

Sunday in Ústí nad Labem belongs to running

Entering only its third race year, the Mattoni Ústí nad Labem Half Marathon can already pride itself on the IAAF Silver Quality Label. The race scheduled to take place this Sunday is set to transform the entire capital of North Bohemia into a running frenzy. Meanwhile the race capacity of 4,200 start numbers has been reached for both the main race as well as the Spolchemie Family Run while the start line of elite runners also promises to deliver an assault on record-breaking times.

“We were rained on during the first race year, then last year it was scorching hot. It’s going to be ideal this time around,” President of the Organising Team, Carlo Capalbo promises. “We’re not just aiming to smash records but above all to ensure all those embarking out a new lifestyle linked to running, have a great time.”

A total of 516 runners (one sixth of participants) will be running their first ever marathon. The oldest participant is Miloš Loužecký who will be celebrating his 73rd birthday on race day. Among the 36 different nationalities to take part alongside Slovaks, Poles and Germans as traditionally prominent competing nations, Finns rank as the fourth largest nationality group. Could this refer to some kind of symbolic connection to the north perhaps?

Kenyan rank as the top nationality fighting for the first place on the podium. Daniel Chebii, the first man to cross the finish line at last Saturday’s O₂ Prague 10 km Grand Prix, is in great form plus feels at his best running the half marathon course. “I want to run as fast as I can and believe I can make a new race record. Running alongside Philemon Limo, who I know very well, could help me out with that,” he reveals reminding us of the winner of the city’s first half marathon race as part of the series.

To give you an idea, Chebii is capable of running the half marathon course in 0:59:49; something which he achieved last year in České Budějovice. Philemon Kimeli Limo holds the race record (from the first race year) at 1:00:57.

Spectators can look forward to observing the sequel in the battle for first place among Czech long-distance runners, Homoláč, Kreisinger and Kocourek. “I don’t know what time to expect, though I definitely want to match the best Czech performance achieved this year,” the several time 10,000 metre champion, Milan Kocourek revealed when asked about his half marathon debut.

When it comes to the women, the fight for the top spot will be between winner of last year’s race, Betelhem Moges from Ethiopia and winner of the O₂ Prague Grand Prix, Kenyan runner, Josephine Chepkoech. “I want to give it my best shot and am confident I’ll be able to run it in under 1:10,” Chepkoech reveals who has spent all of this week in Prague along with the other elite runners.

Alongside Olympian runner, Ivana Sekyrová, Petra Kamínková cannot wait for the never-ending race battle to get underway: We’ll all be running to scoop up the best Czech title. It’s been almost two months since I ran my last big race and I’m really looking forward to it. I’d like to complete the course in under 1:17:30 which is the maximum time here. But then again I always struggle in the last few kilometres of the half marathon.”



It will most certainly take somewhat longer for other well-known faces competing to make their way through the course. Actor and presenter, Dalibor Gondík as well as professional European Boxing Champion and local resident, Lukáš Konečný will both be running half marathon race. “I couldn’t take part in the past due to the race being scheduled just before matches which my trainer wouldn’t let me do. I don’t have any tournaments coming up right now so I’m not doing much training. But I made a bet with a friend for a few drinks and want to complete it in under 1:40,” he says smiling. He’ll be running the Spolchemie Family Run to warm-up beforehand, where he will be up against double Olympic Champion Martin Doktor and his children.

What about any other news? “We’ve made some minor modifications to the course ensuring it’s as fast as possible. The turn in the Střekov district will be in a different place this year,” Race Director Václav Skřivánek revealed. “And we’re delighted to see the number of local residents taking part go up which goes to show they see the event as their own.”

The RunCzech Running League is well and truly getting the whole city involved in sport. “We initially met with resistance regarding whether or not it was appropriate to host a running race in an industrial city. That no longer poses a threat. We deserve it and see ourselves as a sport-loving city. Qualifying for the IAAF Silver Quality Label, especially given our status as the smallest place in the world to earn it, is an added bonus we weren’t expecting to get so quickly. The race has succeeded in marrying the city’s green spaces with its industrial part,” Deputy City Mayor, Zuzana Kailová revealed.

This will be the third time runners pass through the grounds of the chemical plant which rose to fame thanks to Vladimír Parál’s novel. “Everything is ready and we’re looking forward to it,” says spokesperson of the Association for Chemical and Metallurgical Manufacturing, Marie Logrová invitingly. “A part of the course on our grounds is downhill which we’re expecting the handbikers to dash through at lightning pace,” she points out.

The race aimed at competitors with disabilities will be taking place for the first time as part of the RunCzech series. The 18.6 km course promises to offer a nail-biting finish with the best times expected at around thirty minutes. “It’s a relatively short and flat course; tactics will play a huge part in who wins. The incline up Hradební Street will be decisive as will the downhill stretch featuring a bend just before the finish line. The speed there will be around 50 km /hour,” according to Jan Tománek, one of the hot favourites to win.

“We’re a longstanding race partner and are proud to be promoting a healthy lifestyle. We hope that the only water to appear on the course this Sunday will be that of our own brand - Mattoni,” says Eva Dolenská, Marketing Director of RunCzech Running League title race sponsor, Karlovarské minerální vody raising her head to the sky.

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Should you be interested in further information, please contact:



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