



Press release  
16 September

## Road racing stars ready to shine in the Mattoni Usti nad Labem Half Marathon to conclude the RunCzech Running League season

*Several world class athletes were highlighted at Friday's pre-race press conference for the Mattoni Usti nad Labem Half Marathon – just a day before the running event will bring the curtain down on yet another successful RunCzech Running League. In the afterglow of last Saturday's terrific Birell Prague Grand Prix 10K – where RunCzech Racing athlete Abraham Kipyatich's world-leading 27:40 made him the surprise winner and Violah Jepchumba's winning time of 30:24, also a world leader, was just 3 seconds off Paula Radcliffe's world record – many wondered if the Usti finale might produce a road racing encore.*

One of the more accomplished of the elite men attending the press conference was Barselius Kipyego. The East African road race star has performed well in earlier competitions in this year's RunCzech Running League. His 59:30 2<sup>nd</sup> place finish in the Sportisimo Prague Half Marathon currently ranks him #6 on this year's world leader board. Later in the season, the Kenyan raced 60:30 to claim victory in the Mattoni Ceske Budejovice Half Marathon. Considered the favorite, Kipyego nonetheless plans to keep his eye on a talented field which includes Moroccan athlete Aziz Lahbabi whose half marathon PB of 59:25 is the fastest in the field. When asked about his fitness level and his anticipated performance in Saturday's race, the 23 year old Kipyego – who is scheduled to run a marathon in Valencia later this fall – replied, "This course is not too difficult. If the conditions are right, I will run under an hour."

Much interest was directed toward Peres Jepchirchir. The Kenyan star began the year on a strong note by posting a half marathon personal best of 66:39 in Ras Al Khaimad in February. In late March in Cardiff, Wales, the young athlete built off her earlier PB performance – currently ranked #7 on this year's world list – by winning the IAAF world half marathon championship where she ran 67:31 under simply horrid conditions of heavy wind and lashing rain. "I will try my best," answered the world champion when asked if she could better the course record of 67:17 she set here last year. Jepchirchir plans to run her marathon debut in Frankfurt later this fall. Several questions directed to Jepchirchir inquired about another rising star Violah Jepchumba and just when the two might square off in a half marathon dual. "I look forward to racing against her," declared the 22 year old Kenyan while exhibiting a broad smile.





With no overwhelming favorite in the men's field, pre-race speculation sees the competition as a wide open fight featuring – among others – Barselius Kipyego, Lahbabi, Uganda's Geoffrey Kusuro, and Ethiopia's Adegna Takele whose Prague time of 59:40 places him 9<sup>th</sup> on the world leader list. On the women's side, Jephchirchir – with a half marathon PB over 3 minutes faster than anyone else in the field – should be the easy victor. But road race results can – and often do – turn out quite differently than what the pundits' form charts predict. Only last week, overlooked Kipyatich surprised the men's field – and the prognosticators – with his late race move that powered him to victory in Prague. Upsets can happen. That is, after all, why they run the races.

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**Should you require more information or photographs in print quality please contact:**

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**Note: The attached photographs can be used only in connection to this press release and mentioning the source: RunCzech.**

**Notes for editors:** <http://www.runczech.com/en/for-the-media/notes-for-editors/index.shtml>



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