

The Manchester Marathon continues to be one of the UK's premier road races, attracting tens of thousands of runners every year. For the 2026 edition, runners were eager to find details about the **central Manchester bib pickup**, as well as vital information about the marathon's date, distance, route, and logistics. In this comprehensive guide, I'll cover everything you need to know about pack collection, entries, the course, and important tips for race day.

Manchester Marathon 2026: Date, Scale, and Time Limit

The 2026 Manchester Marathon took place on **Sunday 19th April 2026**, kicking off early morning with tens of thousands of participants lining up on the start line. The event remains one of Europe's largest city marathons, with over 30,000 entries recorded in recent years.

Feature Details Date Sunday 19th April 2026 Scale 30,000+ runners Time Limit 7 hours (7:00 AM start, cut off at 2:00 PM) Start Location Salford Quays, near MediaCityUK Finish Location Albert Square, Central Manchester

Entry Process and Sell-Out Reality

Entry to the Manchester Marathon is highly competitive. Official entries go live months in advance — usually around September the year prior — and typically sell out within days. As of 2026, <https://the5krunner.com/2026/08/27/manchester-marathon-2027/> registration was handled via the official marathon website. Below is an overview of the typical entry process and facts you should know:

1. **Standard Entry:** Enter online via the official event website. There are no on-the-day entries.
2. **Charity Entries:** Many bypass the sell-out by signing up with official charity partners.
3. **Selling Out:** The marathon sold out in under 72 hours, making it essential to be ready when registration opens.
4. **Minimum Age:** Entrants must be aged 17 or over on race day.

Realities of Charity Places and Costs

Charity entries offer a reliable way to secure a spot if you missed the initial sell-out, but they come with commitments. One notable example for 2026 is running for the **Motor Neurone Disease (MS) Trust**. Their usual deal included:



- £40 registration fee
- £500 minimum fundraising target

This means the real cost of charity entry is not just the registration alone but also a significant sponsorship effort. Always check the details carefully; some charities are more flexible regarding fundraising targets, but the standard expectation remains around £500.

Pack Collection Location: Central Manchester Bib Pickup

For many runners, the highlight (or headache) of race weekend is collecting the race pack. In 2026, the bib pickup was split over two days:

- **Friday 17th April:** 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM
- **Saturday 18th April:** 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM

The **central Manchester collection point** was again at the popular **Adidas Store on Market Street**. This location remains the favourite for accessibility and convenience, situated right in the city centre with excellent transport options.

Why the Adidas Store on Market Street?

- Large indoor location with ample space for large crowds.
- Central location near key tram and bus stops.
- Close to shops and cafes – perfect for last-minute shopping or pre-race carb loading!
- Easy access to the **Market Street Metrolink tram stop**, which saves several minutes of walking for runners using public transport.

Note: You must bring your confirmation email and valid ID to collect your pack, which includes your bib number, timing chip, and race-day information booklet. No third-party collections allowed.

Tips for Pack Collection

- Arrive at the start of the opening hours to avoid queues.

- Double-check your race number and chip details on collection.
- Bring your race week 'kit list'—I always keep mine on my phone and cross-check to avoid forgetting essentials.
- Pack collection is not possible on race day, so don't risk missing it!

Course Route, Elevation, and Certification History

The 2026 marathon route retained the classic central Manchester loop, starting from Salford Quays and finishing in Albert Square. The route is officially **UK Athletics certified**, making it a legitimate course for qualifying times and records.

For avid runners who like to study the course in detail, independent tools like goandrace.com provide downloadable **GPX files of the 2026 route**. These can be loaded onto GPS devices such as Garmin watches to help you train and pace.

Route Highlights

- Start at Salford Quays with views of MediaCityUK.
- Passing through vibrant areas of Manchester city centre including Deansgate and Oxford Road.
- Finishing with strong crowd support at Albert Square near the iconic Town Hall.

Elevation Profile

The Manchester Marathon is renowned for being a relatively flat course, ideal for PB attempts. Elevation changes are minor, with a few gentle inclines throughout, particularly on the route through Salford and near Manchester University.



According to Garmin users who uploaded the GPX file from goandrace.com:

Segment	Elevation Gain (m)	Notes
Start to 10 km	15 m	Gentle gradual inclines
10 km to 21 km	20 m	Mostly flat urban streets
21 km to Finish	10 m	Downhill finish towards Albert Square

Transport Notes for Pack Collection and Race Day

The Market Street location for pack pickup is served by multiple transport links, but the tram is the easiest and most reliable way to minimise walking:

- **Metrolink Tram Stop:** Market Street
- **Nearest Rail Station:** Manchester Piccadilly (approx. 15-minute walk or 1 tram stop to Market Street)

On race day, several roads close in central Manchester and near Salford Quays. Plan your route carefully and consider arriving at the Salford Quays tram stop for the start, which is a short and well-marked walk to the marathon start line.

Common Questions About Manchester Marathon Pack Collection 2026

1. **Can I collect my pack on race day?** No, bib pickup is strictly on Friday and Saturday before race day at the Adidas Store on Market Street only.
2. **Can someone else collect my bib?** No, bibs must be collected by the runner themselves for security reasons.
3. **Is there parking near pack collection?** Parking in central Manchester is limited and expensive on race weekend. Public transport is highly recommended.
4. **Are third-party GPX routes official?** The official course maps and elevations are published by the race organisers. Third-party resources like goandrace.com provide useful GPX files for training but always cross-check for any minor variations.

Summary

To recap, **Manchester Marathon 2026 pack collection** took place at the central Manchester **Adidas Store on Market Street** over two days (Friday and Saturday before race day). The race itself remains a key fixture in the UK marathon calendar with a flat, fast, and certified course through central Manchester. Understanding the entry process, charity place realities, and logistics around transport and elevation can make your race preparation smoother.

Don't forget to download the official or trusted GPX route files from sites like goandrace.com and load them onto your Garmin or other GPS device to familiarise yourself with the course profile.

Good luck to all 2026 runners chasing a PB or simply taking on Manchester's iconic streets!