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Kenyan runner wins historic first Marathon for Peace in Dili

Dili, 21 Jun (PPR) – Philimon Rotich, of Kenya, takes home USD\$5 000 following his historic win of the first Dili Marathon. The Kenyan had set a strong early pace passing the half-way point in 01:10 and completed the course in a final time of 02:34:57.

Mr Rotich said “I would love to come back next year to participate. I found the course pretty straightforward and didn’t experience too many problems. The biggest challenge was the heat. It got very hot”. He went on to say: “The race was very well organized and the Timorese people who supported the race around the course were fantastic – the one thing that I hope is that a Timorese can win the event next year.”

The runner had been tracked by the two lead Timorese runners, who kept the leader in their sight but were unable to close the 250 metre gap that Mr. Rotich maintained. Augusto Ramos Soares and Zeferino Guterres Magalhães finished just over a minute after the winner, posting times of 02:36 and 02:36:28 respectively.

In the Women’s Open, Lucie Hardiman, of Darwin, Australia, won in an overall time of 03:03:32. Mrs. Hardiman was “very happy with the first half of her course, but found the temperature was a real challenge to maintaining a set pace.” She joined the Open Men’s winner in praising the organizers for the race: “I’ll make sure that many people know about next year’s marathon. This race will only get bigger and better. I’ve raced in marathons around the world and this race was tremendous.” In second and third respectively, was the aspiring Timorese athlete Juventina Napoleão (03:13:05) and former Olympian, Aguida Amaral (03:22:26).

UNPOL (United Nations Police) and PNTL (local police forces) successfully enforced road closures and joined thousands of people across the capital Dili to support the race as traffic was brought to a standstill. The race’s finish line was full of energy as local artists drummed and crowds gathered to watch the drama unfold. The biggest cheer of the day went out as H.E. the President of Timor-Leste, Dr. José Ramos-Horta, ran across the line surrounded by friends, supporters and staff that joined him for the 5 km fun run which passed through the central neighbourhoods of Dili.

The first Dili Marathon actually had four running events: the full marathon (42 kms), the half marathon (21kms), a 10 km fun run and the 5 km fun run. The registrations for the four events were as follows: 115 runners in the marathon, 193 runners in the half marathon, 287 runners in the 10 km and 675 in the 5 km. In total: 1270 runners representing 28 nations.

Visit the official website: www.dilimarathon.com for more info.

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