

Paris,  
Sunday 6th of April 2008

## 32nd International Paris Marathon: 2h06'40 for young Kebede and Olympic qualification for France's Munyutu

29 706 competitors started the 32nd edition of the International Paris Marathon on the Champs-Élysées in a very festive atmosphere. The last runners crossed the start line while the leaders had already reached the Place de la Nation...

All along the course, from Bastille to the Seine embankment and going through the Bois de Boulogne, close to 200 000 people were present to cheer on the competitors and enjoy the 75 musical and festive animations in the streets of the capital.

The elite race produced two new winners. In the men's race, young and talented Ethiopian Tsegaye Kebede only just missed out on the event record as he triumphantly crossed the finish line in a time of 2h06'40. In the women's event, Kenya's Martha Komu managed a fantastic sprint finish on her way to victory in a time of 2h25'33. Her companion in life, Simon Munyutu gave some fresh air to French athletics as he qualified for the Olympics. The time was of 2h09'24 which gave the member of the Foreign Legion in Auvergne a very satisfying 11th spot.

In the men's race, one had to wait for the 30th kilometre to finally see the impressive front group break up as the eight best runners took off. At the passage of the 35 kilometre mark Ethiopians Kebede and Shentema and Kenyan Arusei remained in the lead. Two kilometres later, Kebede and Arusei broke away and the young Ethiopian awaited the final kilometre to take off and leave his main rival struggling behind. At the age of 20, he already seems to be working on the footsteps of his prestigious compatriot Haile Gebreselassie, the marathon World Record holder.

Simon Munyutu gave French athletics some extra blue sky by capturing his ticket for the next Olympic Games and will be joining Christelle Daunay (3<sup>rd</sup> here last year) for the Beijing Olympic Marathon. James Theuri, also a member of the Clermont Athle Auvergne club will unfortunately not be present in China. He finished the race in 21<sup>st</sup> position in a time of 2h13'16.

In the women's competition, the race was decided in the final 200m where Kenyan Martha Komu outsprinted her rival and race favourite Worknech Tola of Ethiopia (2h25'37)

Concerning the "handisport" race, Mexico's Saul Mendoza claimed the win after a final sprint in a time of 1h32'27 beating France's Denis Lemeunier and multiple event winner Heinz Frei of Switzerland.

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