

Kastor wins Olympic Trials; Dallas runner finishes 27th

Melisa Christian of Dallas finished 27th in the 2008 U.S. Olympic Team Trails Women's Marathon on a specially-designed loop course in Boston. She finished with a 2:41:18.

American record holder Deena Kastor, overcoming Magdalena Lewy Boulet's 1:55 lead through 14 miles, won in 2:29:35. She led fellow Californians Boulet and Blake Russell onto the Olympic Team.

With her American record personal best of 2:19:36 making her 12 minutes faster than the next-fastest Olympic Trials entrant, Kastor (Mammoth Lakes, Calif.) was a heavy favorite coming into the race.

Kastor, 35, began running mile splits of 5:30 to 5:34 and quickly ate away Lewy Boulet's lead. When the Olympic bronze medalist strode past Lewy Boulet 2:14:50 into the race, she increased her pace even more, to 5:29 per mile, as she added an Olympic Trials marathon title to her storied resume.

Boulet, 34, made her first Olympic Team, finishing second in a personal-best time of 2:30:19. The native of Poland and mother to a nearly 3-year-old boy, Lewy Boulet's time improved on her personal best of 2:30:50, which she ran in placing fifth at the 2004 Olympic Trials in St. Louis.

Russell ran in third nearly the entire race. At 20 miles, she appeared to be laboring a bit but easily held on for third in 2:32:40. Zoila Gomez (Alamosa, Colo.) was fourth in 2:33:53, with Tera Moody (Boulder, Colo.) fifth in 2:33:54.

At age 50, 1984 Olympic Trials champion and Olympic gold medalist Joan Benoit Samuelson finished 90th in 2:49:08, crossing the finish line in a Boston Red Sox cap. It was an American record for the women's 50-54 age group.

Athletes won a total prize-money purse of \$220,000. Kastor won \$50,000, while Lewy Boulet took home \$40,000; Russell \$30,000; Gomez \$20,000; and Moody \$15,000. Prize money continued through \$1500 for 15th place.