

BATTLE FOR SHOES



1,000 female athletes expected to race in Shoe4Africa meeting

BY JOSEPH NGURE

More than 300 pairs of shoes and cash prizes totalling \$2,650 (Sh219,950) will be up for grabs today as more than 1,000 female athletes line up for the sixth edition of the Shoe4Africa road race in Iten Town today.

The athletes, to assemble at Kenyan born-Dutch Lornah Kiplagat's High Altitude Training Camp (HATC), some 32 kilometres North East of Eldoret town, will include the who is who in the region as budding females set to replenish their purses on Christmas eve.

The 5km women only race will start at 8.30 am and will be witnessed by top fe-

male stars including World marathon marathon champion Edna Kiplagat, Berlin marathon champion Florence Kiplagat, Mary Keitany, double world champion Vivian Cheruiyot, and 800m veteran Janeth Je-pkosgei among others.

As opposed to the past, the event has attracted a big number of participants from foreign countries who are currently training in the region.

Shoe4Africa CEO Toby Tanser told *Feverpitch* the number of willing participants was overwhelming, forcing the registration to close early yesterday after hundreds turned up in the first day.

"We have already exceeded the usual number of 500 participants. We had to close the registration exercise early because we have only 500 T-shirts and similar number of running bibs," said Tanser at the HATC yesterday.

There will be over 300 pairs of shoes to be raffled up to lucky participants and a total of Ksh212, 400 that will be spread out

to the first 12 finishers with the winner taking home Sh41,000 (\$500) while second and third positions will receive Ksh25,000 (\$300) and Sh16,000 (\$200). \$100 will be spread out to those finishing from fourth to 12th positions.

"There will be additional \$1,100 (Sh83,000) for the first girl who has never represented Kenya in an international race to boost the amateurs. The whole prize should not go to the top runners only," added Tanser, who is organising the event assisted by the host Lornah Kiplagat.

The race will start outside HATC near Iten Police Station, taking the participants towards Iten Township before taking a three Kilometres' loop on the cross-country trails West of Lornah's Camp and ends on the Iten-Eldoret road.

Last year, 1997 world junior cross-country champion Rose Kosgei beat Olympian Alice Timbilil to win the race in 16:34.16, missing the course record that stands at 16:33.40.

Participants at last year's Shoe4Africa race held in Iten town. (PHOTO: PETER OCHIENG/STANDARD)