to challenge the existing course records.

Begley, a native of Kendallville, Ind., is six-time U.S. national champion and a member of the 2008 U.S. Olympic Team in the 10,000 meters. She was a 15-time NCAA All-American and two-time NCAA champion at the University of Arkansas, and is currently a member of the Nike Oregon Project based in Portland, Ore., which aims to prepare American athletes for Olympic success. The Bank of America Shamrock Shuffle 8K will be Begley's debut race in Chicago.

"I'm really excited to continue my return to high-level competition at the Bank of American Shamrock Shuffle 8K after Achilles surgery last year," said Begley. "The flat, fast course through downtown Chicago is the perfect opportunity to test my fitness. As a Midwesterner, I know this is an event that resonates throughout the running community, and I look forward to racing in April."

Bairu is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison where he was a two-time NCAA cross country champion and three-time Big Ten cross country champion. Last spring, he set the Canadian national record in the 10,000 meters, making him a front-runner for the 2012 Canadian Olympic Team. He is currently a member of Nike's Oregon Track Club based in Portland, Ore. The Bank of America Shamrock Shuffle 8K will mark his competitive debut in Chicago.

"I appreciate the opportunity to race in Chicago and to make my season debut at the Bank of America Shamrock Shuffle 8K," said Bairu. "I intend to start the season with a win. I remember those long, cold winters in Madison, so I'm sure there will be a lot of enthusiasm out on the course as Chicagoans celebrate the arrival of spring."

The deadline to register as an Elite Club is March 25. For more information, go to [shamrockshuffle.com](http://shamrockshuffle.com) or e-mail [jeremy.borling@bankofamerica.com](mailto:jeremy.borling@bankofamerica.com).

### **About the Bank of America Shamrock Shuffle 8K**

Long recognized as an annual rite of spring and the kick-off to the outdoor running season in Chicago, the Bank of America Shamrock Shuffle 8K takes runners on a scenic tour of downtown Chicago, starting and finishing in Grant Park. The race will begin at the intersection of Columbus Drive and Monroe Street at 9 a.m. on April 10, and will conclude with live musical entertainment at the traditional Post-Race Party in Grant Park. In advance of the event, the two-day Bank of America Shamrock Shuffle Health & Fitness Expo will take place at Navy Pier on April 8-9 and will feature more than 80 industry-related exhibitors. The Expo is free and open to the public. For more information about the event and how to get involved, go to [shamrockshuffle.com](http://shamrockshuffle.com).

[www.shamrockshuffle.com](http://www.shamrockshuffle.com)

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