

Zurich Marathon, Sunday, April 26, 2009,

Marathon debutant Tadesse Abraham of Eritrea triumphs in Zurich

The 2009 7th Annual Zurich Marathon went off without a hitch. It was a winning debut for Tadesse Abraham (Eritrea), who placed first with a time of 2:10:09,0, 3.1 seconds faster than last year's winner, Oleg Kulkov (Russia), and 12 seconds faster than 2003 and 2006 winner, Tesfaye Eticha (Eritrea). Russian runners Olga Rosseeva and Elsa Kireeva dominated the women's race, crossing the finish line ahead of Tarekegn Getaun Etaferahu of Ethiopia.

The 2009 7th Annual Zurich Marathon got off to an exhilarating start, as 5893 registered runners gathered before a sea of visitors packed around the opening to the new Uetliberg Tunnel. Averaging a good 3 min/km, a lead group of 17 runners took off through the tunnel in the direction of Meilen. The winner of the 2008 Zurich Marathon, Oleg Kulkov of Russia, along with a large group of African runners, delivered an exciting race. As early as mid-race, it became clear that no records would be broken. 35 km into the race, the lead group fell 2 minutes short of setting a new course record, allowing Viktor Röthlin to remain «*König von Zürich*» [King of Zurich] with his 2007 winning time of 2:08.19,2.

Neck-and-neck race to the finish line

38 km into the race, Oleg Kulkov of Russia revved up the tempo. Tesfaye Eticha (Ethiopia), Tadesse Abraham (Eritrea) and Teferi Wodajo (Ethiopia) managed to keep pace, while Yeshitela Dagim Getnet (Ethiopia) dropped behind. At 40 km, Teferi Wodajo (Ethiopia) was no longer able to maintain pace, leaving the final stretch to Oleg Kulkov and Abraham Tadesse, who served up a thrilling countdown to the finish line. Abraham came in at a winning 2:10:09,0, with Kulkov a mere 3,1 seconds behind him at a personal best time of 2:10:12,1. Third place went to Tesfaye Eticha of Ethiopia for his time of 2:10.21,1.

Winning debut

Tadesse Abraham has been making a name for himself in marathon circles. He's grabbed attention for completing the Berlin Half Marathon in 1:01:25, winning the «Hallwilerseelauf» in 2008 and securing second place that same year at the «Greifenseeelauf». On top of all that, he's managed to win a marathon on the first go 'round.

A clear win in the women's race

Only 33 km into the race, Olga Rosseeva of Russia took the lead and stayed there, enjoying a clear final stretch to the finish line with a victory time of 2:32.17,5 in the women's race. Elsa Kireeva, also of Russia, secured herself second place with a time of 2:33.13,9. Tarekegn Getaun Etaferahu of Ethiopia, who led for a long time, finished third in 2:34.05,7. Winner Olga Rosseeva spoke happily, «The first section of the race was the hardest for me. I definitely want to participate in the race next year in Zurich.»

The present Swiss Champion is the former Swiss Champion

Ancay Tarcis of St. Jean (VS) managed to defend his title with his time of 2:21.29,3. «I had to run a long time alone, but I'm still happy with the outcome», said the former and present Swiss Champion, also expressing his pleasure in running the stretch of the course along the lake. René Hauser from Ennetbürgen (NW) joined the Swiss winners' podium with his time of 2:25.03,0. Third place went to Richard Gerzner of Sulz-Rickenbach (ZH) who finished in 2:27.56,1.

Second Swiss Championship win qualifies Patricia Morceli for the World Championship Marathon

Patricia Morceli of Cham (ZG) grabbed the Swiss Champion title in the women's race with a time of 2:38.44,2. Her winning time also qualifies her for the upcoming World Championship Marathon in Berlin. Back when Patricia Morceli was still Patrizia Bieri, she was already dominating the junior racing scene with her five-time Swiss Championship wins in the middle-distance races (1500/3000 m). This is her second Swiss Marathon Championship, following her win in 2007 for the same distance in 2:49:49. This now places her at #5 in the Women's Overall Marathon Ranking. «As early as 21 km into the race, I knew I was running a good race». Bernadette Meier (Dreien/SG), back in competitive sports following an extended

maternity leave, finished in 2:43.34,5, landing her second place but not qualifying her for the world championships. Jenny Breitschmid of Allschwil (BS) finished in 2:44.08.3, taking third place.

5893 registered - 5018 started - 4790 finished

The Zurich Marathon isn't just a race for running elite. This year, 5893 runners registered, 5018 started and 4790 finished in between the required 5 1/2 hours. Really standing out from the crowd was the runner with an alphorn (not made of wood) strapped across his back, who even managed to have enough oxygen left in him to play a piece after crossing the finish line. «The 2009 7th Annual Zurich Marathon is hit - good weather, a great race and a thrilling duel in the last stretch of the men's race», commented Bruno Lafranchi, Zurich Marathon's OC President. «We're relieved that there were no medical emergencies and only three participants who needed to be taken to the hospital for further medical attention.»

High spectator turn out

Spectators were already out in large numbers at the start of the race - some even taking to the arch of the new tunnel to grab a bird's eye view - forming a great backdrop to the athletes. Large crowds of spectators also gathered along the lake basin and lakeside neighborhoods to cheer on the runners. Over 30 bands provided for the musical accompaniment.

Zurich Marathon – Runners from 48 countries

The long distances traversed in marathons never ceases to fascinate. As runners sprint across the finish line, their sheer effort and iron will transform into utter elation, tears of joy and a proud stance at the incredible feat just mastered. Participants come from all over Switzerland and around the world - representing 48 countries this year. Born in 1928, this year's oldest 71 year old male participant finished with a time of 5:16:31. Born in 1940, the oldest female participant crossed the finish line in 4:02:17. The largest number of participants were between 40 - 49 and most runners managed to finish within 3 1/2 and 4 1/2 hours.

Great performances despite a rough winter

Running a marathon requires months of intense, ongoing training. This past winter's snow and long cold spells really took their toll on marathon participants, which made it all the more enjoyable to hand over a well-deserved «Zurich Marathon Finisher» t-shirt to such a large number of finishing marathon runners, all basking in the great weather.

Go to www.zurichmarathon.ch for more information and photo galleries.

Zurich Marathon – In short

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