

PRESS RELEASE
18th May 2015

Wilson Kipsang and Geoffrey Ronoh are set to renew their rivalry while Mary Keitany makes her RunCzech debut in the Mattoni Olomouc Half Marathon

The sixth edition of the Mattoni Olomouc Half Marathon will feature the latest episode of the dueling training partners. Wilson Kipsang and Geoffrey Ronoh will stand on the start line in the Czech Republic on Saturday, June 20 while the Kenyan theme of excellence will be boosted by the women's former world record holder at the distance, Mary Keitany. The Mattoni Olomouc Half Marathon is an IAAF Gold Label race and forms part of the seven events in the RunCzech series.

A year ago Wilson Kipsang was the world record holder in the marathon and Geoffrey Ronoh a little known member of Kipsang's illustrious training group in Kenya. That impression changed dramatically in the course of just over one hour as Ronoh beat Kipsang by eight seconds to win the Olomouc title in 60:17, his debut at the distance and only his second race at elite level outside of Kenya. The duo, who remains training partners, will renew their rivalry and both have shown the kind of form in 2015 which suggests another epic contest is in prospect.

Kipsang lost his pre-eminence in the marathon when his compatriot and training partner Dennis Kimetto broke the world record in Berlin last September. However, the 2012 Olympic marathon bronze medallist remains a formidable and consistent competitor at any distance, as shown by his second place in 2:04:47 in the London Marathon in late April. He is confident that regular strength sessions in the gym and track sessions have maintained his ability to be a contender at the half marathon. Moreover, he relished his debut in the RunCzech series last year in Olomouc: "People here love the sport of running". He has broken the hour for the distance on five occasions, the best being 58:59 to win the Ras Al Khaimah event in 2009. The presence of Geoffrey Ronoh alongside Kipsang makes the prospect of a men's event record highly feasible. Ronoh holds that current honour with 60:17 from last year's win. In the week before the Volkswagen Prague Marathon on May 3, where he improved his marathon time by almost five minutes with 2:10:52 for fifth place, Ronoh was confident his current training would bring rewards: "I've improved in training, meeting new targets for speedwork and long runs, compared to a year ago."

A back injury, now healed, hindered his preparation for the Sportisimo Prague Half Marathon in late March and he has long since been in a successful training groove and also full of respect for his rival in Olomouc, Wilson Kipsang: "He is my mentor, I learn from him. You may try to do other things but they can hurt your career. He tells me, after a workout, relax, take your time, wait for the next workout, things like that." Geoffrey Ronoh soon built upon his success in Olomouc a year ago, bringing his best for the half marathon distance



down to 59:45 with victory at Klagenfurt in Austria two weeks before making a triumphant return to Prague roads and winning the 10k race in the Birell Prague Grand Prix on September 6.

Prospects are also enticing for the women's race in Olomouc where the former half marathon world record holder Mary Keitany makes her Czech debut. She has returned strongly from maternity leave, winning the highly competitive Ras Al Khaimah event in mid-February in 66:02, the fourth fastest performance in history and only 12 seconds slower than her world record mark of 2011. She continued her form with second place in the London Marathon on April 26. This form should put the Olomouc event record of 68:53, set last year by the World marathon champion Edna Kiplagat, under pressure. Whatever the stop watch shows after the race on June 20, high quality competition should be on the menu. Carlo Capalbo, president of the RunCzech organising committee is among the many running fans who is eagerly awaiting the starting gun of the Mattoni Olomouc Half Marathon 2015: "Having such big athletic stars as Wilson Kipsang and Mary Keitany is the best promotion not only for the race but also for the city. Last year, Olomouc got the attention of the whole athletic world, thanks to the surprise that caused the victory of Geoffrey Ronoh. I believe that also this year we can be looking forward to very fast times and superb sporting achievements".

Should you require further information or print quality photos, please get in touch with us on the contact details below:

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