

10 mln

It's estimated that China's 10 million amateur marathon runners create a market in sports-related purchases, valued in the hundreds of billions of yuan.

the opportunity to explore the city and broader China, connecting local and international running communities.

"Running the races in China helps share each city's local character," he explained. "The efficiency of resources and the abundance of aid stations for Chinese marathons are impressive."

However, he noted a distinct difference in crowd support for local marathons compared with international races.

The Boston Marathon, for instance, which ranks among the world's top races, is famous for its "Scream Tunnel." As the course passes through the campus of Wellesley College, runners experience a wave of sound through a tunnel lined with enthusiastic students.

DeHaven admitted that language barriers and sometimes urban air quality can be challenges for foreigner runners coming to China, but he said he remains optimistic about the growth in popularity.

Ben Kirkby, a UK expat and manager for brands at a Danish furniture and lighting company, has been living in Shanghai for eight years. He said he particularly likes the Shanghai Marathon

because it feels like his hometown race.

"It doesn't matter where you are from or what job you have for those few hours, everyone is focusing on the same goal," Kirkby said. "I think as more Chinese travel overseas to race, the race-day party culture will grow here."

Shanghai's combined sports with its reputation for technological innovation. Real-time tracking apps, artificial intelligence-powered crowd management systems and eco-friendly race practices are deployed in the city.

Shanghai's Daning Park in Jing'an has introduced a high-tech "smart running track," equipped with data collection points that enable runners to monitor metrics such as mileage, calories and speed, and view their performance on a leaderboard.

Environmental sustainability is another cornerstone of Shanghai's marathon planning. Initiatives like minimizing waste, using recyclable materials and promoting public transport reflect the city's broader environmental goals.

Zhang Jin, a recent retiree who lives on Chongming Island, prepared for the



The first roller-skating marathon sets off along the Bund in Huangpu District in April. — IC

Yangtze River Half Marathon by training daily amid the natural beauty of his home district.

"Everywhere I go, the birds are singing and the flowers are blooming," said Zhang, who registered for the half marathon after several unsuccessful attempts to win a lottery placement for the Shanghai Marathon.

The Shanghai Marathon, overwhelmed by applicants, used a lottery system last year after more than 172,000 people registered interest in participating.

"Shanghai should definitely be listed in the top 20 global marathons worldwide, given the quality of its facilities and the growing interest in running here," Wood said.



A women's marathon in Changning District — IC