

The Mattoni Karlovy Vary Half Marathon 2nd Edition a Tale of the Youth and the Veteran

After a rain filled afternoon clearing skies and sunshine greeted the start of the 2014 edition of the Mattoni Karlovy Vary Half Marathon – the newest event of the RunCzech Running League - at 6:00 P.M. Saturday in the world famous spa city in the western Czech Republic. As 3000 runners set off into the evening to the strains of Smetana the temperature was 17 degrees Celsius with little wind but high humidity following the rain.

With the defending men's champion Daniel Wanjiru and his run2gether team mate Thomas Lokomwa leading the way a group of eight men went through the uphill first 2.5k together with the next 2.5k being downhill the same group reached 5k in 14:48. But by 10k Wanjiru was already in serious trouble as he lost some 50 seconds on the leaders in the second 5k. Meanwhile the 18 year old Ethiopian Teshome Mekonen broke from the pack at 8k and by 10k had opened a lead of 7 seconds on his compatriot Fikadu Seboka and Lokomwa. At 14k with Mekonen continuing to increase his lead with each kilometer he passed an open gate on the side of the road and a large dog greeted him with a loud bark. Mekonen jumped and Pat Butcher and the other people on the press vehicle began to laugh which started Mekonen laughing as he ran along at 2:50 per kilometer. By 15k he had opened a 28 second gap and from there to the finish the only question left unanswered was what his winning time would be. It turned out to be an event record of 1:01:21 more than two and one half minutes under Wanjiru's time from 2013. Two young RunCzech Racing athletes Festus Talam of Kenya and Saboka finished second and third making a strong case for the youth movement in road racing.

The women's race also produced a stellar performance but it came from a veteran not a youngster. A group of four women led by 39 years old Christelle Daunay of France and Kumeshi Sichala of Ethiopia went through the 5k in 16:14 and by 6k the defending champion Mame Feyisa of Ethiopia had already dropped back leaving just Daunay and Sichala with Lucy Liavoga in third. By 10k Liavoga was already some 200 meters behind the leaders. Daunay continued to set the pace and apply pressure to Sichala, and the gap between them continued to widen and by 15k she had built a 14 second lead. At 17k she passed a badly limping Daniel Wanjiru who dropped out shortly thereafter. From there to the finish Daunay continued to run at her intended pace finishing some three and one half minutes under the event record at 1:09:17 as the first four women all finished under the old event record.

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