

Bloomsday 2006

Okari outpaces Kiama to win; Ochichi survives rally by Hladyr over the final mile

May 7, 2006—Kenyans Gilbert Okari and Isabella Ochichi lived up to their billing as pre-race favorites, as the two withstood challenges from a strong field of contenders to win their respective divisions in the 30th running of the Lilac Bloomsday Run.

On a chilly, overcast morning, Okari and his training partner Charles Kiama broke away from the pack after the first uphill following Latah Creek, then ran stride for stride through the next two miles of the rolling Bloomsday course. Heading up the infamous Doomsday Hill, though, Okari broke away, emerging with a solid lead by the top. Kiama held on gamely over the final 2-1/2 miles of the 12-kilometer course (7.46 miles), but Okari nevertheless lengthened his lead, racing to the line in 34:14, over 30 seconds ahead of Kiama. Those two were followed by Ernest Meli Kimeli and Julius Kibet, as Kenyans captured the top eight places.

“It was challenging and the hill was tough,” Okari said later. “I know [Kiama] well, and he is a strong runner.”

In the women’s race Ochichi, the 2004 Olympic 5000 meter silver medalist, led the race with a first mile of 4:41, then moved steadily away from the pack. It looked like it might be a runaway, but Ochichi was in for a surprise. Farther back Ukrainian Tetyana Hladyr and Australian Benita Johnson were running stride for stride in pursuit. As those two climbed Doomsday Hill Hladyr broke away, and she began to close steadily on the leader. With less than a mile to go Hladyr finally closed the gap, but Ochichi suddenly responded, unleashing a powerful kick on the final downhill to post a 38:38 victory, two seconds ahead of Hladyr.

“It if was warm I would have been faster, but being cold it was tough,” said Ochichi later, then added a nod of thanks to the crowd for spurring her to victory. “When you are running and they say ‘Go Isabella, you look good’ and then I think I look good, I’m out of here.”

In the Men’s Masters competition Sean Wade of Houston, Texas, took top honors with a time of 37:45, followed by Alan Newton of Boise, ID. Women’s Masters winner Sylvia Mosqueda, 40, of Los Angeles posted a time of 41:37, good enough for 11th overall. Top Washington finishers were Uli Steidl from Shoreline, WA with a time of 37:55 and Janet Collar from Spokane, WA with time of 44:08.

Over 40,000 runners, joggers and walkers finished the 30th running of the Lilac Bloomsday Run, which has now recorded close to 1.2 million finishers. Top finisher results are listed below. Next year’s Bloomsday is Sunday, May 6, 2007.

MALE

1. Gilbert Okari Kenya 34:14 \$7,000
2. Charles Kiama Kenya 34:46 4,500
3. Ernest Meli Kimeli Kenya 35:06 3,000
4. Julius Kibet Kenya 35:09 2,500
5. Josphat Ngetich Kenya 35:15 1,800
6. Lewis Nyariki Kenya 35:19 1,350
7. Joseph Koech Kenya 35:25 1,000
8. Julius Kiptoo Kenya 35:34 900
9. Mike Aish Australia 35:36 700
10. Matt Downin Westwood, NJ 35:52 1,200*
11. Mindaugas Pukstas Lithuania 36:07 500
12. Linus Maiyo Kenya 36:08 400
13. Samuel Ndereba Kenya 36:28 300
14. Celedonio Rodriguez Alamosa, CO 36:29 500*
15. Shane Nankervis Australia 36:44 200
16. Teren Jameson Taylorsville, UT 36:46 --
17. Abraham Kosgei Kenya 36:49 --
18. Lamech Mosoti Kenya 36:53 --
19. Matt Levassiur Alamosa, CO 36:54 --
20. Austin Vigil Fort Collins, CO 37:11 --
21. Luis Collazo Puerto Rico 37:13 --
22. John Itati Kenya 37:29 --
23. Travis Armstrong Boise, ID 37:40 --
24. Araya Haregot Ethiopia 37:42 --
25. Sean Wade Houston, TX 37:45 1,000-m
-- Uli Steidl Germany 37:55 1,000-w
-- Alan Newton Boise, ID 38:12 800-m
-- Preston Brashers Renton, WA 38:13 750-w
-- Leif Kohler Seattle, WA 38:27 500-w
-- Chris Charles Seattle, WA 38:35 250-w
-- Sam Ngatia Colorado Springs 38:41 600-m
-- Dennis Simonaitis Draper, UT 38:50 400-m
-- Danny Gonzalez Lake Oswego, OR 39:25 200-m

*Includes U.S. citizen bonus
w-Washington state resident
m-Masters runner

FEMALE

1. Isabella Ochichi Kenya 38:38 \$7,000
 2. Tetyana Hladyr Ukraine 38:40 4,500
 3. Benita Johnson Australia 39:04 3,000
 4. Kathy Butler Great Britain 39:29 2,500
 5. Dorota Gruca Poland 40:16 1,800
 6. Luminita Talpoz Romania 40:44 1,350
 7. Teresa Wanjiku Kenya 41:00 1,000
 8. Victoria Klimina Russia 41:02 900
 9. Nicole Aish Arvada, CO 41:32 1,400*
 - 10. Nicole Hunt Deer Lodge, MT 41:34 1,200***
 11. Sylvia Mosqueda Los Angeles, CA 41:37 1,000-m
 12. Rosemary Ryan Ireland 41:43 500
 13. Samia Akbar Herndon, VA 42:01 800*
 14. Vicky Gill Great Britain 42:04 300
 15. Lyubov Denisova Russia 42:58 250
 16. Gladys Asiba Kenya 43:14 200
 17. Lyubov Kremleva Russia 43:17 800-m
-- Janet Collar Spokane, WA 44:08 1,000-w
-- Valentina Egorova Russia 44:10 600-m
-- Gwen Greiner Seattle, WA 44:24 750-w
-- Lauren Matthews Seattle, WA 45:16 500-w
-- Susan Empey Mercer Island, WA 46:06 250-w
-- Mary Thane Missoula, MT 47:40 400-m
-- Sandy Jacobson Canada 48:48 200-m
- *Includes U.S. citizen bonus
w-Washington state resident
m-Masters runner