



PRESS RELEASE  
13<sup>th</sup> October 2016

## Festus Talam demonstrates the RunCzech Racing project at full strength in the DLL Eindhoven Marathon

*Festus Talam is not the first man to start a marathon as pacemaker and finish it as a winner, but he is simply the best. Talam, 21, was making his marathon debut in Eindhoven last Sunday, October 9. But, having completed his pacing duties at 35K, he carried on to smash a high-class elite field and record a superlative winning time of 2:06:26, the fastest ever for a debutant.*

Born in Baringo County in Kenya, Festus started to train at the age of 15 with a dream of having a better life for himself and his family, like thousands of other Kenyan runners. "I didn't like running in the beginning, but my family encouraged me to train. They believed I had talent." – recalled Festus. His first international race Festus organized by himself. "I just wanted to run a race overseas. They had a series of three races in two days, and I told them I will win all," – said a smiling Festus, - "and I did."

Talam was drafted into the RunCzech Racing team in 2014 by the late Zane Branson and his management team. That same year, Festus made his international debut as a RunCzech Racing athlete in the Mattoni Karlovy Vary Half Marathon, where he finished second with a personal best of 1:02:25. That was followed by reasonable performances in various races in Europe. In 2015 for the first time Festus tried out the role of a pacemaker in the Eindhoven Marathon, and impressed everybody with a strong performance up to 32K, at 2:05 marathon pace.

"Festus is a mature, kind and gentle athlete," – said athletes' representative Davor Savija, who shared his experience working with Talam, – "Always keen to learn, correct mistakes and is unusually clinical in his approach, without appearing to be overly obsessive about his running and career. There is lots of peace around Festus, there is kindness in his heart and he truly is a pleasure to work with-and-for. We enjoyed the opportunity to assist in transition of an unknown and inexperienced pacemaker to a world-class debutant and we believed that process was to take 18-24 months and the fact that all played out in just over 12 months makes this journey even more rewarding for all of us".

The D-day for Festus was October 9 at the 2016 DLL Eindhoven Marathon. A big group of runners started leading by a pacemaker Festus Talam, reached half marathon point at 1:02:59. At 30K point only defending champion, Stephen Chebogut, and Marius Kipsere, the winner of this year's Rotterdam Marathon still stayed the pace, but very soon Talam was alone, approaching the finish line, which he crossed with an impressive 2:06:26.

Based on analysis conducted by Ken Nakamura, renowned statistician, this result makes Talam the second fastest pacemaker ever, who managed to finish the race. The only man faster than him was Sammy Korir, pacing Paul Tergat to the World Record in the 2003 Berlin Marathon, where Korir finished just one second behind Tergat with 2:04:56. But there was no faster debutant, who finished as a pacemaker.





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Carlo Capalbo, the President of the Organizing Committee of RunCzech, stated, "If you believe in your dream, you can make it come true. All what you need is persistence and patience. We are happy, that only after 3 years of the RunCzech Racing project started, we have such an amazing result, and it is definitely just a first kilometre of the RunCzech Racing "marathon."

After a small celebration with team mates in Kenya, Festus Talam will fully focus on his marathon preparation for the 2017 spring season. Inspired by his example, other members of RunCzech Racing are working hard and waiting for their time of success to come.

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**If you require any further information or print quality photos, please get in touch with:**

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**Note: The attached photography may only be used in connection with this press release, ensuring the source is specified as RunCzech.**

**Notes for editors:** <http://www.runczech.com/en/for-the-media/notes-for-editors/index.shtml>



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