

Paris
9th of April 2006

The 30th Paris International Marathon celebrates

With ideal weather for running and an atmosphere as festive as ever, more than 30,000 competitors were present at the start of the 30th Paris International Marathon on the Champs-Élysées. The last of the runners were crossing the start line while the leaders were already at Place de la Nation...

Throughout the race, from the Bastille to the Quai de Seine and through the Bois de Boulogne, almost 200,000 persons lined the roads to encourage the competitors and enjoy the 84 festive musical events put on in the streets of the capital.

For its 30th anniversary, the Paris Marathon can be proud to have beaten its record in terms of number of competitors finishing under three hours – more than 1,500 runners – confirming its leadership position at the international level.

The elite race produced two new winners: The Ethiopian Gashaw Melese (2hrs 08' 03") and the Russian Irina Timofeyeva (2hrs 27' 22"), On the French side, Zaia Dahmani took sixth place among the women with 2hrs 31' 31", and we saw a very fine race by David Ramard in which he obtained 11th place, beating his personal record with a time of 2hrs 10' 51". In the men's race, the Ethiopian Gashaw Melese waited until the Bois de Boulogne, a few kilometres from the finish, before putting on a direct attack to leave behind the six athletes accompanying him in the leading group. At 27 years of age, Melese won the marathon in 2hrs 08' 03" (a new personal record). It was his first marathon since he won fourth place two years ago, and third place last year here in Paris.

Some way behind (almost 45 seconds), the Kenyans Kiprotich Kenei and Bernard Barmasai took second and third places in respectively 2hrs 08' 51" and 2hrs 08' 52". A few seconds behind them, the Portuguese runner Luis Jesus and the Kenyan neo-marathon runner David Langat, both ran fine races.

Among the women, the favourite, the Romanian Mihaela Botezan who led the race practically throughout, had a very difficult time at the end. The two Russians Timofeyeva and Volgina, running a very intelligent waiting race, took the lead at the 35th kilometre mark and never let go. Finally it was Irina Timofeyeva, more experienced than her compatriot, who won in 2hrs 27' 22" compared to 2hrs 27' 32" for Natalya Volgina. To complete the podium, the Kenyan Pamela Chepchumba took third place (with a time of 2hrs 29' 48") just ahead of Mihaela Botezan.

A victim of dehydration cramps, the Frenchwoman Zaia Dahmani, aiming for a French record, had to content herself with sixth place in 2hrs 31' 34".

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

www.parismarathon.com

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