

Dickson Chumba and Tirfi Tsegaye win Tokyo Marathon with the course record

Dickson Chumba of Kenya won the 2014 Tokyo Marathon with the new course record time of 2:05:42, replacing the previous course record time of 2:06:50 recorded by Dennis Kimetto last year. It is also his personal best (replacing 2:05:46 from 2012 Eindhoven marathon) and the fastest time in Tokyo, replacing the 2:06:33 by Gert Thys from 1999 Tokyo International Marathon. It is also the fastest time in February, also replacing 2:06:33 by Thys. Only record Chumba failed to break is the Japanese all-comers record of 2:05:18 by Tsegaye Kebede.

The real action started when the last two pace makers left the race at 30km, and when all the dust settled, seven runners – Dickson Chumba, Tadesse Tola, Sammy Kitwara, Michael Kipyego, Peter Some, Geoffrey Kipsang, and Deressa Chimsa – were left in the lead pack.

After 35km Chumba took over the lead to push the pace, and only Tadesse Tola was able to stay close to Chumba. Chumba covered 35km to 40km in 14:21, the fastest time ever for this 5km segment in the history of Tokyo Marathon, and Chumba and Tola were completely alone in front. Chumba later recalled at the press conference, “I did not think it (14:21) was too fast because I was planning to push the pace after 35km.” Chumba continued to push the pace and after 40km (1:59:19), Tola had to let Chumba go. “I knew Tola is a strong runner, having run 2:04 and won a medal in the championships. So I was not sure who would win until 40km when I became confident that I can win the race.”

Chumba covered the final 2.195km in 6:23, the fastest for this distance in the Tokyo Marathon, and won by 15 seconds. “From the start, I felt that I can run a good race today. I am very happy. I hope to come back next year to run the Tokyo Marathon again. I did not have a confidence to run such a fast time today, and I did not realize time will be this fast till very end,” said Chumba in the winner’s press conference.

Tadesse Tola of Ethiopia finished second with 2:05:57, and thus Chumba and Tola recorded the second and third fastest time on Japanese soil. Of course, it was the first time two runners cracked 2:06 in Japan. Third place Sammy Kitwara with 2:06:30 also ran faster than the previous course record. He was followed by the defending champion Michale Kipyego. Kipyego ran 2:06:58. In all four runners cracked 2:07 and three more runners cracked 2:08. The depth of today’s Tokyo Marathon was unparalleled as the best marks for place for second to ninth on Japanese soil were improved. In short it may have been the best marathon race in Japan, at least in the recent years.

The best Japanese in the race was Kohei Matsumura in eighth with 2:08:09. It was his third marathon of his career and each time Matsumura improved his personal best, from 2:11:58 in his debut to 2:10:12 and then to 2:08:09 today. “I am happy to fulfill my goal of 2:08 marathon and being the first Japanese in the race,” said Matsumura after the race. “If I am selected to represent Japan in the Asian Games, I will be delighted to run.” Behind Matsumura, three other Japanese runners broke 2:10 for the first time in their career.

Tirfi Tsegaye of Ethiopia won the women's race with 2:22:23, improving the course record by more than three minutes. "Although part of the course was quite tough, it was a good race for me. My future goal includes victory at the major marathon as well as a faster time," said Tirfi after the race. After 35km Tirfi Tsegaye and Birhane Dibaba both from Ethiopia broke away leaving two Kenyans – Caroline Rotich and Lucy Kabuu in their wake. "After 35km I was determined to win the race," said Tirfi at the winner's press conference. With 700m from the finish Tirfi Tsegaye surged away to win by seven seconds in 2:22:23. Seven seconds winning margin tied the smallest ever in the women's race in the Tokyo Marathon. Birhane Dibaba in second with 2:22:30, Lucy Kabuu in third with 2:24:16 and Caroline Rotich in fourth with 2:24:35 all ran under the old course record of 2:25:28 by Atsede Habtamu from 2012.

Results:

1) Dickson Chumba (KEN)	2:05:42 (14:52, 14:56, 15:09, 15:07, 15:11, 14:56, 14:21, 6:23)
2) Tadese Tola (ETH)	2:05:57
3) Sammy Kitwara (KEN)	2:06:30
4) Michael Kipyego (KEN)	2:06:58
5) Peter Some (KEN)	2:07:05
6) Geoffrey Kipsang (KEN)	2:07:37
7) Deressa Chimsa (KEN)	2:07:40
8) Kohei Matsumura (JPN)	2:08:09 PR (previous best 2:10:12)
9) Koji Kobayashi (JPN)	2:08:51 PR (previous best 2:10:40)
10) Abel Kirui (KEN)	2:09:04
11) Hirokatsu Kurosaki (JPN)	2:09:07 PR (previous best 2:12:22)
12) Masanori Sakai (JPN)	2:09:10 PR (previous best 2:14:44)
13) Suehiro Ishikawa (JPN)	2:09:29
14) Cyrus Njui (KEN)	2:09:35
15) Chihiro Miaywaki (JPN)	2:11:50 Debut

Women

1) Tirfi Tsegaye (ETH)	2:22:23 (17:20, 16:58, 16:50, 16:57, 16:40, 16:42, 17:03, 16:32, 7:21)
2) Birhane Dibaba (ETH)	2:22:30 PR (previous best 2:23:01)
3) Lucy Kabuu (KEN)	2:24:16
4) Caroline Rotich (KEN)	2:24:35
5) Janet Rono (KEN)	2:26:03 PR (previous best 2:28:36)
6) Albina Mayorova (RUS)	2:28:18
7) Mai Ito (JPN)	2:28:36
8) Rika Shintaku (JPN)	2:31:15 PR (previous best 2:37:13)
9) Manami Kamitanida (JPN)	2:31:34 PR (previous best 2:38:21)
10) Hiroko Yoshitomi (JPN)	2:32:38