

Second ever Mattoni České Budějovice Half Marathon scores Ethiopian personal record double

This year's first place positions were awarded to two young promising Ethiopian runners both embarking on their European debuts. 22-year old Tamirat Tola (1:02:24), and 18-year old Hurtesa Kedija (1:12:10) triumphed at the second ever Mattoni České Budějovice, the latest race to feature on this year's RunCzech Running League calendar. In keeping with expectations, Jan Kreisinger and Ivana Sekyrová emerged with the best Czech scores although both finished a fair way off their best times of 1:08:57 and 1:19:13 respectively.

The weather conditions didn't exactly go in their favour with warm temperatures made that bit more intense thanks to air humidity levels measured at almost eighty percent. By the sixth kilometre already, this year's winner of the prestigious Great Ethiopian Run already had a head start on the rest though subsequently slowed down and was caught up by the group. Winner of the recent Mattoni Karlovy Vary Half Marathon and hot favourite to win, Daniel Wanjiru was nowhere to be seen, having to pull out due to experiencing problems with a muscle in his thigh.

Tola subsequently managed to break away from the leading group one more time with only the experienced Kenyan athlete, Henry Chirchir left chasing his tail. Clearly delighted to be the first past the finish line, the winner made a symbolic sign of the cross and looked up to the sky. He later described that final crucial stretch which secured him victory: "He caught me up but around five hundred metres ahead of the finish, I went for it and was able to shake him off." Going on to say: "I really liked it here. I may not have been able to understand what the people were saying but the atmosphere was still amazing and the weather conditions similar those back home." With a slight gap coming in third place was Silas Ngetich from Kenya.

The best women stuck together in a group of four right up until the twentieth kilometre. It wasn't until the last hundred metre stretch that Hurtesa Kedija managed to overtake her compatriot, Shure Demise: "Us two Ethiopians had a plan to go for it together. And it worked out." 16-year old Letekidan Gebreaman from Eritrea finished third.

Czech stars, Kreisinger and Pechek emerged as the best European runners coming in sixth and seventh place respectively. A defeated Petr Pechek described the race as follows: "We ran together until the



thirteenth kilometre, at which point the injury I sustained over my winter training sessions became apparent, even though I was feeling really great.”

“After that I ran alone but I couldn’t really push it much because the weather was just too oppressive,” Jan Kreisinger revealed. Prior to the race, the runner had announced his intention to launch an assault on the best Czech performance of the year however in the end missed out on this by three minutes. “It was hard to breathe, it just wasn’t happening. My time is terrible, but am pleased with the position,” he summarised.

With a tough few weeks of training behind her, Ivana Sekyrová told of a similar experience: “I wasn’t running well. Even though I like running in warm weather, the oppressive conditions were too much for me. I had to stop for a drink at each station, something which I normally don’t do. Plus I was worried about tripping on the large cobblestones leading me to slow down. In the end I ran alongside two guys but we all slowed down.” Her time also lagged behind her best performance this year by a whopping five minutes.

In terms of start numbers, this year’s event saw a record number of 2 500 runners take part. When it came to the relays, spectators had the privilege of checking out the performances of spot hockey stars led by world champion and two-times Russian KHL winner, Filip Novák. “I was really looking forward to soaking up the atmosphere of running in this city which I love,” he revealed. In a relay duel fought between hockey and football league players, champions on the ice, HC Mountfield emerged victorious, repeating their winning performance from last year and earning themselves a barrel of beer from the Budweiser Budvar brewery.

Race organisers decided to donate the proceeds of the start fees from the Family Run to those affected by the floods in the nearby town of Putim. A minute’s silence was also held in honour of the victims of this year’s floods.

The race may be over however there’s little time for rest for the RunCzech Running League team which heads off to Olomouc in two weeks time on 22nd June for the Mattoni Olomouc Half Marathon.

As the race enters its third year next season, České Budějovice will have its sights set on qualifying for a quality label from the International Association of Athletics Federations, the IAAF.



The Mattoni České Budějovice Half Marathon 2013:

Men: 1. Tola (Ethiopia) 1:02:04, 2. Chirchir 1:02:07, 3. Ngetich (both Kenyans) 1:02:19,... 6. Kreisinger 1:08:57, 7. Pechek 1:09:46, 8. Serbesa 1:11:13, 9. Fekl 1:11:48, 10. Orálek (all from the Czech Republic) 1:12:07.

Women: 1. Kedija 1:12:10, 2. Demise (both from Ethiopia) 1:12:15, 3. Gebreaman (Eritrea) 1:12:28,... 9. Sekyrová 1:19:15, 10. Churaňová 1:22:3, 11. Krejčová (all from the Czech Republic) 1:28:09.

To view the results in full along with the RunCzech rankings, please go to www.runczech.com.

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