

Paris,
Sunday 8th of March 2009

2009 Paris Semi-Marathon A time of 1h01min56'' for Ethiopian winner Bazu WORKU

The Château de Vincennes Esplanade was once again extremely lively this morning for the start of the 17th edition of the International Paris Semi-Marathon. At 10:00 AM, Madame Michèle Blumenthal, mayor of the XIIth arrondissement of Paris, and Monsieur Joël Lainé, event director, launched off the runners for this new edition from the Avenue Daumesnil. This year, the runners had to deal with cold weather, wind and rain.

Close to 22,000 runners of the 27,000 registered were bunched together for the 21,097 kilometre race through the streets of Eastern Paris.

The weather conditions, which were hardly favourable to attacks (headwind) forced the leading group to keep a medium pace, up until kilometre 5 covered in 15'12". It was only after passing this kilometre 5 that Bazu WORKU and Fikadu LEMMA imposed a new, more sustained speed, running side by side (the timer read 29'58" at the passing of the 10th kilometre). It was owing to an impressive attack that Ethiopian Bazu WORKU positioned himself in front, still followed by Fikadu LEMMA. It wasn't until km 19 that BAZU launched a new attack that LEMMA was unable to counter.

The podium places were thus decided with a time of 1h01'56" for Bazu WORKU, followed by Fikadu LEMMA (1h02'00"). Kenyan Barnabas KOSGEI clinched 3rd place with a time of 1h02'25".

In the women's race, Kenyan Perninah ARUSEI and Ethiopian Makda Harun HAJI formed a front-running pair from the start, which continued until the halfway mark. Behind them, at 20", Jelena PROKOPCUKA (2nd place in the 2008 Semi-Marathon), and the two French runners, Yamna OUBOUHOU and Margaret MAURY, remained persistent, protected within a group of 15 men. It was at kilometre 10 (covered in 33'20") that Jelena joined the leading pair.

It was after various attacks that Jelena PROKOPCUKA came out in the lead and broke away at the 15th kilometre. First place with a time of 1h10'43" thus went to Jelena, two-time winner of the New York Marathon in 2005 and 2006. Makda Harun HAJI came in 2nd in 1h10'57". Perninah ARUSEI finished in third spot (1h11'38").

Like every year, the International Paris Semi-Marathon was a great opportunity for the participants but also the spectators to witness the city of Paris in a different way through a lively morning thanks to 27 musical animations all along the course.

The first French Semi-Marathon in terms of participants and a reference race for all the runners behind the Paris Marathon, this 17th edition of the Semi-Marathon was a perfect preparation before the big meeting on the 5th of April on the Champs-Élysées, for the 33rd edition of the Paris Marathon.

Find the complete standings at www.semideparis.com

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