

MARATHON EXPO
Paris, Porte de Versailles
8th of April 2006

30th Paris Marathon tomorrow: 36 500 starters

The start of the 30th International Paris Marathon will be given at 8:45 PM (8:35 PM for the handisport race) on the Champs-Élysées by Mayor of Paris Bertrand Delanoë, alongside Jean-Pierre Eudier, first winner of the Paris Marathon back in 1976.

Joël Lainé, event director, deliberately wanted to limit the number of starters to 36 500 for the comfort of all. The inscriptions were closed since the end of October.

Among the participants are 16% of women and 8 450 foreigners representing 87 nationalities. All the runners will go down the Champs-Élysées wearing a yellow hat mentioning the 30th birthday. Certainly a great picture!

For the 200 000 fans expected in the streets of the capital, 84 festive and musical stands will be organised all along the race course with several podiums set up at the Porte de Charenton, the 12th district City-Hall, Boulevard Henri IV, the Trocadéro, Place de Bolivie, Porte d'Auteuil ...and a special surprise at kilometre 30.

The spectators will be able to win numerous gifts by depositing bulletins in special ballot boxes all along the race course. This morning, the Breakfast Race was organised and started in front of the Unesco building. 5 000 runners took off for an enjoyable 5.2 kilometre effort in order to prepare for the big day.

On a purely sporting point of view, the Kenyans should be the favourites. Alongside former winner Mike Rotich, Francis Kiprop could impress like his compatriots Joshua Chelanga or Paul Biwott. Against them, Estonia's Pavel Loskutov and Portuguese Luis Jesus will do their best to perform well. A dozen riders can hope covering the 42.195 Km in less than 2h09, which should make the race very open.

In the women's race, Romania's Mihaela Botezan will take off with the favourite's status but she'll have to keep a close eye on Ethiopian Asha Gigi, a regular on the Paris Marathon podium. Also among the top guns will be Morocco's Asmae Leghzaoui competing in her first marathon. Concerning the French contingent, Zaia Dahmani and Margaret Maury both have the intention of going for the French national record.

Get all the information on the Paris Marathon on the official website:

www.parismarathon.com

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