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ATHLETICS

Kogo, Chepkurui win Nandi road race

By JONATHAN KOMEN jokomen@ke.nationmedia.com Posted Sunday, January 16 2011 at 18:30

Little-known Julius Kogo and Georgina Chepkurui on Sunday easily won the 6th Re-discover Nandi National Social Security Fund 10km road race in Kapsabet.

Kogo, who finished fourth at the 2010 Boston Half Marathon, broke away with his training mates Nelphat Sirma and Gilbert Kipkosgei at five-kilometre mark and blasting to victory in an impressive 27 minutes and 53.4 seconds.

“I could keep with the high pace since I had trained well. I simply used it to gauge my form ahead of the national cross-country trials next month in Nairobi,” said the 25-year-old Kogo who trains at the Ibrahim Hussein camp in Kapsabet.

Sirma, a pace setter at the Frankfurt Marathon last October, weighed in second (28:19.0) ahead of Madoka Half Marathon runner-up Kipkosgei (28:24.7). Francis Kimutai (28:32.1), Marius Kipserem (28:38.5) followed in that order.

Last year’s winner

“I am ready for the provincial cross-country championships, then I will get back to Europe to participate in road races,” said Sirma, who was eighth at the KCB/AK seventh leg in Iten, recently.

Chepkurui, last year’s winner, dazzled the crowds as she weaved through the snaking course at Kapsabet to defend her title in 32:32.5.

Gladys Jebet (32:46.7) followed Chepkurui in second place as she did last year. leaving Paris 20km champion Rose Jelimo to settle for a third place in 33:21.4.

Hellen Chepkurgat (33:39.6) and Agnes Cheserek (33:58.9) came fourth and fifth as she faded to a distant 14th place. Sarah Chepchirchir (34:15.1), Pamela Chepkoech (34:42.3) and Betty Chepleting (34:59.7) were sixth, seventh and eight respectively.

Olympic 800m champion Wilfred Bungei, former Africa 800m record holder Sammy Kosgei and world marathon champion Abel Kirui were among a host of elite runners present at the meeting.

Kenya Bureau of Standards managing Director Joseph Kosgei and his NSSF counterpart Alex Kasongo attended the event he warned them against waiting until the runners are successful that they identify themselves with them.

Difficult situation

“They should start from the ground as athletics come from a very difficult situation and there is need to help them from grassroots. It is prudent that they chip in and sponsor camps,” said the Beijing Olympic champion.

At the same time, successful athletes have been asked to invest in education as a way to give back to the community.

Former world 800m champion Janet Jepkosgei, three-time London and two-time New York marathons winner Martin Lel and Shoe4Africa Chief Executive Officer Toby Tanser said improving education standards is the best support the athletes can offer the masses.

Speaking at Kimng’eru village in Nandi Central at the commissioning of Martin Lel and Shoe4Africa public Primary School, Tanser said they wanted a public school equipped with modern facilities, including a state-of-the art computer laboratory.

Tanser, an America author and former athlete, said the school –which is at Martin Lel’s home area –will serve an inspiration to village that has produced world’s leading marathoners.

New talent

They include four-time Boston Marathon winner Robert “Mwafrika” Cheruiyot, Benjamin Kolum, Eunice Jepkuri and Mathew Kisorio alongside his siblings Peter Kimeli and new talent Niobolas Togom.

Toby said he discontinued schooling at 15 years old and realized its importance later.

