

CZECH SUPERSTARS PETRA KVITOVÁ, ZUZANA HEJNOVÁ, JIŘÍ JEŽEK AND KATEŘINA NEUMANNOVÁ SET TO “DRAFT” PROFESSIONAL ATHLETES FOR FIRST EVER TEAM MARATHON EVENT.

On May 18, in a ceremony resembling the much-hyped NBA draft, a panel of honorary captains chosen from among Czech sports legends will assemble teams comprising of some of the world’s best marathoners. Those teams will then compete in an exciting new twist on the ancient sport.

The race itself will be held in Prague on May 30 at 6:30 am, starting at the fabled Charles Bridge.

Teams will be made up of eight runners each, with each team featuring professional athletes from Africa and Europe. Teams will be made up of four men and four women, and will each include one pro-athlete from the Czech Republic. The featured Czech runners are Jiří Homoláč, Eva Vrabcová Nývltová, Vít Pavlišta and Moira Stewartová who will be taking one more opportunity to qualify for Tokyo Olympics after she missed it by 9 seconds in Belp, Switzerland this year.

"I didn't underestimate my preparation, I decided to choose mountains as a spot for my training camp. I want to show the strongest performance possible, I want to run for myself and also for my teammates. My goal is to cross finish line with a feeling that I left there everything I had," stated Jiří Homoláč

Visiting runners will include Volkswagen Prague Marathon winner, Valary Aiyabei, and Kinde Atanaw, winner of the Valencia Marathon, with an astonishing personal best of 2:03:51 (2019).

We spoke to Tomáš Coufal from RunCzech, the organization behind this event. According to Mr. Coufal, “what makes this race so much fun—and unique—is that the runners will end up grouped in a way that makes the four teams almost identical in terms of their collective abilities. So each team has an excellent shot at victory.”

The teams will be formed using each member’s personal best from the previous four years to create almost perfect parity. Mr. Coufal adds that because each runner earns points based on their times, the last runners’ performances will be just as important as the overall winners’.

As if the athletes needed any additional motivation to do their best, this event will serve as one last opportunity to qualify for the upcoming Olympics.

During the draft, in addition to the complete composition of the teams, the course will also be revealed.



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The Draft will be broadcasted May 18 at 9:45 pm on ČT Sport, and will be moderated by Daniel Stach. An encore presentation of the event will be rerun on May 19 at 4:35 pm, just before Zlatá Tretra broadcast.

Each team is being supported by a partner—Volkswagen, Mattoni, Birell and ČEZ. And the members of each team have selected a charity to support, with proceeds also coming from registrations for RunCzech's Volkswagen Prague Virtual Marathon. The charities include the Partnership Foundation, the Czech Union for Nature Conservation, Cesta za snem and the Pink Bubble Foundation.

"It was my pleasure to become an ambassador of the team Mattoni. Running is my everyday routine and I have a huge respect for everyone who ever tried to step on the starting line of a marathon. I see the best performances as something that I deeply admire and that stands for both genders. Therefore, I can't wait to see my teammates in action, the pace around 3 minutes per kilometer is absolutely outstanding and I will be supporting them (virtually) with my full heart" said Petra Kvitová, captain of team Mattoni.

Additional support and essential services come from adidas and Lasvit Ajeto who will produce the medals and a spectacular crystal trophy.

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NOTES FOR EDITORS: ABOUT RUNCZECH

- 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") 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!
- 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.



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