FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MANCHESTER ROAD RACE COMMITTEE ANNOUNCES PLANS FOR 2020 ROAD RACE

Manchester’s favorite holiday tradition will continue this November.

The Manchester Road Race Committee announced today that it will sponsor an actual road race on Thanksgiving Day that will be limited for safety to 500 runners, and a virtual version of the 4.748-mile run that will be open to anyone who wishes to participate.

“Obviously, due to the Covid-19 health crisis, this year’s 84th annual Manchester Road Race will look and be much different from all of our past events,” said Dr. Tris Carta, President of the Manchester Road Race Committee. “But we sincerely believe that by utilizing this hybrid approach, we can safely keep the town’s Turkey Day tradition alive in a manner that is totally consistent with state public health mandates,” he added.

Carta said that beginning October 1st, anyone who wishes to participate in this year’s MRR can register for the virtual road race on the event’s website at www.manchesterroadrace.com. The registration fee is $20. Registered runners will download a phone app with GPS capabilities to their smart phones. They can then run the 4.748-mile distance at any location of their choice. The app will measure their distance, signaling when they have completed the full course, and upload their times to race officials. Runners will be able to see their progress on an “event map” of the actual MRR course, even if they are running on a rail trail. The virtual race must be completed between 8 a.m. (EST) on Thursday, November 19, 2020, and 5 p.m. (EST) on Wednesday November 25, 2020.

Runners who wish to compete in the on-road race on Thanksgiving Day will be able to indicate that when they register for the virtual race. Only persons who sign up for the virtual race will be eligible for selection to compete on Thanksgiving Day.

The road race committee will choose 500 entrants — the maximum number of participants permitted for road race fields under current state guidelines — to run the loop course through the town’s central streets on Thanksgiving morning. Under a staggered, “wave” starting system, twenty heats with 25 runners in each heat will start the race at five-minute intervals. The overall order of finish will be determined on the basis of net times.

Carta said race organizers plan to select runners for the Thanksgiving Day on-road race from each of the MRR’s men and women’s age group divisions, based on times that the applicants posted at the 2019 or 2018 MRRs.

The first wave of this year’s road race will begin at 8a.m (two hours earlier than the usual starting time of 10 a.m.) on Thanksgiving Day (November 26, 2020). The race will start and finish on Main Street in Manchester, in front of St. James Church.
Carta said that completion of either the on-road or virtual race will qualify as an official MRR finish, and count towards longevity streaks.

He indicated that race organizers will take all steps necessary to ensure the safety of the runners and volunteers on Thanksgiving Day. “We will be following all recommended social distancing and hygiene protocols at the starting line and throughout the race,” Carta said. “Because state guidelines limit the number of participants in a road race to 500, we’re urging anyone who is not officially registered to run on Thanksgiving morning to stay off the course while the road race is being held.”

“We are also respectfully reminding all of our volunteers and anyone who may be watching the race to wear facial coverings, stay six feet apart, and avoid gathering in large groups,” Carta said.

Due to the global nature of the Pandemic and the travel advisories affecting foreign countries and many of the states throughout the nation, the MRR will not be inviting elite professional athletes to compete, and will not be awarding prizes this year.

The road race committee also announced today that its annual Ray Crothers Manchester Road Race Blood Drive will be held again in conjunction with the Connecticut Chapter of the American Red Cross on Friday, November 27th from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. at Manchester High School. The MRR blood collection effort has become one of Connecticut’s largest blood drives in recent years.

The ongoing Covid-19 crisis has forced MRR officials to cancel a number of the race week events that it traditionally holds each November. Carta said that the road race’s Earl Yost Media Conference, Scholastic Luncheon, Honor’s Club program, Veteran’s Row reception, pre-race Spaghetti Supper, and the “Charlie Robbins Club” gathering of senior finishers will not be held this year. Race officials are discussing the possibility of staging a virtual Little Manchester Road Race for youngsters. Carta said the race committee will announce a decision about the status of that event in the near future.

“The exigencies of the horrible coronavirus Pandemic have forced us to scale our operations and events way back this year,” said Carta. “But we hope and pray that the Manchester Road Race as we know it will be back even bigger and better in 2021.”

More information about the 2020 Manchester Road Race and on-line entry applications will be available at www.manchesterroadrace.com starting October 1st.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT DR. TRIS CARTA AT (860)646-2251