

Press Release

Karlovy Vary, 18 May 2024

Nearly 5500 Runners in the New Format of Mattoni Karlovy Vary Running Festival Race, Hrochová Wins First EuroHeroes 2024 Race

The historic spa town of Karlovy Vary was once again filled with thousands of runners participating in the new Mattoni Karlovy Vary Running Festival race format. The event, part of the famous RunCzech races and one of the four EuroHeroes races saw nearly 5,500 participants, with dramatic finishes and inspiring performances across various categories. Khalid Choukoud, Netherlands won the half marathon race, defeating Spain's Abdelaziz Merzougui in a photo-finish, both clocking an impressive time of 1:04:01. Tereza Hrochová won the women's race in 1:12:29 to the delight of the Czech fans and started her road of winning yet another EuroHeroes crown.

The new concept of the event brought even more opportunities for the athletes. The latest addition to the traditional Karlovy Half Marathon, a race with a certified route with the World Athletics quality mark and five stars from European Athletics, was a 10k race. Separate start at 2pm was the perfect opening of the day.

Furthermore, the Half Marathon course has been slightly changed, contributing to faster times and a spectacle for the competitors. The runners once again enjoyed the course leading along the famous spa colonnade, past the world-famous Thermal and Pupp hotels, and other exciting places that make Karlovy Vary a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The victory in the Mattoni Karlovy Vary Half Marathon went to Choukoud, who beat the Merzougui by mere centimeters as the champion had to be decided by the finish photo. The third place went to Germany's Hendrik Pfeiffer (1:04:53), Tokyo Olympian and 2022 German Marathon Champion who is currently aiming for the European Championship in Rome. "The race was very nice, but they got away at the 15th kilometer. I am still not in my optimal shape after the London Marathon. I hope to return to Ústí Half Marathon better prepared but it depends on my marathon schedule," Pfeiffer said.

Ondřej Fejfar was the best of the Czech runners with a time of 1:07:20, Jiří Homoláč finished second with 1:09:37, and Jan Kohut took the third place with 1:10:13. "The time is just a few seconds behind my personal best. I did not expect that after the Prague Marathon, I am very excited" said a satisfied Fejfar.



Tereza Hrochová won the women's title, with the Hungarian Nora Szabó finishing 58 seconds behind. The two women ran together for the first six kilometers; Hrochová then gained a lead, which she maintained throughout the race. Third place went to Ukraine, Nataliya Lehonkova, at 1:14:57. "I enjoyed it, but it was really hard for me. Tereza ran away at the sixth kilometer and I was alone for a long time. She was faster this time. I'm very happy for both her and me," said Nora Szabó.

EuroHeroes is a project by RunCzech in collaboration with European Athletics to identify, develop, and promote local sporting heroes and motivate the public to exercise. The project had its zero version in 2018 with two RunCzech races and fully started in 2019 when we dedicated four of our World Athletics Gold Label races - the Mattoni Half Marathons in Karlovy Vary, České Budějovice, Olomouc and Ústí nad Labem - to promote European Athletics. The elite field of these races is focused on European athletes.

The newly introduced 10km race was won by Czech junior 10k champion Jiří Špiroch in 33:37. Despite rainy weather in the afternoon, 1,850 runners also took part in the family runs. The weather cleared for the evening's primary race, attracting large crowds and creating a festive atmosphere.

The half marathon's title partner is Mattoni, which has been bringing a drinking regime to the competitors in Vary for the 11th year. Thanks to its balanced ratio of calcium, magnesium, and potassium, Mattoni mineral water is the best choice every day for natural hydration and mineral replenishment before, during, and after sports performance. That is why it has been inseparably linked to running for many years.

Note for editors

- Each of the five races are certified by AIMS, have been awarded a 5 Star Road Race standard by European Athletics or have hosted the IAAF (World Athletics) Half Marathon Championships.
- RunCzech races are awarded the quality mark by World Athletic and the Prague International Marathon, Prague Half Marathon and Birell 10k Race received the World Athletics Elite Label Road Race award.
- SuperHalves races have played host to World Record performances (2 in Lisbon, 2 in Prague, 1 in Copenhagen and 3 in Valencia).
- RunCzech organizes running events in cities across the Czech Republic and in Italy, with Napoli Running, and in Japan and China supported by local entities.



- Prague International Marathon spol. s.r.o. ("PIM")/RunCzech was established in 1995 by Carlo Capalbo, President of the Organizing Committee, with the aim of staging a world-class international marathon in Prague.
- Nearly 1.2 million runners have participated in RunCzech events since its inception. In 2019, we welcomed over 120 000 finishers from 101 different countries.
- ALL RUNNERS ARE BEAUTIFUL is our way of welcoming everyone to the world of running.
- Initiatives like RunCzech Running League and SuperHalves were created to motivate casual runners. To support elite European athletes, we created the EuroHeroes Challenge.
- RunCzech Racing is dedicated to the development of young athletes, community ties, and sporting excellence. Eight World records so far and over 150 podium finishes for our team!
- In 2021, RunCzech introduced the unique running invention called The Battle of the Teams. "Professional marathoners competing in teams, strategically drafted based on their collective personal bests, giving each team a serious chance to win gold".
- We host other events such as our Bambini Runs, Family Runs and Junior Marathon Championship to encourage youth participation.
- Our FreeRun courses form a network of running trails across the Czech Republic.
- Our Running Mall serves as the epicenter of the running world in Prague.
- All accompanying information regarding RunCzech can be found at this link: [Notes for editors](#)

Contact

For more information, please get in touch with:

- reach the office at pr@pim.cz

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/runczech>

Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/runczech/>

Twitter - <https://twitter.com/RunCzech>

