



# **Feeling the Heat: Inside the 2023 Medtronic Twin Cities Marathon Cancellation**

Eli Asch & Charlie Mahler

Running USA, 2024

## AGENDA

- 1 Introduction & Objectives**
- 2 Overview & History**
- 3 Key Pre-Race Week Events**
- 4 Race Week Tick-Tock**
- 5 Key Post-Race Events**
- 6 Takeaways**





# Introduction & Objectives



# Presentation Objective

- Overview of 2023 Medtronic Twin Cities Marathon heat cancellation
- Walkthrough of a **specific** event cancellation example
- Potential differences of your event to consider:
  - Event specifics
  - Staffing
  - Nature of threat/incident
  - Nature of relationship with municipality
  - Nature of media relationship
  - Insurance
  - Etc.





# Overview & History



# Organization Overview

- Twin Cities In Motion
- 501(c)3 non-profit
- Governed by a Board of Directors
- Staff leader: President
  - Race Director: Eli
  - Sr Media & Communications Manager: Charlie
- Nearly 400 Association members
- Nearly 5,000 day of volunteers
- Marathon Weekend
- Four smaller events
- Year-round programs

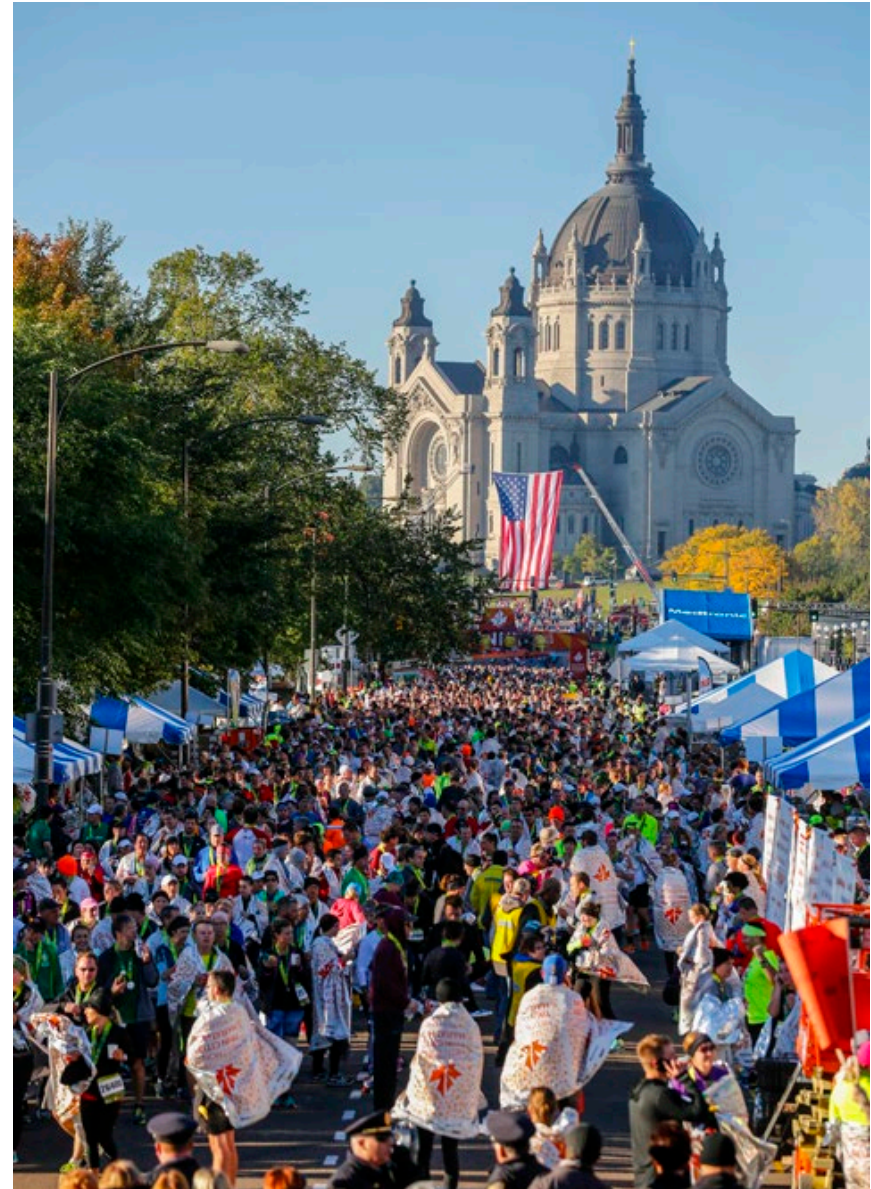


**TWIN CITIES  
IN MOTION**



# Event Overview

- Medtronic Twin Cities Marathon Weekend
- Approx. 350 Association members
- Over 3,000 Marathon Weekend volunteers
- Saturday: 7,000-8,000 registrants
  - 5k
  - 10k
  - Family Events
- Sunday: 20,000+ registrants
  - Medtronic Twin Cities Marathon
  - TC 10 Mile
- Top-25 US running event, top-10 marathon



# Historical Context (Ops)

- Marathon founded 1982
- Professionalization in early 2000s
- Long-time leader in Endurance Medicine (Dr. Bill Roberts)
- 2007 Marathon Weekend
- **Primary objective:** a safe event with a positive impact on Twin Cities community





# Historical Context (Comms)

- Participant comms watershed at 2012 Red, White, & Boom! Half Marathon
- Crisis opportunities since then that honed skills and messaging:
  - 2013 Medtronic TC 1 Mile Cancellation – Tornado Warning
  - 2015 Marathon Weekend Black Lives Matter Protest / Obstruction Threat
  - Also, Ice Storm, Flooding, Air Quality, Heat & Humidity, Lightning, Hypothermia
- Tabletop exercises with staff
- FEMA incident and crisis comms training



# Incident Overview

- 2023 Medtronic Twin Cities Marathon and TC 10 Mile: Sunday, October 1
- Start: Minneapolis (10 Mile 7:00am, Marathon 8:00am)
- Finish: Saint Paul (2:30pm)
- Cancelled due to forecast unsafe heat shortly after 5:00am on race morning
- 20,000 combined registrants impacted

## WEEKEND SCHEDULE

### SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

TC 10K, TC 5K AND  
MEDTRONIC TC FAMILY EVENTS  
State Capitol

TC 10K <small>presented by Dermatology Consultants, PA</small>	7:15 AM
TC 5K <small>presented by Friskies</small>	8:45 AM
KARE 11 FAMILY MILE	10 AM
HALF MILE <small>presented by Westlands Minnesota</small>	10:30 AM
MASCOT INVITATIONAL	11 AM
DIAPER DASH	11:15 AM
TODDLER TROT (AGED 4 & UNDER)	11:30 AM
FAMILY ACTIVITY AREA	8 AM - NOON

HEALTH AND FITNESS EXPO  
Saint Paul River Center

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29: 11 AM - 2 PM  
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30: 10 AM - 6 PM

### SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1

MEDTRONIC TC 10 MILE <small>The ShortCut to the Capitol™ Downtown Minneapolis to the State Capitol</small>	7 AM
MEDTRONIC TWIN CITIES MARATHON <small>The Most Beautiful Urban Marathon in America™ Downtown Minneapolis to the State Capitol</small>	8 AM
27 <sup>th</sup> MILE State Capitol	8 AM - 2:30 PM





# Key Pre-Race Week Events



# Established Practice

- Sound financial stewardship
- Cancellation insurance: since 2014
- Race Operations Center/MACC: since 2017
- Incident Response Plan
  - 69-degree WBGT Black Flag cancellation threshold at start (guidance)
- EAS Flag System
  - 82-degree WBGT Black Flag cancellation threshold (guidance)



# 2023 Process

- 10 Mile Expo Gear Check drop-off
- Interagency Public Safety Team
- National Weather Service
- Crisis Comms Team
- Crisis Comms Consultant

Welcome to the Medtronic Twin Cities Marathon Weekend

## Race Operations Center (ROC)



### Schedule of Major Race Weekend Events

#### **Friday, 9/29**

Health & Fitness Expo at St Paul RiverCentre: 11:00am-7:00pm

#### **Saturday, 9/30**

Health & Fitness Expo at St Paul RiverCentre: 10:00am-6:00pm

TC 10k presented by Dermatology Consultants 7:15am

TC 5k presented by Fredrikson & Byron, P.A. 8:45am

KARE 11 Family Mile 10:00am

Half Mile 10:30am

Diaper Dash 11:15am

Toddler Trot 11:30am

#### **Sunday, 10/1**

Medtronic TC 10 Mile 7:00am (Professional Athletes 6:55am)

Medtronic Twin Cities Marathon 8:00am (wheelers and duos 7:55am)

Final Finisher 2:21pm





# **Race Week Tick-Tock**



**Sunday,  
September  
24**

## **Race Day Forecast**

- Via event-specific NWS 10-day forecast link
  - Daily email updates beginning Monday
  - 24-hour phone availability
- Lows in mid-to-high 60s
- Highs in low-80s
- High humidity
- Breezy
- **EAS RED FLAG CONDITIONS**



# Ops Timeline

- First day we take race day forecast seriously
- Confirm EAS flag level with Medical Director
- Share adverse conditions/EAS flag forecast with President, President alerts Board
- Share adverse conditions/EAS flag forecast with key work partners (Ops leadership, Comms leadership)
- Finalize Interagency Public Safety Meeting agenda/topics

FLAG COLOR	EVENT CONDITIONS
<b>BLACK</b>	<b>EVENT CANCELED</b> EXTREME AND DANGEROUS CONDITIONS
<b>RED</b>	<b>EXTREME CAUTION</b> POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS CONDITIONS
<b>YELLOW</b>	<b>CAUTION</b> LESS THAN IDEAL CONDITIONS
<b>GREEN</b>	<b>LOW RISK</b> GOOD CONDITIONS
<b>WHITE</b> (cold weather events only)	<b>RISK OF HYPOTHERMIA</b>





# Monday, September 25



RACE WEEK TICK-TOCK



NWS Twin Cities <nws.twincities@noaa.gov>



Mon 9/25/2023 4:33 AM



Decision Support Briefing Se...

296 KB



Good morning,

There should be a break from precipitation through mid-morning, then scattered showers and thunderstorms will redevelop this afternoon and evening. Severe weather is not expected. Rainfall amounts will likely be between a quarter to half of an inch, but brief heavy downpours may occur with any thunderstorm. Highs will climb into the upper 60s. Winds will be from the southeast at around 10 mph.

Attached is a 1-page weather briefing. In addition, below is a link to the forecast for your location. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call us at 952-361-6671.

**A site-specific forecast can be found at:**

[Fallen Firefighters Memorial](#)

[Medtronic Twin Cities Marathon](#)

# Ops Timeline

- 7:00am: Event Week Staff Teams Chat opened
- 9:00am: Race Week Interagency Public Safety Meeting
  - Agreed on EAS Red Flag forecast
  - Agreed on medical nature of incident
  - Agreed on additional paid ambulance staffing
  - Agreed on medical follow-up meeting
  - Agreed we're a "go" under current forecast
- 12:30pm: Standard Crisis Comms Meeting
  - Engaged daily through week
- 6:00pm: Marathon Monday Shakeout Run

National Weather Service: "There should be a break from precipitation through mid-morning, then scattered showers **and thunderstorms will redevelop this afternoon and evening.** Severe weather is not expected. Rainfall amounts will likely be between a quarter to half of an inch."  
*(Emphasis mine)*



# Comms Timeline

- 2:00pm: Virtual Press Conference
  - Added Race Director to line-up to speak to Heat/Humidity concerns ... first TCM mention of issue
  - Cross-messaging concern of pros talking about competition as we talked safety
- 3:30pm: Crisis Comms Consultant Call
  - A trusted consultant who is a runner and has worked with TCM over the years
  - Engage annually and ramp up as needed – like this year!



## Minnesota's Marathon King Eyes Fifth Twin Cities Title Medtronic Twin Cities Marathon Welcomes Pros for 10 Mile & Marathon

St. Paul, Minn. – September 28, 2023 – Dominic Ondoro, the men's course record-holder and four-time Medtronic Twin Cities Marathon champion, will return to the streets and parkways of Minneapolis and St. Paul on October 1 aiming to add to his already-packed marathon résumé at this year's Medtronic Twin Cities Marathon.

Not only does the 35-year-old Kenyan hold the Medtronic Twin Cities Marathon course record at 2:08:51, he also holds the Grandma's Marathon record where he is a two-time champion. Compatriot Milton Rotich, the 2021 Grandma's Marathon champion with a 2:08:55 personal best to his credit, is Ondoro's most likely challenger in the men's field that will race for a \$10,000 winner's check and \$26,000 in prize money.

Kenya's Helen Jepkurgat, 42, a Grandma's and City of Los Angeles Marathon champion, sports the fastest personal best in the field at 2:29:10, but expects challenges from Denver's Brittany Charboneau, 35, a 2:33:14 runner and local favorite Breanna Sieracki of Burnsville, who ran 2:33:26 at Grandma's this summer. The women will also race for \$10,000 winner's prizes and a \$26,000 purse.

An additional \$26,000 prize pot will be split among U.S. men and women who notch Olympic



# Tuesday, September 26



NWS Twin Cities <nws.twincities@noaa.gov>



Mon 9/25/2023 4:33 AM

Decision Support Briefing Se...  
296 KB

**Weather Hazards:** Scattered showers linger across E MN/W WI through the afternoon hours. Summer-like heat is expected for the weekend with highs in the low to mid 80s Saturday & Sunday. Attached are temperatures & wetbulb globe temperatures for the weekend.

## Temperature Forecast

	9/30 Sat					10/1 Sun						
	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm
St. Paul	68	77	81	79	73	71	69	65	69	77	81	79

## Wetbulb Globe Temperature Forecast

	9/30 Sat					10/1 Sun						
	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm
St. Paul	67	72	75	74	70	68	67	64	67	72	75	73



# Operations Timeline

- 7:00am: Event Week Staff Teams chat daily update posted
- 1:00pm: Daily Crisis Comms Meeting
  - Agreed on “full-go”/”full no-go”
- 4:00pm: Lead Race Operations Center Volunteer Update
- Additional medical supplies plan discussed with Medical Director
- HSIN stood up for secure Interagency Public Safety Committee File-Sharing—Ops Manual and Incident Response Plan uploaded
- Insurance Claim Number established

9/26/23 7:51 AM

Good morning! Some lingering showers will remain today and highs are in the high 60s. We will be sending out the pre-race emails to participants today which will include the notice that we expect to start under a red flag condition this weekend, and that they'll hear more from us about that tomorrow; an email from Dr. Dave with tips to keep safe running in the heat will follow Wednesday (and a final email is planned for Friday, as well). Our Interagency Meeting yesterday went well, and all agencies agreed we could safely run under red flag conditions as long as we prepared appropriately. Confirmed preparations currently include: a preparedness alert to all local hospitals from our EMS contacts, extending the shift of our Hennepin ambulances (usually released in the early afternoon once we clear Minneapolis roads) until 3pm, misters in a TBD location in the finish festival area, and an additional ice delivery to the main medical tent. Other contingencies including additional ice and water at medical locations on course are being considered and some changes to the Main Medical Tent operations (using additional cots we're deploying, opening the walls, etc) will be game time decisions. I want to level-set with everyone--these conditions are challenging, and we will be telling runners to slow their pace and listen to their body, but this is 5-7 WBGT degrees cooler than it was in 2007 AND we're better prepared than we were then. So if the forecast holds and the runners heed our advice, it's solidly a red flag day and will surely come with some challenges, but isn't a black flag day. If we start, it's because we expect to be able to safely finish.



# Comms Timeline

- Importance of scheduled Crisis Meetings
  - Timing and line-up set ... one less bit of chaos to the week
- Pre-Race email finalized and sent early Tuesday afternoon
  - Moved weather messaging to top
  - Closed with when to expect more info
- Initiated Medical Dir. Messaging.
- Determined who would be weather spokesperson
- TCM Messaging starts with participant emails, then shared to staff, social, customer serv.



*It's race week! Here's important participant information for the Medtronic Twin Cities Marathon. Please read the information closely and follow the links to get the most out of your race. Good luck on Sunday!*

## Race-Day Weather Alert

The Twin Cities In Motion medical team expects the all Marathon Weekend events to run under **EAS Red Flag** Conditions -- Extreme Caution: Potentially Dangerous Conditions. TCM is gathering extra course and finish line resources in partnership with its support agencies to enhance runner safety in expected hot and humid conditions.

Participants are urged to drink extra fluids if they are thirsty or sweating heavily. Those with previous heat stress problems or heart disease should not start their race. Expect further communication about weather conditions and runner safety on Wednesday, September 27.

## Your Event Details at a Glance

Race Day  
Sunday, October 1  
Marathon starts at 8 a.m.  
[600 S 6th Street](#)



# Wednesday, September 27



NWS Twin Cities <nws.twincities@noaa.gov>



Wed 9/27/2023 5:33 AM



Decision Support Briefing - S...  
351 KB

Good morning,

Scattered showers will develop after sunrise through the afternoon hours across portions of E MN & W WI. These showers will be hit or miss and move fairly quickly.

Rainfall amounts will be light, just enough to wet the ground in most cases. Highs will climb into the upper 60s. Winds will be from the east-northeast at around 10 mph.

Temperatures warm into the mid 80s for this weekend. This could be the warmest Twin Cities marathon since 2007! We've attached additional information for Sunday in the one-pager below.



# Ops Timeline

- 7:00am: Event Week Staff Teams Chat Daily Update posted
- 8:00am: Finish Site Build Begins (Ed, Mike)
- 11:30am: Daily Crisis Comms Meeting
- 12:15-12:45pm: Lead Ops Volunteer Update
- 1:00-2:45pm: RD Media Obligations
- 3:00-6:00pm: Sound Level Variance Approval Meeting
- 6:00-6:45pm: RD/President WBGT “Close Call” Scenarios Plan Touchbase
- 10:00pm: “Final” Incident Response Plan Emailed to Staff, Lead Volunteers

National Weather Service: “Temperatures warm into the mid 80s for this weekend. **This could be the warmest Twin Cities Marathon since 2007.**”  
*(Emphasis mine)*





# Ops Timeline (cont'd)

- WBGT “Close Call” Plan Written
- Confirmed additional medical supplies & logistics plan
  - Misting fans in Finish Area
  - Upped ice, cooling towels, and bottled water at on-course medical, approved reimbursement for each location (no misters or hoses!)
  - Additional Sweep Vehicle bottled water
  - Upped “Course Medical Tent” response and cooling capabilities (carts, dunk tanks, ice, towels, and water)
  - Heat deck plan for Medical Tent—opening walls and using surrounding parts of Finish Area



# Comms Timeline

- Medical Dir. Messaging
  - Informed by TCM and other weather hot message examples
  - Allowed ample time for volunteer physicians to produce the product
  - Allowed for layout and finalization
- Media Interest
  - A Non-Presser Presser
  - Most knowledgeable available source
  - Key talking points

**1. Assess your readiness** - With the impending red flag start, you should assess your readiness for sustained running in these unfavorable conditions. If you have any preexisting medical conditions, such as heart problems you should consider not participating. If you have recently been ill with a fever, COVID-19 symptoms, have been diagnosed with diabetes or obesity (BMI>30) you should consider not participating as your risk for heat stroke is higher. If you have not acclimatized by running in similar weather conditions during your training, you should also reconsider your readiness for this weather.

**2. Hydrate** – I cannot underscore enough the importance of hydration during heat and humidity. Please start your hydration before the race. Start drinking about 2 cups of water two hours before your run. Drink another 6 to 8 ounces of water closer to your start time. On the course, please listen to your body and drink when you are thirsty. You can assess your hydration status during a bathroom break and your urine color should be light yellow.

**3. Dress “light”** – Dress in light-weight moisture wicking fabrics. It is also best to dress in light-colored clothing that absorbs less heat. Consider adding a breathable hat and sunglasses as this can provide additional shade and protect from UV rays to your head and face.

**4. Go Slow** – Unfortunately this will not be the weekend for your personal record. Lower your race pace expectations, make finishing strong your goal and don't get enticed into following packs with faster runners. Find areas of shade on the course and use them to your advantage.

**5. Listen to your body** – Monitor your well-being, be prepared to slow down or stop. If you feel nauseated, dizzy, lightheaded, clammy, or confused please recognize this may be a sign of heat-related illness. Find our medical team wearing orange or our EMTs wearing yellow for further assistance. They may need to cool your body temperature to reduce the risks associated with heat illness.



# Thursday, September 28



NWS Twin Cities <nws.twincities@noaa.gov>



To: Eli Asch; Ed Whetham

Thu 9/28/2023 5:49 AM



Decision Support Briefing - S...

392 KB

Good morning, today will have no hazardous weather.

Looking ahead, the previous forecast remains on track with summer-like weather expected. Temperatures warm into the mid 80s for this weekend. We've attached additional information for Sunday in the one-pager below.

Day of week:	Sunday 10/1															
Time:	12AM	1AM	2AM	3AM	4AM	5AM	6AM	7AM	8AM	9AM	10AM	11AM	12PM	1PM	2PM	3PM
Weather:																
Temperature (°F):	69	69	69	68	68	67	67	67	68	70	72	74	77	79	81	82
Heat Index, °F:	69	69	69	68	68	67	67	67	68	70	72	74	77	79	83	85
Wet Bulb Globe T (°F):	68	67	67	66	66	65	65	65	66	68	70	72	75	76	77	77
Wind Speed (mph):	9	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	12	13	14	15	16	16	16
Wind Gust (mph):	14	15	15	15	15	15	15	16	17	18	20	22	23	24	24	24



# Ops Timeline

- 7:00am: Event Week Staff Teams Chat Daily Update posted
- 7:45am: RD radio interview
- 8:30am: RD/President WBGT “Close Call” Plan review
- 9:00am: First road closure (Finish Area)
- 1:00pm: Daily Crisis Comms Meeting
- 8:00-8:30pm: All-Staff meeting
  - Host hotel (near Expo)
  - Ops hotel (near Finish Area)
- WBGT “Close Call” Plan finalized and distributed to key players
- All Day: Finish Site Build continues
- All Day: Expo Load-in

## MTCM 2023 WBGT CANCELLATION PROTOCOLS:

- “Sunday events (the Marathon and 10 Mile) will be canceled if WBGT is 69.0 or higher at the event start (‘event start’ defined below)”
- “The official reading will be taken by the event meteorologist, to include an average of readings of the Falcon Heights, Minneapolis, Camden, and Fridley permanent weather stations (with those stations’ reliability also being assessed by the event meteorologist, and excluded if deemed unreliable).”
- “The ‘event start’ is defined as the ‘go/no-go’ time in advance of the first event of the day”
- “For 2023 Sunday events (the Marathon and 10 Mile), **that is 6:40am.**” (*Emphasis mine—more on this later...*)



# Comms Timeline

- Work on Friday morning's "What we're doing" email to participants
- Day more focused on "flying the plane" aspects of Marathon Weekend including
  - Moving into HQ hotel
  - Monitoring Live Show set-up and details
  - Finalizing next day morning show Expo hits
  - And everything else!



# Friday, September 29



NWS Twin Cities



To: Eli Asch; Ed Whetham

Fri 9/29/2023 6:22 AM



Decision Support Briefing - S...

385 KB

Good morning, there will be scattered thunderstorms this morning, with another round of storms possible later today. The main risks are lightning, with gusty winds, hail, and heavy rain also possible.

## Sunday's Forecast (no significant changes)

**Weather Hazards:** Warm and muggy conditions are expected on Sunday. The one caveat would be if we get shower/thunderstorms Saturday night. Right now there is a small chance (22%) of storms Saturday night. If it doesn't rain, expect warm and muggy conditions on Sunday..

### Hourly Table

Day of week:	Sunday 10/1															
Time:	12AM	1AM	2AM	3AM	4AM	5AM	6AM	7AM	8AM	9AM	10AM	11AM	12PM	1PM	2PM	3PM
Weather:																
Temperature (°F):	72	71	71	70	70	69	69	68	70	72	73	77	80	83	84	85
Heat Index, °F:	72	71	71	70	70	69	69	68	70	72	73	77	83	86	87	88
Wet Bulb Globe T (°F):	69	69	68	68	67	66	66	66	68	69	71	74	77	80	80	79
Wind Speed (mph):	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	9	10	12	13	13	14	14	15
Wind Gust (mph):	13	13	13	12	12	12	12	13	14	16	17	18	21	22	23	23



# Ops Timeline

- 7:00am: Event Week Staff Teams Chat Daily Update posted
- 8:00am: RD MPR radio interview
- 9:00-9:45am: Follow-up Medical Team Meeting
  - Forecast update (similar to 2007)
  - Available assets confirmed (incl. 200 ER beds open in metro)
  - Medical “go” under current forecast agreed upon
- 11:00am-7:00pm: Expo open, EAS “red flag” posted
- 1:00-1:30pm: Crisis Comms Meeting
- 2:45pm: NWS check-in call
- 3:00pm: Saturday Events Inclement Weather meeting (RD, President, Ed)



*Medtronic Twin Cities Marathon Medical Director (Dr. Dave Supik, right) and Assistant Medical Director (Dr. Jake Kastner, left) at the 2023 IIRM Boston Marathon Endurance Medicine Conference*



# Ops Timeline (cont'd)

- 3:00-5:00pm: ROC set up by Volunteer Lead
- 3:30 & 5:00pm: Saturday Events Walkthroughs (Ed)
- 4:00pm: RD President weather briefing
- 4:30pm: RD State Patrol/Capitol & SPPD Saturday Events review (“our call” confirmed for lightning, heat)
- 4:30pm: President Board Executive Committee briefing
- 5:00pm: Medical Directors Saturday Events check-in
- 7:00pm: Crisis Comms Touchbase (Saturday AM send prep)
- 8:00-8:30pm: All-Staff Meeting
- All Day: Finish Site Build continues
  - 3+ hour AM “shelter in place” delay for lightning, on track by 6pm





# Comms Timeline

- Live hits from Expo with President, Comms Mgr. and Expo lead
  - Ground rules re: weather
  - Reputation helped us here and throughout
  - Hammered the Five To-Dos and what we're doing in addition
- “What we’re doing” email sent before Expo opened
  - Segmented for Sat. / Sunday participants
  - Universal talking point reference

**It Will Be Up to the Weather:** Twin Cities In Motion will only start Sunday's races if our medical team and community safety partners are confident we can run the races *in their entirety* under RED Flag or better conditions. EAS Flag conditions are based on very clear Wet Bulb Globe Temperature thresholds that must be followed in concert with the ability to support a safe event. While the likelihood of a cancellation appears low, if cancelling the race is required based upon our best practices and safety protocols in light of weather conditions, it is a decision we will make at any time conditions dictate.

**Please expect a dedicated email update about weather conditions and the safety status of the event by 8:30 p.m. Saturday evening, September 30.**

**Safety measures and enhancements Twin Cities In Motion has arranged for your safety include:**

- Extra water in the start areas.
- Extra water at fluid stations on course.
- Cooling towels and ice buckets at course medical aid stations for runners experiencing heat stress.
- Extra water in the finish area as well as cooling misting stations.

**This is in addition to the 300-member medical team – the largest in recent record – which includes:**

- Medical aid stations near every fluid station.
- Periodic first aid posts along the route.
- Roving bike medics.
- Community ambulances stationed along the last third of the course providing space for cooling and medical triage.
- Additional dedicated ambulances will be provided by EMS units from Hennepin EMS and Saint Paul Fire.
- A larger scale medical tent after the finish line that can assess any medical issues our runners may encounter.



# Comms Timeline (cont'd)

Advised President we needed two-track comms.  
plan for to manage Sunday

- Comms Mgr. to advance "Go" scenario
  - Crisis messaging as needed
  - Live Show
  - Event Media
  - Aftermath
- Crisis Consultant to advance "Cancel" scenario
  - Draft version 1.0 of cancellation copy
  - Draft talking points for cancellation

**Having a safe Medtronic Twin Cities Marathon weekend will rely on you, as well.** Please follow the comprehensive advice of our Medical Director [FOUND HERE](#), which notes the importance of:

- Assessing your readiness for a run in hot and humid conditions.
- Being properly hydrated before and during your run.
- Dressing in light-weight, light-colored, moisture-wicking clothes.
- Going slow and lowering your race pace expectations.
- Listening to your body and monitoring your well-being on course.

RED Flag conditions require serious attention and preparation, but we can run a great, safe Medtronic Twin Cities Marathon Weekend, if we work together.

Good luck this weekend. Thank you for running – safely! – with us.

Twin Cities In Motion

## **Please Check Your Emergency Contact and Medical Information**

Twin Cities In Motion requests you assure that all of your emergency contact and medical information is accurate. Please check that your emergency contact attached to your registration is updated by 7 p.m. the night before your race. (Click the "Edit Registration" button on your [participant dashboard](#) in Race Roster.) Please also fill out the emergency contact/medical information on the back of your race bib.

And no one anticipates having a health or injury crisis on race day, but it is important for our medical team to know about your existing health conditions. So please consider sharing your medical information with our medical team on [RaceSafe](#) in case of emergency. It is secure, private, and takes five minutes to fill out. Having the information can be a big difference for our medical team and YOU

*Please expect further communication about weather conditions  
and the safety status of the event by 8:30 p.m.  
Saturday evening, September 30.*



# Saturday, September 30



NWS Twin Cities <nws.twincities@noaa.gov>



To: Eli Asch; Ed Whetham

Sat 9/30/2023 3:20 AM



Event Weather Support Briefi...

1 MB



## Twin Cities Marathon - Today

Showers clearing becoming partly cloudy this morning.

### Hourly Table

Day of week:																	
Time:	5AM	6AM	7AM	8AM	9AM	10AM	11AM	12PM	1PM	2PM	3PM	4PM	5PM	6PM	7PM	8PM	9PM
Weather:																	
Temperature (°F):	68	68	67	66	68	71	74	76	79	80	81	82	81	80	77	75	75
Wet Bulb Globe T (°F):	66	66	65	66	68	71	74	76	78	78	78	78	77	76	74	72	72



## Twin Cities Marathon - Sunday

Warmer and Mostly Clear

### Hourly Table

Day of week:																	
Time:	5AM	6AM	7AM	8AM	9AM	10AM	11AM	12PM	1PM	2PM	3PM	4PM	5PM	6PM	7PM	8PM	9PM
Weather:																	
Temperature (°F):	68	68	68	68	69	72	75	79	82	83	84	85	83	82	80	78	76
Wet Bulb Globe T (°F):	65	65	65	66	67	69	73	76	78	79	78	78	75	75	72	71	70



# Saturday Events Sidebar

## We interrupt this narrative to mention ...

- Nearly 8,000 10k, 5k, Mile, Half Mile, Toddler Trot & Diaper Dash registrants
  - 5:00am staff and committee call-time (earlier for Ops Team)
  - 7:10am first race start (10k Athletes With Disabilities), 12:00pm festival close
  - Registrants promised “final update” email by 5:00am Saturday AM (also to go out on social)
- 2:00am National Weather Service call (lightning early, is certain to pass by or just after 5:00am)
- Race morning “go” Teams chat sent to staff 2:30am, with plan to remain in hotel or shelter in place until lightning passed
- “Go” email sent to participants by 3:15am
  - Made “go” call being okay with event not being produced perfectly with possible shortened set-up time
- 4:15am pop-up cell, Teams chat confirming “shelter-in-place” likely for at least next 45 minutes
- NWS gave final “all-clear” via phone at 5:00am, final Saturday Events set-up began
- All events went off safely



# Ops Timeline

- 5:15am: ROC stood up
- 6:55am: Race all-clear sequence 15 minutes before first start of day, portable weather station reading 66 degrees WBGT
- 12:00pm: Saturday Events festival closed, ROC stands down, site “turnover” begins (Ed)
- 12:30-2:30pm: Technical Meeting (RD departs early)
- 1:00pm: Sunday Start Area barricade staged (Charlie W.)
- 2:15pm: NWS check-in call
- 2:30pm: RD President Sunday Inclement Weather Briefing
- 3:00pm: RD Medical Directors Saturday check-in—lots of vomiting, no major medicals reported
- 3:00pm: Finish Area Walkthrough (Ed)



# Ops Timeline (cont'd)

- 3:30pm: Municipal medical partners check-in calls (still a “go,” still our call)
- 4:30pm: Race Ops All-Hands (Ed)
- Cancellation “at the line” plan drafted, sent to Sr. Ops Manager for feedback at 5:00pm
- 6:00pm: NWS check-in call, President forecast briefing
- 6:30pm: President Board Executive Committee Briefing, Sunday “go” given steady forecast confirmed
- 7:00pm: Crisis Comms Touchbase (Saturday PM & Sunday AM send prep)
- 8:00pm: All-Staff Meeting, cancellation “at the line” operational plan and roles reviewed
- 8:30pm: Cancellation “at the line” operational plan and latest forecast (4 degrees below WBGT threshold) shared with key vendors & volunteers



# Comms Timeline

- Saturday Events Media hits
  - Comms Mgr. and President
  - Fun of Saturday tempered with Weather concerns
- Contingency plan for Live Show shut down
  - Show to start at 6:30 ... but at-the-line decision could come as late as 6:45
  - Go to commercial ... Comms Mgr. breaks news with show anchor ... show ends.
- Finalization and send of 8:30 p.m. email



## Twin Cities Marathon runners warned of extreme heat and humidity for Sunday's race

Expected humidity and heat caused Twin Cities Marathon organizers to email participants about the weather and that they are "gathering extra course and finish line resources" to support the 25,000 entrants.

By Bob Timmons and Rachel Blount Star Tribune | SEPTEMBER 27, 2023 — 7:08AM



RICHARD TSONG-TAATARI, STAR TRIBUNE

# Sunday, October 1



NWS Twin Cities <nws.twincities@noaa.gov>



To: Eli Asch; Ed Whetham

Sun 10/1/2023 4:47 AM



Decision Support Briefing - ...

773 KB

Good Morning Gentlemen,

The WBGT continues to remain the primary concern as the WBGT will range in the upper 60s by 6 AM and reach the low 80s in the early afternoon. Conditions are already warmer than forecast 24 hours ago and forecasted highs are expected to reach 90 this afternoon. Lightning threat remains low. Development of showers/storms is expected from a line extending from Sioux Falls to St. Cloud between 7 AM to 11 AM but predominantly remains west of the event site. The updated copy of the briefing slide is attached below.



## Twin Cities Marathon - Today

### Hourly Table

Day of week:	Sunday 10/1															
Time:	4AM	5AM	6AM	7AM	8AM	9AM	10AM	11AM	12PM	1PM	2PM	3PM	4PM	5PM	6PM	7PM
Weather:																
Temperature (°F):	70	71	71	71	72	74	78	81	85	88	90	91	91	90	87	84
Wet Bulb Globe T (°F):	68	67	67	67	68	70	73	76	79	82	82	82	81	79	78	75



# Timeline

- 2:00am: NWS call
- 2:25am: Staff “no decision” Teams message sent
- 2:30am: Crisis Comms call (no decision)
  - Comms Mgr. Drafts cancellation messages
- 3:00am: President Board Executive Committee Briefing
- 4:00am: Start Area road closures (RD)
- 4:30am: Final NWS call (no change)
- 4:45am: “Rules & Games” call (some at Start Area hotel room, some remote)
- 5:10am: Cancellation decision made



## Today's Races Cancelled Due to Black Flag Conditions

Today's 10 mile and marathon races are cancelled due to [EAS Black Flag](#) weather conditions – Extreme and Dangerous Conditions. The latest weather forecast update projects record-setting heat conditions that do not allow a safe event for runners, supporters and volunteers.

It saddens Twin Cities In Motion and its partners to be unable to hold the races that runners have been pointing toward for months, but the safety of participants and the community will always be our primary concern. Extreme heat conditions can tax both runners and our emergency medical response systems. We ask the entire running community to come together for the safety of everyone involved.

Please expect an update about possible credit for the cancelled event by end of day Thursday, October 5.

Twin Cities In Motion





# Timeline

- 5:14am: Cancellation email sent
  - Not before hotel internet went down!
  - First media call at 5:23 a.m.
- Comms Mgr. 100% focused on Media Relations
  - Live Show Asst. struck media tent and communicated with Live Show team
  - Late notice and 10 mile were the key issues for media
  - And the story proved pretty big ...





# Timeline (cont'd.)

- 5:23am: Staff cancellation Teams chat sent
  - Race Committee notifies volunteer leadership (Lead Operations Volunteer getting inbound calls ASAP)
  - Vendors, Permitting and Public Safety Personnel, Partners receive mass notification email (lists pre-loaded, use mass comms tool)
  - Day of volunteers emailed in volunteer tool
  - RD direct calls to law enforcement and medical partners


10/1/23 5:23 AM

Staff, I have the news none of us wanted: Due to unsafe conditions, we have made the call to cancel both the marathon and TC 10 mile today. We will be engaging protocols very similar to the cancel at the line process shared last night. I'll be contacting directly people for whom it's a slight difference. Comms will go out shortly, and once they do you will receive confirmation that you can reach out to your team, but until then this is closed-hulled. The one exception is that in areas that are operational currently, we are going to begin teardown. Thank you all for everything this week--there's no way around it that this sucks, but we're going to pull together and get through it. I love you all.



# Timeline (cont'd.)

- 5:41am: Staff Teams chat confirming “closed hull” is lifted (comms are out)
  - Staff begins to be in position in Start Area having in-person interactions with runners
- 5:57am: After confirming w/ Gear Check team, Teams chat sent confirming 10 Mile Gear Check pick-up will be open until 2:30pm
  - Medals **not** to be distributed
- 6:22am: Personal email from RD to broader permitting and public safety contacts list (then in position at 10 Mile, Marathon start lines)



MEDTRONIC  
TWIN CITIES MARATHON  
WEEKEND

**10 MILE GEAR CHECK PICK UP:**

- GEAR CAN BE PICKED UP AT THE CAPITOL GROUNDS TODAY FROM 8 AM – 2:30 PM
- FRIENDS & FAMILY ARE ALLOWED TO PICK UP FOR EACH OTHER, BUT WE ASK THAT YOU BRING PROOF OF BIB NUMBER

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING.**



# Timeline (cont'd.)

- 7:00am: 10 Mile start (scheduled)
- 8:00am: Marathon start (scheduled)
- 8:13am: Usual “sweep” vehicle departs from Marathon Start Line
  - PD and staff estimate approx. 20-25% of expected runners ran on some part of course
- Media hits, interviews and follow-up until mid/late-afternoon
  - TV meteorologists were our best friends!
- Check-ins with Crisis Consultant on execution and sentiment
- 12:00-2:30pm: Staff with cooling supplies on final miles of course
- 2:30pm: Gear Check stood down



OUTDOORS

## Twin Cities Marathon canceled due to heat; some runners hit streets, trails anyway

Sunday's marathon and 10-mile run were canceled early Sunday due to "black flag conditions" that organizers said made it too dangerous to run. The high temperature reached 92 degrees.

By Bob Timmons and Josie Albertson-Grove Star Tribune | OCTOBER 2, 2023 — 6:32AM

GALLERY GRID

< 1/15 >



RICHARD TSONG-TAATARII, STAR TRIBUNE




# Key Post-Race Events






# Post-Event Timeline

- Monday Media
  - President did mid-day public radio interview and TV partner sit-down interview at TCM office to largely close the cancellation chapter.
  - President refused an irreverent morning radio show once we heard the tone.
  - Race director handled selected avenues (Another Mother Runner podcast, RW Online, WSJ) for deeper stories on decision
- Tues/Weds ... first media inquiries about "credit"



 **MEDTRONIC  
TWIN CITIES MARATHON**  
WEEKEND

**10 MILE GEAR CHECK PICK UP: ADDITIONAL HOURS**

**IF YOU STILL NEED TO PICK UP YOUR GEAR CHECK BAGS FROM THE RACE, OR YOU WOULD LIKE TO GRAB A 10 MILE MEDAL, YOU MAY DO SO AT THE TWIN CITIES IN MOTION OFFICE THIS WEEK AS FOLLOWS:**

- **MONDAY: NOON - 7 P.M.**
- **TUESDAY: 7 A.M. TO 5 P.M.**
- **WEDNESDAY: 9 A.M. TO 5 P.M.**
- **THURSDAY: 9 A.M. TO 5 P.M.**

**MARATHONERS: YOU CAN EXPECT AN UPDATE ON THE CANCELLATION IMPACT BY END OF DAY THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5.**



# Post-Event Timeline (cont'd)

- 10 Mile Gear Check and medals available at TCM office 12pm Monday, 10/2 (during business hours until 10/27)
  - Plus other “after hours” time windows and events
- Thursday, 10/5: Update email (medal request & mailing plan, no virtual race, no refund answer)
  - 1415 medals requested mailed, 2000+ picked up
- Friday, 10/20: Update email (full refunds confirmed)
  - Large portion of insurance claim confirmed
  - Any shortfall Board-approved cash reserves draw
- Thursday, 11/2- Monday, 12/11: “Restitution” Registration
- Friday, December 8: Refund processing deadline (manual!)
- Request for prompt for invoices from vendors
- Partner meetings . . . and some make goods



KEY POST-RACE EVENTS

## Marathon made the right call for safety

Responding to Sunday's forecast, health considerations came first for runners and the broader community.

By Editorial Board Star Tribune | OCTOBER 2, 2023 — 5:50PM



RICHARD TSONG-TAATARII, STAR TRIBUNE

Members of Mile in My Shoes warmed up and decided to do a short run at the start of what would have been the 10-mile race in Minneapolis on Sunday. The Twin Cities Marathon and 10-mile race were canceled due to high heat and humidity.

# Post-Event Timeline (cont'd)

- March toward resolution of credit/refund was long and stressful.
- Delay opened door to doubts about restitution and TCM finances.
- But also surfaced people who said they didn't want refunds!
- Timeline largely out of our hands.
- Taking special care with expectations language around credit/refund and timing



BUSINESS

## Canceled Twin Cities Marathon, 10 Mile registrants will receive full refunds

The events didn't happen Oct. 1 as planned because of hot weather, and organizer Twin Cities in Motion took until Friday to figure out its insurance claim and refund policy.

By Nick Williams Star Tribune | OCTOBER 20, 2023 — 11:52PM





# Takeaways



# Ops Takeaways

- Don't try to predict the unpredictable
- Always take an all-hazards approach—no policy covers everything
- Build templates and pre-populate comms lists
- Have the confidence of your convictions—have guidelines, but know they don't replace judgment
- Build slack into the system
- Create clear written protocols on who decision-makers and key input-providers are
- Trust your people . . . but also proactively verify that you're on the same page when operating under unprecedented conditions



# Ops Takeaways (cont'd.)

- Have needed policies (“no refunds”), but be “runner first” once possible (“full refunds!”)
- Be empathetic whenever possible
- Customer service and social media staff are heroes!
- Specifics:
  - “Silent killers” (heat) require different protocols than obvious incidents (lightning)
  - Meeting 30 minutes earlier would’ve made a world of difference
  - Find the right broadcast text tool for both participants and key stakeholders—we’re all on our phones
  - Clarify expectations of public safety partners in advance of crisis—keep ROC stood up!



# Comms Takeaways

- **Prepare ...** tabletop, event experience, trainings, talks ... experience is most important in the heat of an event.
- **Get Help ...** Consultant offers perspective, support, experience ... but trust your good sense, too.
- **Overcommunicate ...** Too much still beats too little. Always note when you'll communicate again.
- **Teamwork & Trust ...** open communications among staff, known roles, deadlines met, feedback, “in this together” spirit
- **Plan for Both ...** we were 100% ready for a “red flag” race, but maybe only 95% ready for cancellation.



**MARATHON AND TC 10 MILE CANCELLATION REFUND UPDATE:**

- TWIN CITIES IN MOTION IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT ALL 2023 MARATHON AND 10 MILE RUNNERS WILL RECEIVE A REFUND EQUAL TO THEIR REGISTRATION PAYMENT AS COMPENSATION FOR THE CANCELLED RACE ON OCTOBER 1.
- IN ADDITION TO THIS REFUND, WE ARE PLEASED TO SHARE THAT MARATHONERS AND 10 MILERS WILL RECEIVE EXCLUSIVE GUARANTEED ACCESS TO THEIR EVENTS IN 2024 AT PRICES EQUAL TO 2023.
- OUR PRIORITY THROUGHOUT THIS PROCESS HAS BEEN WORKING TO DO THE BEST POSSIBLE FOR OUR RUNNERS, WHILE REMAINING AN ACTIVE, VITAL, AND SOLVENT MEMBER OF THE TWIN CITIES NONPROFIT COMMUNITY.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS PROCESS, AS WELL AS A LIST OF FAQs, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE: [TCMEVENTS.ORG](https://TCMEVENTS.ORG)





# Comms Takeaways (cont'd)

And keep your sense of humor ...



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## Twin Cities Marathon Canceled Due to Everyone Nowadays Being Big Crybabies, According to Hard-as-Nails Old Guy

October 02, 2023 / Mark Remy



# Organizational Takeaways

- Learn from your experiences . . . debrief and document!
- Do the right thing, explain and don't hide, and you will get through it
- Your supporters will rally behind you
- Your runners will return . . . TCM Weekend fields currently 40% full **before** we usually launch registration





**Questions?**

