

Records Galore at Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon

The Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon celebrated its 30th edition with perfect weather conditions and the athletes responded.

Four men ran under Philemon Rono's Canadian All Comers' record led by the diminutive Kenyan himself at 2:05:00.

Lemi Berhanu of Ethiopia, the 2016 Boston Marathon champion, finished second though he had to be overhauled in the closing stages. His time was 2:05:09. He was followed by Felix Chemonges who broke the Ugandan national record held by Olympic champion Stephen Kiprotich with his 2:05:12. Defending Toronto Waterfront champion followed him in, just a second behind.

While the men's race was incredible for its quality the women's race saw no less than nine elite women run behind pacemakers through 30km before Magdalyne Masai-Robertson decided she would test the competition. Surging ahead at around 38 kilometers she set a new course record of 2:22:16 knocking four minutes off her best and also earning the women's all-comers record by a mere second.

Ethiopia's Biruktayit Eshetu was second in 2:22:40 with late addition Betsy Saina finishing third in 2:22:43. She had suffered food poisoning before last week's Chicago Marathon and dropped out at half way. Her agent asked for a place in Toronto on Tuesday. All three women set personal bests. All three were delighted with their results.

"I didn't realize there was nobody behind me until 40km," Masai-Robertson said. "Yes, exactly I was running scared. You don't want to give it all out and then have someone passing you with a couple of hundred meters to go. After 40km I checked behind. I thought 'I can hold this.'"

"I am really happy, just like I said before I had the perfect preparation for a marathon. The conditions were just perfect for a marathon race."

The race served as both the Canadian Marathon Trials for the Tokyo 2020 games and Athletics Canada national championships with an unprecedented number of domestic entries chasing the automatic qualifying standards of 2:11:30 for men and 2:29:30 for women.

Brave running by Trevor Hofbauer and Dayna Pidhoresky earned them enormous personal best times - by seven minutes - and Tokyo 2020 standards.

Hofbauer finished 7th overall with 2:09:51 the second fastest time by a Canadian of all time. The normally laid back Calgarian summed up his performance succinctly.

"I never looked at the splits or anything," he admitted. "I didn't know what time I was going to run until I came around the corner (to see the finish). Pretty cool experience. Give me a few days and it will sink in." Trevor wasn't even wearing a watch that day.

Later he revealed that he had been inspired by Cam Levins' performance in Toronto last year when he beat Jerome Drayton's 43 year old Canadian record with his 2:09:25. Training alone for the most part he pledges to continue training in Calgary where he is content.



Pidhoresky went out at an ambitious pace and while her husband/coach Josh Seifarth watched nervously at the finish she booked her place on the Tokyo team by winning the Canadian title and beating the standard with her 2:29:03 personal best. That earned her 10th place in the women's race.

There were other encouraging performances that might go otherwise unnoticed. Emily Setlack set a personal best as second Canadian with a time of 2:29:48. Tristan Woodfine improved his personal best to 2:13:16 while Cam Levins endured a hard day at the office finishing in 2:15:01.

The national master's record went to two time Olympian Reid Coolsaet as the 40 year old finished in 2:15:23. Ever the optimist he revealed he was close to getting 2:14 but ran his last three kilometers a minute slower than he had been averaging.

All in all, it was a great day for a marathon with two all-comers records smashed and two Canadians have earned their place on the Tokyo 2020 team.

Congratulations to all runners.

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