

Breaking out of the glass pyramid

By Recep Yavuz

Antalya is located in the south of Turkey on its 450km-long coastline with the Mediterranean Sea. It was established in the First Century BC by the Roman King Attalos I and then developed by Hadrianus. Today the city has a population of close to one million people and tourism is the most important source of income. There are four and five-star hotels and holiday villages with a capacity of about 400,000 beds. In 2007, eight million tourists came to Turkey from different countries of the world and many of them spent their holidays in and around Antalya (Kemer, Belek, Side, Alanya).

European summer is the peak period for tourism but the climate is hot then, and the mild winters provide favourable conditions both for tourism and for running. The race date was selected for the refreshing calmness of the winter season for athletic activities, but fortunately it is also at a time when the city has spare capacity to absorb more visitors.

There is much to see in the surrounding area, including the Karain Cave, 20km away, which shows signs of habitation from

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180,000 BC. The settlements of Perge, Side, Aspendos were developed in the Hellenistic age while Phaselis, Olympos, Myra, Lymra date from the Lykien period. With these and many more historical towns among the Taurus Mountains and beside the Mediterranean, Antalya has a rich cultural heritage to match the physical beauty of its setting.

Apart from tourism, greenhousing and citrus fruit are also very important for the local economy. The majority of the population is young. Akdeniz University, with 17,000 students, is one of the most important in Turkey.

Öger Tours was Turkey's first tourism agency, set up 39 years ago. Since its foundation many others have followed but it is still the leader in the field. Öger Tours has about 5000 staff and more than 200 contact offices all around Turkey working with the centers in Hamburg and Antalya. With that network already in place preparations for the first marathon began in 2005 and when the first race was held, on 19 March 2006, 850 athletes participated in the marathon and half marathon. Apart from the Intercontinental Eurasia Marathon in Istanbul, it was the first event of its kind to be held in Turkey.

The course lies between the Taurus Mountains and the clear waters of the Mediterranean which together provide a setting of outstanding natural beauty. The success of the first event was reflected in the

significant growth of participation when the second edition was held on 17 March 2007, as 1450 serious runners took part along with more than 4000 in the fun run.

The 19-strong organising team, including two people based in Hamburg, started intensive preparations for the 2008 Marathon a month before the race. There were some new initiatives this year, including a 10km race to be added to the programme. The overall prize money was increased to \$40,000 and the race was started in the city centre with the finish line in the Antalya Stadium. A major publicity campaign generated many broadcasts and the Marathon was made known to the world through Reuters and the European Broadcasting Union.

The eve-of-race Pasta Party was held in the Glass Pyramid, a building





which has become the symbol of Antalya. About 2000 competitors and their relatives attended this event, which appeared as a festival of sport in its own right as competitors from different cultures and speaking different languages came together through the unifying influence of sport. Gifts were given out by the sponsoring firms while a team from the Anadolu Hospital measured competitors' weight and stress levels. Mindful of the task ahead next morning the program finished early.

As competitors were taken from the Glass Pyramid back to their hotels various teams were going into action. Two were busily setting up start and finish points while another was setting up cameras and

other technical equipment at selected points. A team of 247 police was in charge of security, while 120 course marshals were stationed at critical places along the course. In all 830 people were working away into the dead of night so that the race could take place without a hitch next morning.

The Minister of Justice, the Minister of Sport, the Governor of Antalya, the Mayor of Antalya and many politicians graced the event with their presence. The wheelchair competitors were awarded with special prizes. With 433 Marathon, 1017 Half Marathon, 496 10km and 72 Team Marathon competitors, the start turned into a festival area. The 3500 fun runners were not just a support act for the



The Kenyan **Philip Makau** crossed the finish line as the clock showed **2:16:13**



RESULT

MEN:

1 Philip Makau MUA	KEN	2:16:13
2 John Kipkoskei NGENY	KEN	2:19:32
3 John Musila KIOKO	KEN	2:21:06
4 William Kimutai KURGAT	KEN	2:25:14
5 Muammer ALTINOK	TUR	2:35:07
6 Yusuf ZEPAK	TUR	2:39:03
7 Kiyasettin YALCIN	TUR	2:40:46
8 Murat KAYA	TUR	2:42:37
9 Zekeriya DIKMENER	TUR	2:42:40
10 Mustafa YOLDAR	TUR	2:43:17

WOMEN:

1 Kristina LOONEN	NED	2:42:55
2 Yeter GULAL	TUR	2:50:02
3 Joanna CHMIEL	POL	2:50:15
4 Salome Jepkoech KIMUTAI	KEN	3:01:43
5 Birgit BARTELS	GER	3:04:58
6 Inge RAABE	GER	3:12:44
7 Elena POLYAKOVA	TUR	3:13:36
8 Carmen VALERIUS	GER	3:29:23
9 Lütfiye KAYA	TUR	3:31:10
10 Josi GUTTENBERGER	GER	3:55:54

HALF MARATHON

MEN:

1 Jaroslav MUSINSCHI	MDV	1:04:32
2 Isaac Kinyuha WANJOHI	KEN	1:04:52
3 Moses TOO	KEN	1:05:27

WOMEN:

1 Lyuba MORGUNOVA	TUR	1:14:10
2 Lucia Miihiki KIMANI	BIH	1:14:49
3 Ilona BARVANNOVA	UKR	1:15:53

other runners but they also had a good time for themselves as they ran through the city centre.

As the race started supporters flocked into the stadium to await the runners. The cameras focused on the entrance, while people watched the clock located at the finish line. Last year's best time was 2:19:23 and everybody wondered whether it would be broken and a new record set. The Kenyan Philip Makau answered their question when he entered the stadium and

crossed the finish line as the clock showed 2:16:13. The Dutch runner Kristina Loonen won the women's race with 2:42:54.

Next year's race takes place on International Women's Day, 8 March, and the organisers have worked out something very special for the female participants. Women marathon entrants will not have to pay the entry fee, although they still need to register, like the male participants, via the official application procedure.

RACE CONTACT DETAILS

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Full race contact listings start on page ??