

A lot at stake at Shoe4Africa women's race

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OVER 1,000 athletes have confirmed participation in the 8th edition of the Shoe4Africa women's 5km race in Iten on December 24.

The race will start outside the High Altitude Training Centre and will follow a 5km hilly course across the village before returning to the tape at the starting point.

Race director, Toby Tanser, said Athletics Kenya (AK) President Isaiah Kiplagat, will flag off the race on the eve of Christmas. He said winners will pocket US\$500 (Sh42,500) with second-placed taking home \$300 (Sh25,500) and third US\$200 (Sh17,000).

Other runners in the top 12 will pocketed US\$100 (Sh8,500) each. He said there will also be US\$500 bonus for the athlete who finishes among the top 10 yet she has not competed outside Kenya

Besides raffling off 600-pairs of running shoes, he said one lucky runner will win an Apple Ipad. "For the course record, there is a \$500 bonus.

If no one breaks the course record next year it will be \$1000,"Toby said. He said the race is meant to nurture the upcoming women athletes.

Sylvia Kibet, Lornah Kiplagat, and Edna Kiplagat have all run this race with Mary Keitany launching her professional career here in the year 2006.

"It is a race that has launched many stars because there is no entry fee and prize money encourages upcoming stars to try their luck," he said, adding that the race also gives out hundreds of free pairs of running shoes each year.

The biggest Shoe4Africa race held had 5,000 runners in Kibera in 2008 and the Iten race is capped at 1,100 runners as the route can't accommodate more.

Tanser said he has opted to concentrate in Kenya and had no plans to expand to other countries at the moment. "When I began Shoe4Africa, it was my intention to bring the race to many African countries and I did branch out to Morocco and Tanzania. However, when I started building public schools and fundraising to build a children's hospital I decided to stop and just focus on Kenya," Toby said.