

Prague
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Sportisimo Prague 1/2Marathon was dominated by Kenyans Renju and Jepteling. Elite athletes were slowed down by cold and strong wind

After three years, RunCzech races finally returned to Prague. Sportisimo Prague 1/2Marathon was attended by more than 9500 runners. Four athletes ran to the finish line in under one hour. The Prague Half Marathon was dominated by Keneth Kiprop Renju in a time of 59:28. Philemon Kiplimo Kimaiyo finished second and Mathew Kipkorir Kimeli was third. The fastest woman of this year's edition was Nesphine Jepteling with a time of 1:06:57. The best Czech runner was Jiří Homoláč, who managed the half marathon in 1:04:36, the fastest Czech woman was Hana Homolková (1:20:31).

"I really liked the race, I enjoyed it a lot. Even though it was too cold, it was good. I had a more difficult moment in the middle of the race. Even though I didn't feel pressure, I wanted to win," Renju said at the finish. "The weather caught me by surprise, I didn't expect it to be so cold. The worst was the headwind, which made it really hard in some moments. I wanted to break my personal best, but I'm glad I ran this time. It's a good start to the season, next time I could reach my maximum," Jepteling said.

For the last two years, due to the pandemic, it was not possible to organize mass races, now we welcomed back thousands of runners to the streets of Prague. As always we started with the composition of the Vltava symphonic. Already at the fifth kilometer, a group of elite runners was formed, eight Kenyans ran together. At the tenth kilometer, only a group of four, Keneth Kiprop Renju, Philemon Kiplimo Kimaiyo, Bernard Kimeli and Mathew Kipkorir Kimeli, were at the front. Their split at 10km was 27:52.

The same four runners led at 15km. Before the finish, Renju and Kimaiyo were chasing each other and after crossing the Mánes Bridge, Renju broke away and took the victory. "The race was very windy, from the sixth kilometer it was causing problems because of a headwind. I had to lean into it from the seventh kilometer. I would like to run again next year because this track is fast. A world record may fall here. Despite the conditions here, it was fast," Renju added at the finish.

Also, Philemon Kiplimo Kimaiyo confirmed that the colder weather was really challenging. "It was much harder than I expected. I was taken back a little. It was too cold and I was bothered by the stronger wind. It was a very difficult race," Kimaiyo said.

For the women, from the 10th kilometer, the favourites Nesphine Jepteling and Irine Cheptai broke away from the leading group, they were also at the front at the 15th kilometer and built up a one-and-a-half-



minute lead over the others. At the finish, Jepletting could celebrate the triumph. "I could run faster, but it was too cold and windy. During the race, I doubted I could win. But the mental strength, my head, helped me. Irine and I ran together until the 17th kilometer, then I was able to break away from her", said the fastest woman Nesphine Jepletting.

Homoláč: I believed in myself, the weather did not work out

At the start of the Sportisimo 1/2Marathon Prague it was around zero degrees, a few hours before a light snow fell from the sky. "I would say that the weather affected the race a lot, the problem was mainly the wind, which was very strong in places, so it was not possible to run fast in those sections . Therefore, the time was a little slower than I had imagined. But that's the way it is," said Homoláč, who wanted to complete the half marathon in 63 minutes. "Maybe even in 62 minutes, but that's hard to say right now. I am satisfied that I was able to be the best Czech in the field."

Yeremchuk ran for Ukraine

Sofia Yaremchuk, who is originally from Ukraine but has been racing for Italy since last year, improved her personal best. She finished fifth in a time of 69:09. "I ran for Ukraine and for all the people and men who are fighting in Ukraine. I want to tell everyone that Ukraine does not want war, the whole world does not want war, we all want peace," Yaremchuk added. "I'm happy because I have my new record and I finished with the Ukrainian flag."

Sportisimo Prague 1/2Marathon also started the unique series of SuperHalves connecting five of the most prestigious European half marathon. Besides Prague, other half marathons included in the series are half marathons in Lisbon, Copenhagen, Cardiff and Valencia. "At the beginning I was a little nervous because we were organizing such a mass race in Prague after three years. But the runners answered us, indeed – the Czech Republic loves running. Thousands of runners returned to the streets, everything went smoothly. It is a real restart for our team, for Prague and for all the Czech republic.

We are looking forward to the Prague Marathon which will be held on 8th of May," said Carlo Capalbo, Director of the RunCzech Organizing Committee.



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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>

