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This month we feature running news from: Canada, Italy, Netherlands, New York (Usa), North Korea, Pennsylvania (Usa), Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Virginia (Usa).

## FEATURED WORLDWIDE RUNNING NEWS

### ● SOUTH KOREA / Marathon frenzy in Korea

Marathons seem to be all the rage in Korea these days. Four million marathon runners, thousands of marathon clubs, over 250 official marathons held annually - it is truly the era of marathons. According to one marathon website, some 220 marathons were held in 2003 in Korea, which translates into 18 marathons per month on average. Those who are eager to run couldn't find a better place than Korea, the "paradise of running". But people who have experience running in marathons say running is no easy task at all. Last year, two runners who had completed full marathon courses in the past, died during competitions. Experts say some 20,000 amateur runners in Korea can run full marathon courses, and the total number of amateurs, including those who can run half-courses, reaches 300,000. The number of marathon clubs, which could be counted with the fingers just six years ago, has exceeded 1000, the majority of them having more than 20 members. And the number of marathons has mushroomed as well. Just a decade ago, there were very few marathons amateurs could participate in, but nowadays over 120 marathons open to amateurs are held nationwide every year, which averages to 10 marathons per month. The number of marathons held nationwide in the March-April period surpasses 40. Why so many marathon runners? Experts cite lack of exercise and stress brought about by industrialization as the primary reasons behind the soaring popularity of marathons, as can be seen through the examples of Europe, the U.S. and Japan. When a national-per-capita gross national product (GNP) reaches 5,000 U.S. dollars, citizens begin to take interest in marathons, and when it exceeds 10,000 U.S. dollars the number of marathon runners skyrockets. By the time the per-capita GNP surpasses 15,000 U.S. dollars, marathons become so popularized that 3-4 percent of the entire population run in marathons. In Korea, the marathon frenzy dates back to the 1988 Olympics. In 1989, the per-capita GNP in Korea stood at 5,185 U.S. dollars. Estimates show that given the current trend, the number of marathon runners may grow to at least three million over the next decade from the current 300,000. *Source: www.arrs.net*

### ● SAUDI ARABIA / Islamic Solidarity Games

From April 12 to April 15 in Makkah (Mecca) occurred the first Islamic Solidarity Games. Khalid El Amri (Morocco) won the men's 10,000m in 28:40.33, with Moukheld Al-Outaibi second in 28:41.81 and Boniface Kiprop (Uganda) third in 28:46.27. Adil Kaouch (Morocco) topped the 5000 in 14:11.25, with Khoudir Aggoune (Algeria) second in 14:11.32 and Samir Moussaoui (Algeria) third in 14:12.84. *Reprinted with permission from "Running Stats"*

([www.runningstats.com](http://www.runningstats.com))

● **CANADA / Lioudmilla Kortchaguina captures Canadian women's title after obtaining citizenship**

The excitement was palpable at the 31st "ING Ottawa Marathon" on May 29 as David Cheruiyot, a 35-year old from Kenya, took first place with a time of 2:14:20.3, beating John Itati (2:14:46.6) also from Kenya and Danny Kassap (2:15:12.6) of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Last year's winner and course record holder Elly Rono finished fifth with a time of 2:16:47.3. Victoria native, Jim Finlayson, 32, captured his first Canadian title (seventh overall) with a time of 2:18:20.7. He was followed by Kitimat's Ryan Day, 22, (2:19:55.0) and Toronto's Matthew McInnes, 30, (2:21:45.2). Russian Lidia Vasilevskaia recorded the third fastest time ever in the women's field since 1984 with a time of 2:31:52.7. The course record was established in 1984 by Canadian runner Sylvia Ruegger at 2:30:37. Last year's winner Lioudmila Kortchaguina, who was sworn in as Canadian citizen two days before the marathon, followed with a time of 2:32:18.5, snatching the Canadian title at the same time. Nicole Stevenson of Toronto finished third with a time of 2:38:49.6. "The Ottawa Race Weekend keeps growing at an incredible rate and we couldn't be happier with the results" says Susan Longbottom, president of the organizing committee. "It was the women's year: we broke a 16-year record in the women's 10K and almost had a new record in the women's marathon". Throughout the weekend, another record participation was recorded as 26,224 runners took part in one of the nine races on the schedule.

● **NEW YORK (USA) / Reebok Sports Club Running Camp**

The Reebok Sports Club of New York organizes a 20-week running camp between June 25 and November 6. This is the most comprehensive program of its kind, led by certified Usa Track & Field coaches. The camp includes a running and fitness assessment; a personalized daily training schedule; supervised training runs in Central Park; clinics on running mechanics, flexibility, strength training, sports nutrition, race strategy, and more; discounts on running gear and spa services; post-race celebration. The running camp is geared to teach you everything you need to know to cross the finish line of one of the following races *and* get in the best shape of your life: "New York City Marathon" (November 6), "Mystic Places Marathon" (October 23), "Mystic Places 10-miler" (October 23) or "Mystic Places Marathon Relay" (October 23). All ability levels are welcome, but you must be able to jog 5 miles at the start of the program if you plan to train for the full marathon. There is no prerequisite to participate in the training program for the other distances. The camp is coached by Tim Haft (Level 1 Usa Track & Field Coach and an Ace-certified personal trainer) and Lorelei Guttman (Level 1 Usa Track & Field Coach, holds a Fitness Certification from NYU, and has completed 18 marathons). Together, they have organized and led numerous long distance running programs over the past six years. Fees do not include race fees or travel costs. For more information contact Tim Haft ([haft2run@rcn.com](mailto:haft2run@rcn.com)) or Lorelei Guttman ([midasresponse@earthlink.net](mailto:midasresponse@earthlink.net)).

● **NORTH KOREA / Ri Kyong-chol wins the Pyongyang Marathon**

On April 10 in the People's Republic of Korea, according to an Athletics International report by Heinrich Hubbeling, Ri Kyong-chol won the "Pyongyang Marathon" in 2:11:36, with Ri Gum-song second in 2:14:49 and Jong Myong-chol third in 2:14:58. Ham Bong-sil claimed the women's title in 2:31:46, with Oh Song-suk second in 2:33:09, Ryang Gum-hwa third in 2:33:37, Kim Sun-gyong fourth in 2:34:21, and... 11th-place Samukeliso Moyo (Zimbabwe) setting a 2:38:59 national record. *Reprinted with permission from "Running Stats"*

([www.runningstats.com](http://www.runningstats.com))

● **PENNSYLVANIA (USA) / Local boy inspires athletes**

Ed Dowling, of Allenhurst (Usa/New Jersey) on the Jersey Shore, started running 11 years ago to lose weight. Three years ago, after accomplishing all of his goals and becoming bored with the five-kilometer and marathon races, he took up triathlon and now he is regularly chasing top-five finishes and racing for a reason, his nephew, Thomas Peterpaul, who passed away last autumn after a year-and-a-half battle against leukemia, a few days shy of his 12th birthday. Dowling is raising money and set to compete at the June 26th swim-bike-run "Philadelphia Triathlon" at Fairmount Park ([www.phillytri.com](http://www.phillytri.com)), which benefits Children's Hospital of Philadelphia's oncology department, among other groups. When Dowling and his family heard about the Philadelphia Triathlon and that it was going to help the hospital, Thomas' parents, Frank and Barbara Peterpaul, asked if he would race in Thomas' memory. He and Tom Battaglia will toe the line for him. The "Philadelphia Triathlon" will feature many of the city's most historic and picturesque areas along its Olympic-distance course (1.5 km swim / 40 km bike / 10 km run). More than 1250 amateurs will attack the challenging yet fun swim in the Schuylkill River, two-loop bike course winding through Fairmount Park and past Boathouse Row, and scenic, out-and-back run along the Art Museum loop. For more information on the Thomas Peterpaul Foundation visit [www.ThomasPeterpaul.com](http://www.ThomasPeterpaul.com), for triathlon information visit [www.PhillyTri.com](http://www.PhillyTri.com). *Source: [www.transitiontimes.com](http://www.transitiontimes.com)*

● **USA / Do you know the air quality of your favorite trail?**

All athletes depend on clean air for peak performance. In fact, did you know that endurance athletes can process as much as twenty times the normal air intake of a sedentary adult? While training outdoors often energizes our training regimens, breathing dirty, unhealthy air sets back our fitness goals, and potentially leaves us exposed to health damage. Do you know the air quality of your favorite trail? The American Lung Association's annual State of the Air report (<http://lungaction.org/reports/stateoftheair2005.html>) is a county-by-county report card that rates each region's air quality showing you whether your community's air quality may be impacting your athletic performance. As a website that actively encourages runners, the American Lung Association would like to share the online State of the Air ZIP-code lookup with the visitors of Run the Planet. The American Lung Association is the oldest voluntary health organization in the United States, with a national office and constituent and affiliate associations around the country. Founded in 1904 to fight tuberculosis, the American Lung Association today fights lung disease in all its forms, with special emphasis on asthma, tobacco control and environmental health.

● **VIRGINIA (USA) / Potomac River Run Marathon and Half Marathon**

Leaving at 2 in the morning from his home in Williamsburg, John Piggott drove through a night-long downpour, en route to the second "Annual Potomac River Run Marathon & Half Marathon" in Alexandria, directed by the Arlington Cooperation Foundation and the Greater Washington Sports Alliance. Piggott won the 2004 inaugural edition of the race and hoped to do it again this year. The rain continued unabated as he and other runners from 23 states and China arrived shortly after 6 am for registration. Then, as the first group of runners (the "Early Birds") toed the line for the 6:30 am split start, the weather smiled and the rain stopped. When the rain broke, World Laughter Leader Scotty Scott led the assembled group in a laughing warm-up to celebrate World Laughter Day, and at 7:00 am on May 1, after the National Anthem, the race director blew a New Year's Eve horn, and two hundred marathoners and half marathoners started with a hoot. Piggott didn't waste any time breaking free from the pack, outdistancing even half-marathon leader John Kevin Temple. By the time

he finished in 2:40:47, the rain was gone, the sun was peeking from behind the clouds, and the crowd at the finish erupted in applause - and laughter, because the day turned out beautiful. Patrick Dean Hopewell took second in 3:02:19 and donated his \$150 prize. Thomas Francis Jensen gleefully accepted his \$100 prize - 3:15:20 is not bad for 41 years old. Among the women, Ellen Komesarook stayed ahead of Amanda Michelle Light, winning in 3:23:40 to earn \$250 while Amanda brought to light a 3:27:46 finish and \$150. Shannon Wyont took third in 3:31:22, good for \$100. Temple kept a steady pace to win the half-marathon in 1:20:10, ahead of Alexandria deputy sheriff Patrick Griffith, second in 1:25:51. Lisa C. Jones took the women's division in 1:26:29, finishing third overall. Out on the course, five charities and three running clubs partnered in a unique co-operative to make the race truly enjoyable. Two ambulances were on site, but the day's entire medical response was just one band-aid for a toe blister.

#### ● **ITALY / Europe Cup test for women runners**

The Italian Federation of Athletics (Fidal) asked the organizing committee of the "Memorial Primo Nebiolo" to insert a 3000 meters female race, just to have a test before the Europe Cup in Firenze next June 17-19, 2005. On the track of the Primo Nebiolo stadium there will be the possibility of seeing Silvia Weissteiner (who bettered twice her indoor personal best in Madrid - now 8:56,27, third Italian best ever - and obtained an unexpected fifth place). With her, who is also an Italian indoor champion, will run other athletes from the Bolzano's school: Renate Rungger (best Italian on 5.000 and 10.000 meters in 2005) and Agnes Tschurtschenthaler (born 1982, owner of the indoor junior record on 1.500 meters in 4:25,77). The most important competitor will be Eleonora Berlanda, really in a good shape in this moment (she was second in the 1500 meters Italian championships). Other athletes are Gloria Marconi (marathon runner, 9:04,80 her personal best on the 3000 meters), Michela Zanatta (Italian indoor champion in the 1500 and 3000 meters in 2003 and 2004), and Federica Dal Ri (second in the 3000 meters at the Italian championships 2005). A very interesting Italian race which will see also Sara Palmas, Vincenza Sicari, Cristiana Artuso and Elena Romagnolo competing. It will be a hard fought competition, as it will decide the convocation for the Europe Cup.

#### ● **CANADA / New Guinness World record**

At the 31st "ING Ottawa Marathon" on May 29, Chris Baron, a 30-year old from Oakville, Ontario, managed to eclipse the Guinness World Record for skipping a marathon with a time of 4:49:39. The previous record was 5 hours and 19 minutes. It was Baron's first attempt at the record.

#### ● **NETHERLANDS / World Record attempt in the backward running 400 meters**

On June 17 2005 "The night of the 10.000" will take place. This is an event which will get the world top athletes on the 10.000 meter as preparation and qualification for the World Championships later this year in Helsinki. The organizers expect lots of spectators, athletes and press to witness two very special 10.000 meter races by men and women. The program for the evening will be as follows: 400 meter hurdles (18:30), 100 meter (19:00), 800 meter (19:45), 400 meter backward running (World Record attempt!) starting at 20:30, followed by the 10.000 men international (invitation) at 21:00, the 10.000 women international (invitation) at 21:30, and closing with the 3000 meter race at 22:15.

#### ● **ITALY / Eurasia Pedibus Calcantibus**

Marino Curnis is ready to embark on his "Eurasia Pedibus Calcantibus" project: travel on foot from Italy to Japan and back, through 26 nations, along about 40.500 kilometers, in 5

years. The foreseen departure date will be January 2006. For the success of the project, he is looking for partnerships, sponsorships, and travel's companions. "For years, I'm part of a narrow elite of madmen and dreamers that love spend their own time on this planet simply savoring people, places, flavors, smells and events that make it so unbelievably attractive" says Marino. "Everything started in 1998, the year of my first trip, alone and outside Italy, a trip that lead me throughout three months in India". Later, from April to May 2003, Marino covered the path of Santiago de Compostela, more than one thousand kilometers on foot, going through the north of Spain, starting from France and ending in Portugal. "Walking allows me to experience people, places, cultures. Walking let's you forget speed, stress and materialism of our western way of life, allowing you to come into deep contact with yourself". Now he is ready for another of his children's dreams: follow Marco Polo's footsteps along the legendary Silk Way, across Europe and Asia. On foot, that is "pedibus calcantibus". For additional information visit [www.eurasiapc.com](http://www.eurasiapc.com).

● **CANADA / Toronto captures fastest city title**

Toronto was crowned as Canada's fastest city as part of the "ING Run for Something Better", a race within the race, which began as a project to introduce less-fortunate youth to the sport of distance running. Running clubs from seven Canadian cities each sent two athletes, their best male and female marathoners, to compete for a share of the \$55,000 in prize money donated by ING Canada. Toronto was the city with the lowest combined times of the two runners with a total of 4:59. Victoria (5:22) and Montreal (5:23) were second and third respectively. Beyond bragging rights for the "fastest Canadian city", the Toronto running club received \$10,000 for athletic programs that involve less-fortunate youth.

