

PRAGUE INTERNATIONAL MARATHON 2009



Press Release

Record Smashed in Prague

On a beautiful sunny morning in the Old Town Square of historic Prague more than 6,000 runners including a large elite field of forty men and seventeen women began the 15th edition of the Volkswagen Prague Marathon at 9:00 A.M.. The two pace makers led a group of nine runners through the first 10 kilometers in 30:04 on pace to break the race record of 2:08:52 set in 1998 by E. Lagat of Kenya. The Kenyans Leonardo Muche Maina and Andrew Kipkembo Limo along with Mykola Antonenko of the Ukraine led the pack which included the defending champion Kenneth Mungara and the winner of the Honolulu Marathon in December, Patrick Ivuti.

The early morning temperature of 19 degrees did not seem to lend itself to a fast race, but the sky began to cloud up and cool as the pack moved through the half marathon check point in 1:04:08 with ten runners still in the group. Now, a new record began to seem like a possibility, but by 30 kilometers only Ivuti was still with the pace maker Kibet as they went through in 1:31:09 followed by Maina seven seconds back, and Antonenko in 1:31:19. By 35 Kilometers, Stephen Kibiwott had moved up to take over the lead from Ivuti as they moved toward the finish. With less than one kilometer to the tape Ivuti took back the lead for good and crossed the line in 2:07:48 over one minute under the existing race record. Kibiwott crossed the line in 2:07:54 more than two minutes better than his previous best. 2008 champion Kenneth Mungara completed the top three in 2:10:29. Ivuti's time, which was only two seconds slower than his 2005 personal best set in Chicago in 2005, takes the Prague Marathon into a group of elite International events with sub 2:08 records.

The women's elite field was led by three Ethiopian women with personal bests under 2 hours and 27 minutes. Shitaye Debellu, Eyrusalem Mutal, and Mulu Seboka were joined by runners from Kenya Emmah Kiruki, and Margaret Toroitich, and the Russian, Olga Glock as the pre-race favorites. The three Ethiopians led at 10 kilometers in 35:08 and the race seemed to belong to one of them, but by the half marathon mark Olga Glock had moved up and Debellu began to fall back. Seboka and Mutal led the first half of the race in 1:13:57 with Glock 24 seconds back in third. By 30 kilometers Glock was running side by side with Seboka in 1:45:24 with Mutal 21 seconds back. Glock was definitely the strongest of the group as she continued to press the pace and moved away from the Ethiopians to finish in a very strong 2:28:27 with Seboka second in 2:30:39, and Mutal finishing another two minutes back in 2:32:43.

The top Czech finishers were Mulugetta Sebressa in 2:27:16 and Ivana Martinová in 2:55:31.