



Chebor stoops to tie his shoelace and conquers

For the fifth year running, there was a course record in Brighton as William Chebor smashed the previous best with a fine run of 2:09:25.

That was well over a minute inside the 2013 benchmark of 2:10:46 and showed that the decision to improve the course had reaped the benefits.

Second place went to the defending champion, Dominic Kangor, 11 seconds in arrears while the podium was completed by the third Kenyan, Wilfred Murgor.

For the women it was a different story. For the first time in five attempts they were unable to emulate the men with a course record, but there was certainly a personal best for Alice Milgo by over a minute and a half as she breasted the tape in 2:35:33 held by celebrity invite, world record holder Paula Radcliffe.

Runner up was Ethiopia's Selam Abere in 2:36:37 while Britain's Rebecca Robinson crossed the line third with 2:37:41.

The field set off under leaden skies at a cool nine degrees, but the rain managed to hold off while the wind was the biggest factor blowing from the south west at a brisk 14 miles an hour.

Led by three pacemakers, the men's field swept through the half way mark outside the Hilton hotel in 65:22 on the sea front, only just inside course record time. But a second half in a sprightly 64:03 ensured history was made.

The time could well have been faster had the winner not stopped to tie his shoelace at the seven mile mark. That unscheduled stop lost Chebor at least 60m and meant that he had to expend valuable energy getting back to the lead group.

But all's well that ends well and by the time the finish line loomed, Chebor was away and 60m clear of Kangor by the time they reached Madeira Drive.

Kangor, who set his PB of 2:10:46 here in 2013, was also well inside 2:10 to record a lifetime best of 2:09:36, an improvement of over a minute.

"I didn't expect to win," said Chebor, though it must be said that he had the fastest time of the field with his 2:08:21 and was the favourite in most people's eyes.

“It was at the 37kmark that I managed to break away from Dominic. It was very competitive. But it was also very windy.”

In fact it was the wind that provided the crucial impetus that produced the record. During the middle section of the race as the athletes turned west at the ninth mile they had the wind in their faces.

For the next six miles the lead group of eight headed by Chebor and Kangor were hovering around course record pace. But little by little the record was slipping away and with the toughest section of the marathon to come it hardly seemed feasible that they would be able to haul in the time lost.

But when they turned at mile 21 with the breeze finally at their backs the pace suddenly quickened and the record was back on with the fastest mile of the race flying by in a dizzying 4:39.

In the ensuing miles the cadence improved considerably and with every step the two leaders were eating into the target time. At the 22 mile mark reached in 1:49:12 was where Chebor made the break which proved decisive.

In the women’s race, despite a personal best for the Kenyan winner she revealed that she had had problems with her hip: “At 35km I had to slow

down because of my hip, but I feel OK. With that time, I feel as though I am now at my best.”

Abere found the course to her liking but “it was tough because of the wind.” It was a different story for third placed Robinson who finished just outside her lifetime best: “It has taken me four years to get back to fitness again so I am happy. I pushed the pace as much as possible to the half way mark but then I had to slow down. But I am pleased with my time even though it was just outside my PB.”

Both Kenyan winners received \$6000 in prize money, with Chebor earning an additional \$5000 for dipping under 2:10.

The day started with the inaugural BM10k. The men’s race was won by Morpeth Olympian Nick McCormick in 29:11, missing out by an agonising 11seconds on a £1000 bonus.

Southend’s Adam Hickey, coached by former London marathon winner Eamonn Martin, was second in 29:53, a 10-second improvement on his previous best, while Deeside’s Robbie Simpson was agonisingly close to the 30min barrier with 30:01, but still rewrote his lifetime best by the generous margin of 53 seconds .

The women’s title went to a delighted Alyson Dixon in a new career best 32:35, representing an improvement of 18sec over her previous PB and

shot her to the top of the UK rankings for 2014. She finished eighth overall. In second Winchester's Lorna Russel revised her PB to 33:33, hacking 25sec off her previous mark while third went to clubmate Louise Damen in 34:36.