

Records galore at the Mattoni Ústí nad Labem Half Marathon

If the results are anything to go by, it looked like Ústí nad Labem was in a celebratory mood, flying the IAAF Road Race Silver Label for the first time at today's race. Kenyan runners, Philemon Limo (1:00:38) and Josephine Chepkoech (1:09:08) smashed the race records for men and women respectively in the event's third year. The record number of 4 200 runners taking part overall, including the Spolchemie Family Run, were also greeted with ideal conditions – warm and wet weather around 16 degrees Celsius with little wind. The fastest Czechs to cross the finish line were Jiří Homoláč for the men and Ivana Sekyrová for the women.

"I'd like to thank everyone for helping me get back into shape," a delighted Philemon Limo revealed commenting on his excellent result 19 seconds ahead of his own race record achieved in 2011. He's spent a large part of this season struggling with pain issues in his right knee.

"But now I'm back where I want to be. Breaking the record was an extra bonus to be honest. I didn't think I was up to it but when I saw that my body was responding well, I decided to give it my all. But even so my lungs hurt because of the moist air," he added. An additional factor helping Limo achieve such a fantastic time was the presence of arch rival, Abebe Negewo from Ethiopia who gave him a run for his money during the last five kilometers. As late as the ten kilometer mark reached in 28:29 a seven-strong pack including all the top favorites were still running together, but Limo soon pushed the pace reducing the lead group to Negewo, Tola, (also of Ethiopia) and fellow Kenyan Julius Lomerinyang. It wasn't until right at the end on Mírové náměstí (square) that it became clear that Limo would finish triumphant with a two second victory over Negewo.

When it came to the Czechs, Homoláč managed to break away from compatriots, Kocourek and Fejfar securing him a finish thirty seconds ahead of his rivals. His training partner and several-times Czech Champion in the 10,000 meters, Milan Kocourek finished second in his half marathon premiere in 1:07:17.

As far as the women were concerned, the elite runners were split up early on with Josephine Chepkoech breaking away from her compatriot Caroline Chepkwony after two kilometers reached in 6:11. "I wasn't confident about beating the race record here, but I ran well," she said. After running the final nineteen kilometers alone her finish time of 1:09:08 was four seconds under the previous record. It's possible that she could have been helped out somewhat by slight modifications made to the course this year removing one rather nasty 180 degree turn.

It was a similar story in the battle of the Czech women which saw Olympian Ivana Sekyrová defeat her fellow masters rival Petra Kamínková. after gaining a lead early in the race.



The Mattoni Ústí nad Labem Half Marathon

Men: 1. Philemon Limo (Kenya) 1:00:38; 2. Abebe Negewo (Ethiopia) 1:00:40; 3. Julius Arile Lomerinyang (Kenya) 1:01:15; 4. Tamirat Tola (Ethiopia) 1:01:27; 5. Nicholas Kipchirchir Bor (Kenya) 1:02:10; 6. Daniel Kipchumba Chebii (Kenya) 1:02:33.

11. Jiri Homoláč 1:05:50, 14. Milan Kocourek 1:07:17, 15. Ondrej Fejfar 1:07:41 (all from the Czech Republic).

Women: 1. Josephine Chepkoech (Kenya) 1:09:08; 2. Caroline Jepchirchir Chepkwony (Kenya) 1:10:52; 3. Betelhem Moges (Ethiopia) 1:12:07,

9. Ivana Sekyrová (Czech Republic) 1:17:39, 10. Petra Kamínková (Czech Republic) 1:19:33.

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