

SURPRISE PACKAGE BARMASAI WINS STANDARD CHARTERED DUBAI MARATHON

Dubai (UAE): Despite a mid-race burst by pre-race favourite Eliud Kiptanui, it was Kenyan David Baramasai who stunned a red-hot field to win the Standard Chartered Dubai Marathon yesterday (Friday).

The 23 year-old remains undefeated at the classic distance having crossed the line in 2h:07m:18s to land a cheque for \$250,000 – the biggest in distance running – by just under a minute from runner-up and fellow Kenyan Evans Cheruiyot (2:08:17). Third home for the second year running in 2:08:54 was Ethiopian Eshetu Wendimu with Kiptanui pulling out in the latter stages.



In the women's marathon, Ethiopian Asselefech Medessa gave herself an early birthday present of a cool \$250,000 by winning in a time of 2h:22m:45s, just three seconds outside of the course record. Medessa, who turns 26 tomorrow (Sunday), won by 16 seconds from Lydia Cheromei of Kenya (2:23:01) with Sweden's Isabella Anderson in third (2:23:41).

"It was a big surprise for me as I was really just trying to finish in the top ten," said Baramasai, who collected his trophy from HH Sheikh Mansour bin Mohammed Al Maktoum. "Once the last pacemaker had gone it was tough and I had the wind in my face but I just kept pushing on from the 35km point."

The first Kenyan to win the world's richest race since 2007, Baramasai won his first marathon in Kass in 2009 and followed that up with a second victory in Nairobi a year later. His Dubai win, however, sliced a huge three minutes of his personal best and seems set to take him to the next level.

Medessa, who finished third in last year's London Marathon, may have run just outside her personal best but she insists she is on course for even greater things, including breaking into the exclusive sub 2:20 club.

"I've had pains in my legs for a while and it's thanks to my manager that I have been able to get over the injury," she said. "I'm still not 100 per cent and I think when I am completely free of injury I can be faster than 2:20 on this course."

Asked when she thought she knew she would win, Medessa said she was never sure of victory until the last minute. "Probably at the 41km mark," she smiled. "I was fighting all the way with Lydia (Cheromei) and I was only confident once she was behind me and out of the way."





While the marathon was the big box office event on a morning when dark skies and intermittent rain greeted the athletes, for the UAE it was an historic day in the women's 10km with two national team athletes completing a memorable 1-2 finish.

Betihem Belayneh Deslagn was first home in 33m:07s with Alia Saeed Mohammed in second place some 14 seconds adrift. Third home was Ethiopia's Belainesh Yami Gurm in 35:04. In the men's 10km, it was a Moroccan double with Ihya Bem Youssef (30:38) in first ahead of compatriot Othmane Chaibi (31:14) with Ethiopian Yassin Kedr Ebba in third (31:43).

Held under the patronage of HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE, Ruler of Dubai, and under the aegis of the Dubai Sports Council, the 2011 Standard Chartered Dubai Marathon saw over 14,000 take to the streets for the biggest mass participation event in the Middle East with runners in the marathon, the 10km and the 3km Fun Run.

As well as the able bodied athletes, a number of wheelchair bound competitors took to the streets with Britain's Rob Smith keeping himself on course for London 2012 with a hard-earned win on his Dubai debut.

"I'm the first wheelchair competitor and close to my personal best in near perfect conditions so I can't complain," he said. "The prize money is the biggest of my racing career which is a real bonus. Now I need to get more funding, get a new chair and push on to get better personal bests."

On hand to present the trophies and medals alongside HH Sheikh Mansour were HE Mattar Al Tayer, Chairman of the RTA and Vice Chairman of the Dubai Sports Council, General Obaid Al Ketbi, Deputy Commander of Abu Dhabi Police and V Shankar, Standard Chartered CEO Europe, Middle East, Africa and the Americas.

The Standard Chartered Dubai Marathon is also supported by The Dubai Sports Council, Dubai Holding, "Official Outfitter" adidas, The Address Dubai Marina, Dubai Eye 103.8 FM, Khaleej Times, TNT, Gatorade, Aquafina, Fitness First, Men's Fitness, Plan B and by government departments Dubai Police, RTA, Dubai Municipality DHA and the Dubai Ambulance Services.

MEN'S MARATHON RESULTS

1. .David BARMASAI - KEN - 2.07.18
- 2.. Evans CHERUYIOT - KEN - 2.08.17
- 3.. Eshetu WENDIMU - ETH - 2.08.54

MEN'S 10KM RESULTS

1. .Ihya BEM YOUSSEFF – MAR - 30:38
- 2.. Othmane CHAIBI - MAR - 31:14
- 3.. Yassin EBBA – ETH - 31:43

WOMEN'S MARATHON RESULTS

1. Aselefech MERGIA - ETH - 2.22.45
2. Lydia CHEROMEI - KEN - 2.23.01
3. Isabella ANDERSSON - SWE - 2.23.41

WOMEN'S 10KM RESULTS

1. .Betihem DESLAGN - UAE - 33:07
- 2.. Alia, MOHAMMED - UAE - 35:04
- 3.. Belainesh GURMU - ETH - 35:04

