

Prague
May 9, 2022

Generali Česká pojišťovna won the unique Battle of the Teams. Captain Šlesingr cheered at the finish line

The Volkswagen Prague Marathon revolutionised the world of road running, as for the first time, the Battle of the Teams project was completely open to every participant and a total of six teams contested top honours. The times of both the professional athletes and all others in the marathon, were counted in the final team scores where, after a close battle, the title went to the Generali Česká pojišťovna team, whose captain, biathlete Michal Šlesingr, cheered for every one of his team at the finish line. The prize money will go to his team's selected charity, the Leontinka Foundation. *"In total, around 2,000 runners took part in the team race. We had to wait for every single one to finish, as every individual who had signed up for a team, could influence the result. It gave the marathon a unique and completely new edge,"* Carlo Capalbo, the president of RunCzech, said.

The fundamental racing element of the Volkswagen Prague Marathon did not change, and it was Kenyan Nobert Kigen of the Birell team who was the first across the line, with Ethiopia's Kelkile Woldaregay from the Generali Česká pojišťovna team in second. The majestic „Everest“ of running thus took on a completely new dimension; every runner could choose to become part of an official team. For example, after having finished the race, the first Czech male home Jiří Homoláč, went to congratulate the first woman, Bekelech Borecha, who was part of his ČEZ Group team. *„It is great that our girl won the whole category. I also tried to bring the team as many points as possible,"* Homoláč, who became the Czech Marathon Champion, claimed at the finish line.

The principle of the Battle of the Teams is simple - four professionals in each team had their time converted to points and so scored for their team, and then the average of all other competitors' times was added to the pro-athletes' results, thus making a fifth team scorer. In addition, if any of the four professional team members ran a personal best, they received an extra three percent point bonus for their team; that is exactly what the Ethiopian Borecha did, as she improved her time by almost two minutes, so earning 1193 points for her team, the highest of any professionals.



For many pro-athletes, the Battle of the Teams has become a special motivator. *"I honestly ran a lot for myself, but I thought of the team as well. I also heard people along the course cheering me on and yelling at me that I was in a team and had to give my best. It is definitely an extra motivation,"* Marcela Joglová, who won the Czech Marathon Championship in Prague, described. Moreover, the Battle of the Teams hadn't ended after the professionals finished, as on the contrary, all eyes were on the results of other participants who boasted a coloured team shield on their singlet and so were part of this unique competition.

The overall winner was then revealed at the final Sunday evening After Party at the Hilton Hotel Prague. The winner is the Generali Česká pojišťovna team which scored 4849 points. The second place went to adidas with 4189 points, followed by Volkswagen in third with 3742 points. *"The Battle of the Teams was closely monitored by the entire running world. Everyone was curious about this new concept and everyone loved it. In addition to the competitors, we want to attract new fans with this intriguing team model,"* RunCzech's Carlo Capalbo said. Together with the biathlete Šlesingr, the Olympic champion Jiří Prskavec, the tennis player Barbora Strýcová, the athlete Zuzana Hejnová, Paris St. Germain's football goalkeeper Barbora Votíková and the Paralympic cycling champion Jiří Ježek, whose Birell team won last year (when only pro-athletes ran the race), became non-running captains.

Battle of the Teams in the Volkswagen Prague Marathon: 1. Generali Česká pojišťovna (Kelkile Woldaregay, Purity Changwony, Moses Kemel, Yitayal Zerihun) 4849 points, **2. adidas Runners** (Malene Meyer, Jan Pernica, Julien Lebreton, Philipp Baar) 4189 points, **3. Volkswagen** (Ayele Abshero, Risper Chebet, Lucy Cheruiyot, Edwin Kosgei) 3742 points, **4. The ČEZ Group** (Yuma Hattori, Azmera Hagos, Jiří Homoláč, Bekelech Borecha) 3721 points, **5. Mattoni** (Emmanuel Saina, Sintayehu Hailemichael, Nicolai Saké, Sofiya Chgen) 3703 points, **6. Birell** (Nobert Kigen, Bontu Gada, Benjamin Fletcher, Marcela Joglová) 3664 points.



Note for editors

- All five events hold World Athletics Elite Road Race Labels.
- Each of the five races are certified by AIMS, have been awarded a 5 Star Road Race standard by European Athletics or have hosted the IAAF (World Athletics) Half Marathon Championships.
- SuperHalves races have played host to World Record performances (2 in Lisbon, 2 in Prague, 1 in Copenhagen and 3 in Valencia).
- RunCzech organizes running events in cities across the Czech Republic and in Italy, with Napoli Running, and in Japan and China supported by local entities.
- Prague International Marathon spol. s.r.o. ("PIM")/RunCzech was established in 1995 by Carlo Capalbo, President of the Organizing Committee, with the aim of staging a world-class international marathon in Prague.
- Nearly 1.2 million runners have participated in RunCzech events since its inception. In 2019, we welcomed over 120 000 finishers from 101 different countries.
- ALL RUNNERS ARE BEAUTIFUL is our way of welcoming everyone to the world of running.
- Initiatives like RunCzech Running League and SuperHalves were created to motivate casual runners. To support elite European athletes, we created the EuroHeroes Challenge.
- RunCzech Racing is dedicated to the development of young athletes, community ties, and sporting excellence. Eight World records so far and over 150 podium finishes for our team!
- In 2021, RunCzech introduced the unique running invention called The Battle of the Teams. "Professional marathoners competing in teams, strategically drafted based on their collective personal bests, giving each team a serious chance to win gold".
- We host other events such as our Bambini Runs, Family Runs and Junior Marathon Championship to encourage youth participation.
- Our FreeRun courses form a network of running trails across the Czech Republic.
- Our Running Mall serves as the epicenter of the running world in Prague.
- All accompanying information regarding RunCzech can be found at this link: <https://bit.ly/2X83DLD>



RUNCZECH

ALL RUNNERS
ARE BEAUTIFUL

Contact

For more information, please get in touch with:

- Saso Belovski (belovski@runczech.com, or +420 777 746 807)
- Soňa Barabášová (barabasova@runczech.com, +420 603 455 830)
- Jana Vávrová at vavrova@pim.cz or +420 607 055 932

Or reach the office at pr@runczech.com or +420 224 919 209

