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MEDIA RELEASE VIENNA CITY MARATHON

14th April 2013

Hattrick for Haile Gebrselassie and Henry Sugut Flomena Cheyech takes women's race

Huge celebrations at 30th jubilee of the Vienna City Marathon. Ethiopian superstar wins OMV half marathon in 61:14 minutes. Sugut in 2:08:19 and Cheyech in 2:24:34 victorious in marathon race.

Defending champion Henry Sugut produced a result at the Vienna City Marathon that fitted to the occasion. It was the 30th edition of Austria's biggest sporting event and the 27 year-old Kenyan added a piece of history to the event by becoming only the second athlete to win for a third time. Back in the 80ies it was Austria's Gerhard Hartmann who triumphed even three times in a row, from 1985 to '87. But of course the quality of the fields in those times cannot be compared with today's standards. Hartmann's best time in Vienna was 2:12:22 while Sugut needed to run around four minutes faster today. He clocked 2:08:19 in fine but warm weather conditions. In a race dominated by Kenyans Solomon Kiptoo was second with 2:08:34 while Geoffrey Ndungu took third in 2:08:42.

In the women's race Flomena Cheyech improved by almost ten minutes in Vienna. The 30 year-old Kenyan won with 2:24:34 and produced one of the biggest winning margins in the race's history. She was streets ahead of Ethiopians Assefa Meskerem (2:31:18) and Eyerusalem Kuma (2:32:24). Kenya's Emily Samoei followed in fourth place with 2:32:48.

A record number of 41,326 runners had entered the various events of the Vienna City Marathon. 10,588 of them were marathon runners. The event is an IAAF Gold Label Road Race.

Men's race: Kiptoo and Ndungu challenged Sugut

After a very fast beginning with a 5 k split of 14:46 minutes the pace of the men's leaders soon dropped significantly. Once the leading group of eleven runners had reached half way the clock showed 64:05. By that time the fastest man in the field, Jafred Kipchumba (2:05:48), had already lost contact. The Kenyan later dropped out. When eight runners passed 30 k in 1:31:15 Henry Sugut's course record of 2:06:58 from 2012 was well out of reach.

It was the defending champion Sugut who then increased the pace and broke up the leading group. Among those dropped was his training partner Gilbert Yegon, who finally finished fourth with 2:10:40, and Josphat Kamzee. The Kenyan held on to a sub 2:11 finish in fifth place (2:10:49). But Solomon Kiptoo and Geoffrey Ndungu managed to stay right behind Sugut. "Between 36 and 37 kilometres I had a look at the other two. They seemed strong and I thought: I need to put in more energy to win this," said Henry Sugut. But it was only with around two kilometres to go when he finally was able to move ahead and leave Kiptoo and Ndungu behind. "I am very proud to have won this for a third time," said Henry Sugut. "It was a bit too warm for fast times."

Women's race: Flomena Cheyech comes from behind

Ethiopians were favourites for the women's title, but in the end victory went to Kenya. Temperatures were still comfortable at the start (12 Celsius in the shade) so the Ethiopians opted to run fast. Passing 5 k in 16:43 and then 10 k in 33:55 they were well within the 13 year-old course record of Italy's Maura Viceconte (2:23:49). It was soon after the 10 k mark, when Eyerusalem Kuma slowed and Meskerem Assefa was the only one who followed the pacemaker. At 15 k (50:58) the former 1,500 m runner was well ahead of Kuma (51:45) and Cheyech (52:31). But at half way (1:12:28) the situation had changed.

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While Assefa slowed Cheyech ran faster. The Kenyan had already passed Kuma and was only eleven seconds behind the leader. Soon afterwards she reached Assefa and when she made her move at 27 k the Ethiopian could not respond. In the final third of the race Flomena Cheyech build a big lead.

Finishing in 2:24:34, the third fastest in the history of the Vienna City Marathon, she was almost seven minutes ahead of Assefa Meskerem (2:31:18). Only on three occasions (1984, 1993 and 2005) there was an even bigger winning margin in Vienna's women's race. "I did not expect to run that fast today. But I knew I was in good shape because I trained well in Kenya," said Flomena Cheyech, who had come to Vienna with a marathon PB of 2:34:13. However she had indicated that she would be in contention for victory when she won the Rome Ostia half marathon in March with 67:39. In Kenya she trains with the group of Mary Keitany.

Hattrick for Haile Gebrselassie in Vienna Half | OMV Champions Race

Haile Gebrselassie took the OMV Champions Race with 61:14. This half marathon was staged parallel to the marathon and it was Gebrselassie's first race this year. The 39 year-old was well ahead of Hosea Kipkemboi (Kenya/62:01) and Mekuant Ayenew (Ethiopia/62:21) in a race he won for a third time in a row.

Ethiopia's superstar Haile Gebrselassie was cheered on by masses of spectators along the course. That may have tempted him to run a very fast first 5 k of 14:06 minutes. Afterwards the pace dropped and the 39 year-old then left behind Hosea Kipkemboi and Mekuant Ayenew at the 10 k mark (28:43). However Gebrselassie was visibly working hard in the section around 15 k and could not keep the pace high enough for a sub 61 minute finish. "I wanted to run faster but it did not work today. May be I should have started a bit slower. But I enjoyed the amazing atmosphere," he said after clocking 61:14 minutes. "I think I can still run faster than today."

Leading results Vienna City Marathon 2013

Men

1. Henry Sugut (KEN) 2:08:19
2. Solomon Kiptoo (KEN) 2:08:34
3. Geoffrey Ndungu (KEN) 2:08:42
4. Gilbert Yegon (KEN) 2:10:40
5. Josphat Kamzee (KEN) 2:10:49
6. Edeo Mamo (ETH) 2:11:54
7. Ishmael Bushendich (KEN) 2:12:30
8. Luke Kibet (KEN) 2:15:16
9. Valerijs Zolnerovics (LAT) 2:15:55
10. Vince Kiplagat-Mitei (KEN) 2:18:46
16. Peter Fankhauser (AUT) 2:35:12

Women

1. Flomena Cheyech (KEN) 2:24:34
2. Meskerem Assefa (ETH) 2:31:18
3. Eyerusalem Kuma (ETH) 2:32:24
4. Emily Samoei (KEN) 2:32:48
5. Nonata Da Silva Cruz (BRA) 2:35:48
6. Michele Chagas (BRA) 2:38:59
7. Rosa Godoy (ARG) 2:48:59
8. Nikolina Sustic (CRO) 2:52:05
9. Silvie Tramoy (FRA | LC Villach) 2:55:02
10. Lilian Danci (ROM) 2:56:26
11. Natalia Steiger (AUT | Leichtathletik Mittelburgenland) 2:57:43

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