

HONDA | LA MARATHON

PRESENTED BY K-SWISS

For immediate release: March 15, 2010

Contact: Pat Harris: (323) 965-4900

Defending champ Korir faces tough field in 2010 Honda LA Marathon

Elite field looking for fast times on new Stadium to the Sea course on March 21

LOS ANGELES – March 15, 2010 – When Wesley Korir lined up at the start of the Los Angeles Marathon last year, the idea of winning the race, setting a new race record and winning \$188,705 in cash and prizes wasn't even a dream. He was just hoping to run a strong race.

But two hours, eight minutes and 24 seconds later, he'd achieved all three and now looks forward to defending his title in Sunday's 2010 Honda LA Marathon presented by K-Swiss.

"When I get in a race now, people say 'That's Wesley, he won in L.A. last year,' said Korir, who lives in Louisville, Kentucky. "That is definitely my identity now: the L.A. man. And I love L.A., I love this city. I love what it has meant to me. I love to be associated with L.A. I love that identity, to be known as the 'L.A. man.'"

Korir will face a determined field in the men's elite race, including the fastest marathoner ever to compete in this race: Kenya's Richard Limo, who has run 2:06:45, plus last year's runner-up, Tariku Jufar of Ethiopia (lifetime best of 2:08:10) and third-placer Laban Kipkemboi of Kenya (2:08:38).

Korir, Jufar and Kipkemboi ran a stirring race for 22 miles last year, with Kipkemboi dropping back first, and Korir finally establishing dominance at the 24-mile mark to win by one minute eight seconds.

The men's field is one of the deepest ever to run in Los Angeles: seven men with lifetime bests under 2:10:00 and six more at 2:12:00 or faster. Kenyan men have won this race 11 straight times.

Korir has studied the new Stadium to the Sea course, especially the undulations of the first six miles of the route, going downhill from the start at Dodger Stadium into Downtown Los Angeles in the first three miles and then up 1st Street into Echo Park in the second three. "This is going to be a very fast course," Korir noted. "2:07, or 2:06, I won't be surprised. The thing about it, if you can overcome these 3-4 miles in the beginning and if you can get yourself [into Hollywood] strong, all the rest is a piece of cake. People are going to be rolling."

In the women's elite field, Russian women have won five consecutive Los Angeles Marathons and 2009 third-place Silvia Skvortsova (best of 2:26:24) is one of two Russians in the field. She placed third in last year's race. The fastest time among women entrants belongs to Ethiopia's Ashu Kasim, who ran 2:25:49 last year in Paris, ten seconds faster than last year's winning time in L.A.

Looking for a new lifetime best is American marathoner Paige Higgins of Flagstaff, Arizona, who has run 2:33:06 and competed for the United States in the IAAF World Championships marathon in Berlin last year.

- more -

Fast field headed to 2010 Honda LA Marathon

2-2-2

“This is the ‘go for it’ year,” she told *Runner’s World Racing News*, noting “if the weather’s good and everything, I think it’s going to be a fast course.” She looking to break through the 2:30 barrier, adding “I’m still looking for time . . . I want to make the jump to the next level, where I’m competing on the world stage.”

The men’s and women’s races are tied together by the Marathon’s unique Challenge, which awards a \$100,000 prize to the first man or woman runner to cross the finish line. The women will enjoy a handicap to start the race, based on an average of the lifetime bests of the top runners. The Challenge, originated in this race in 2004, is tied at 3-3 between men and women over its six-year history. In 2009, Korir ran down women’s winner Tatiana Petrova in the 25th mile.

A prize purse of up to \$400,00 in cash plus two Honda Insight EX sedans with navigation system (MSRP \$23,100 each) will be up for grabs this Sunday. Prize money for the first five male and female finishers will include \$20,000 for first place, \$12,500 for second, \$10,000 for third, \$5,000 for fourth and \$2,500 for fifth. In addition to the \$100,000 Challenge prize, time bonuses of up to a cumulative total of \$100,000 per gender will be available for runners finishing in 2:08:15 (men) or 2:27:06 (women) or faster.

Star racers Aaron Gordian of Mexico and Amanda McGrory headline the wheelchair fields, for which there will be a separate prize purse of \$2,500 for first, \$1,000 for second and \$500 for third. Gordian and McGrory both won in Los Angeles in 2009 and will be chasing the Nan Harmon Time Bonus Award of \$1,000 for a wheelchair race record.

The 2010 Honda LA Marathon presented by K-Swiss will be the first run on the iconic Stadium to the Sea course that begins at Dodger Stadium, winds through Downtown Los Angeles, Hollywood, West Hollywood, Beverly Hills, then through the Veterans Administration Greater Los Angeles Healthcare Center and into Santa Monica, finishing on Ocean Avenue and Santa Monica Boulevard. The race will start with the wheelchair fields at 6:55 a.m., followed by the women’s elite field at approximately 7:03 a.m. and the men (and the rest of the field) at about 7:20 a.m.

The race will be broadcast in its entirety on KTLA 5 in Los Angeles and seen nationally on Universal Sports beginning at 7 a.m. PDT. It will be covered from start to finish on radio by AM 570 KLAC. All three outlets will stream their coverage on the Internet as well.

ABOUT LA MARATHON LLC:

We inspire athletes and connect communities. With thousands of volunteers, tens of thousands of participants, and hundreds of thousands of spectators, the Honda Los Angeles Marathon presented by K-Swiss is one of the largest organized road races in the country. For more information, visit www.lamarathon.com.

###