

# HONDA | LA MARATHON

PRESENTED BY K-SWISS

For immediate release: March 23, 2010

Contact: Pat Harris: (323) 965-4900

## **Sensational Silver Anniversary race the largest LA Marathon ever** *Kenyans Wesley Korir and Edna Kiplagat triumph on first Stadium to the Sea run*

LOS ANGELES – March 23, 2010 – Running for the first time past many of the icons of Los Angeles, the largest field in Los Angeles Marathon history and one of the largest spectator turn-outs ever created an electric atmosphere for the 25th Honda LA Marathon presented by K-Swiss.

The race created multiple firsts for this event, begun in 1986, with the largest number of registrants ever, 26,054, and by far the largest number of finishers ever, 22,361.

Race organizers were able to realize owner Frank McCourt's vision of connecting communities through the creation of their new Stadium to the Sea course, which routed the Marathon outside of the City of Los Angeles for the first time. Starting at Dodger Stadium and then running through West Hollywood, Beverly Hills, the Veterans Administration Greater Los Angeles Healthcare Center, and finishing in Santa Monica, race organizers have created what many believe quickly will become a classic route in the world of marathoning.

Thronges of spectators, four and five deep in places, crowded both sides of San Vicente Boulevard and Ocean Avenue over the final miles to cheer on the runners, beginning with the men's and women's champions, Wesley Korir and Edna Kiplagat, both from Kenya.

Korir, who successfully defended his 2009 crown, became the only the second man to win back-to-back Los Angeles Marathons, after countryman Stephen Ndungu did so in 2001 and 2002. He led most of the race, accompanied by a large pack of 12-15 runners that stuck together through the first 18 miles.

"I tried to push the first 6 miles to see who was going to break," Korir told reporters after the race. "I realized that was not going to work, so I changed tactics and decided to not push as hard until the end when I had to kick and it worked. I was keeping an eye on the time. With the group being so large, I did not worry about the Challenge and cared about beating the guys. With 12 guys in the group, it was going to be tough at the end so I decided to wait and see."

Korir broke free in miles 24 and 25, running 4:43 and 4:34 miles to distance himself from his competitors and ensure the 12th straight win by a Kenyan man in this race. He won the \$20,000 first prize and a Honda Insight EX sedan. His winning time of 2:09:19 was the third fastest ever in the race's history, bettered only by his own race record from 2009 (2:08:34) and Benson Cheronon's mark of 2:08:40 from 2006. Countrymen Richard Limo (2:09:48) and Paul Samoei (2:09:54) finished second and third, respectively.

In the women's race, Russian Silvia Skvortsova towed a pack of six through the first 20 miles, with Kiplagat and Ethiopians Ashu Kasim, Teyba Naser, Tiki Gelana, and Alemitu Abera close behind.

- more -

## Record field completes sensational 2010 Honda LA Marathon 2-2-2

Kiplagat took the lead on the Veterans Administration grounds during the 21st mile near a hill already being called “Purple Heart Hill” and pulled away on San Vicente Boulevard in the Brentwood section of Los Angeles, with only Naser giving chase and Skvortsova setting for third.

Kiplagat was the first to cross the finish line in 2:25:38, an improvement of almost 25 minutes on her previous marathon best of 2:50:20 run in 2005, with Naser second (in 2:26:20) and Skvortsova third (in 2:27:20) for the second year in a row.

With the men’s race having turned into a tactical duel thanks to the deep and large pack of elite runners, Kiplagat was the first to the finish and won the unique Honda LA Marathon Challenge, worth a bonus of \$100,000 in addition to the first place prize money of \$20,000. In all, Kiplagat won cash and prizes of \$168,100, including a \$25,000 time bonus. Naser also earned a time bonus of \$10,000 for a total prize of \$22,500.

Said Korir, “It was a beautiful race from Dodger Stadium to the Sea. The organizers did an outstanding job. Everything was just amazing. I really got to take in everything I saw in the race today. Hollywood was crowded, but Beverly Hills was breezy and nice. Veterans Parkway was pretty amazing. People were shouting my name, even in Beverly Hills, which was great. I hope to do it again next year.”

The repeat win was especially sweet for Korir who, having wed his college sweetheart just the week before, was on his honeymoon. In addition, Korir’s parents, who had never seen him run competitively, watched him run on television from his home in Louisville, Kentucky.

Kiplagat was not figured to be among the contenders, but said afterwards that she “was not surprised because of my training and experience. After 21 miles, I tried to force the pace to see who could keep up with it, but after 24 miles I was lucky when I decided to increase the speed and I saw the spectators on that part of the course. I heard music on the course and tried to run to the rhythm.”

A very competitive wheelchair race saw South African Krige Schabert become the first person to complete the Stadium to the Sea course in 1:31:51, while Amanda McGrory won the women’s division in 1:56:35. Both wheelchair winners received \$2,500 for first place.

The top Masters (40 and older) finishers were Juan Ramirez of Santa Ana, California in the men’s division (27th men’s finisher overall, in 2:39:32) and Linda Somers Smith of San Luis Obispo, California, a former U.S. Olympic marathoner (6th women’s finisher overall, in 2:36:33).

Of course, these champions were only the leaders of an army of runners who traversed the 26.2-mile course under near-perfect conditions, including a cooling fog at the beaches in Santa Monica. Each had an individual story, and thousands of runners also raised nearly \$2 million for charity, including 60 organizations officially affiliated with the race.

## Record field completes sensational 2010 Honda LA Marathon 3-3-3

Among the many stories on race day:

- Computer programmer Ravi Rajan of Los Angeles ran a double marathon, starting from the finish in Santa Monica at about 1:00AM and running to Dodger Stadium, then turning around and finishing the Honda LA Marathon in 4:46:24.
- Lt. Jeremy Arnett, who had organized a “shadow marathon” for soldiers at Camp Taji in Iraq last year to raise money for a fallen soldier’s family, came to Los Angeles as race organizers’ guest in 2010 and finished in 4:55:03. Race sponsor Don Francisco’s Coffee made a donation in his honor to the Special Operations Warrior Foundation.
- Ultramarathoner Dean Karnazes biked 500 miles from his Bay Area home to Santa Monica for the race, then ran the race on foot in 4:08:45.

In addition, there were 232 “Legacy” runners who had finished each of the previous 24 races at the starting line, completing a quarter-century of marathon running in Los Angeles, a total of 665 miles each, not including their training.

All told, in 25 years of operation, the race has had 394,575 finishers and will pass the 400,000 mark in 2011.

“We are believers in the transformative power of sport,” said LA MARATHON LLC president Russ Pillar. “The Stadium to the Sea route is the manifestation of our mission statement to inspire athletes and connect communities. With the support of all of the different municipalities, volunteers, participants, and fans we were able to touch, I think we did just that. But as proud as we are of our accomplishment, it’s dwarfed by the accomplishment of our nearly 25,000 athletes. It’s with an aim of inspiring an even larger audience next year that my team and I already have started planning an even greater event for 2011.”

Men’s runner-up Limo, in his first visit ever to Los Angeles, summed up what so many participants thought of the 2010 race: “The morning was perfect. The fans were great and I thought the race was going to be mine. The fan support was great. Please keep the morale up. The run to the sea was great, [especially] to see balloons and flowers and at the breeze from the ocean was really great.”

### 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](http://www.lamarathon.com).

###