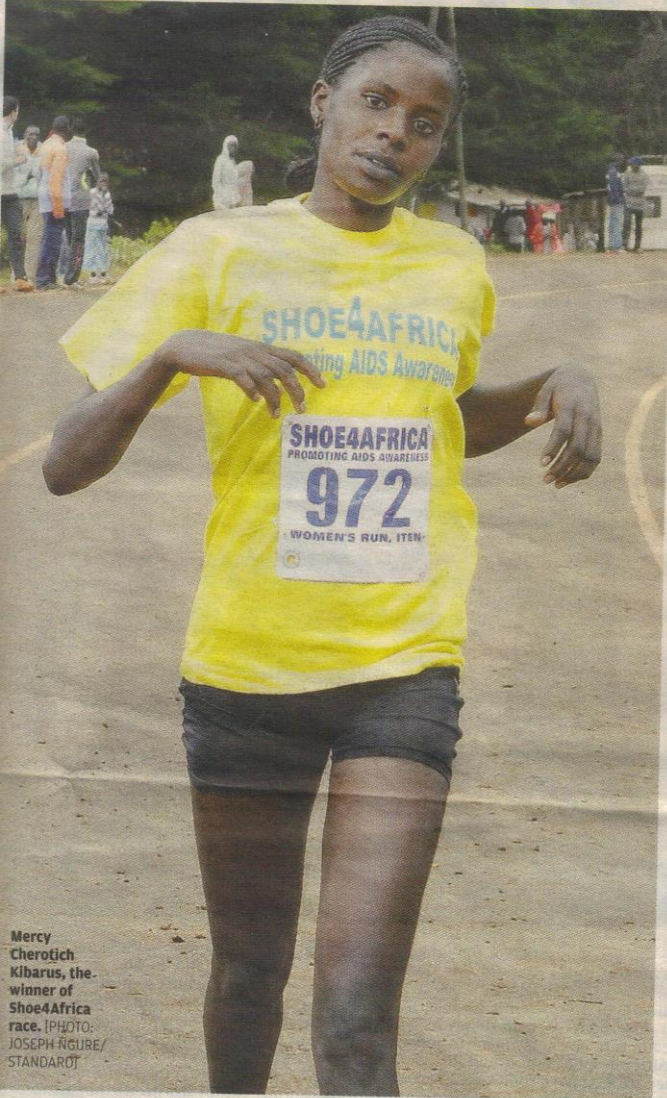


KIBARUS PROWESS



Mercy Cherotich Kibarus, the winner of Shoe4Africa race. PHOTO: JOSEPH NGURE/STANDARD

Ever improving runner conquers experienced field to emerge winner of Iten race

By JOSEPH NGURE

Globaltrotting marathoners failed to give a proper account of themselves as new talents dominated this year's Shoe4Africa 5km road race in Iten on Monday where a record 1,300 runners competed in the year-end event.

And Christmas came early for more than 300 participants who braved the morning wet conditions.

Former Amsterdam Marathon champion Magdaline Chemjor and veteran Hellah Kiprop were obliterated and could not fix themselves among the first five finishers with newly discovered Mercy Cherotich Kibarus calling the shots.

Kibarus, 24, who trains under Gianni Demadonna's stable in Iten, led a class of raw talents in the female only encounter to win the race in 16:45.8 after previous winner Joyce Chepkirui opted to watch the event from the roadside.

MAJOR VICTORY

Kibaru, a top finisher during Baringo Safaricom Half Marathon and Kass Marathon 12km shook off stiff opposition mounted by upcoming Valentine Kibet to boost her Christmas shopping with Sh42,000 being the top prize.

"This is my major victory after competing in several road races this year. The win came after hard training," Kibarus told *FeverPitch*.

Second placed Kibet, a younger sister to former European cross-country champion Hilda Kibet and two times World 5,000m runners-up Sil-

via Kibet, easily discovered her siblings winning format after timing 16:57.32 and went home Sh25,500 richer.

SERIOUS TRAINING

"After taking my training more serious, I have found out that I can run, I want to try cross-country next year and if I make it to Poland, it would be great," Kibet said in a post-race interview.

Diana Jepkemoi clocked 17:01.47 to come third while Jepleting Busienei and constant Gladys Kwambai timed 17:05.0 and 17:10.07 for fourth and fifth positions respectively.

Marathoner Hella Kiprop, the pre-race favourite finished a distant 7th in 17:12.94 while 2007 Amsterdam Marathon champion Magdaline Chemjor, fresh from winning Kisumu International Marathon a week ago, came tenth timing 17:17.62.

During the race graced by Athletics Kenya (AK) Vice-President General (Rtd) Jack Tuwei who represented the sport President Isaiah Kiplagat and was assisted by Moi Teaching and referral Hospital Director John Kibosia.

Jepleting Busienei won a special prize for finishing fourth with no international outing experience.

Sharon Chebiwott won the prize for running using a special chase number.

General Tuwei, who represented Shoe4Africa CEO Bobby Tanser for organising the event and for the charitable work being carried out by the Foundation.