



TEN TO WATCH IN THE 2015 SCOTIABANK OTTAWA MARATHON

WOMEN

Meselech Melkamu ETHIOPIA

Melkamu, 30, has a superb personal best in the marathon of 2:21:01 set at the 2012 Frankfurt Marathon. A complete distance runner, she has run 3,000m in 8:23.74 and was the African Champion at 5,000m. In addition, she has won three individual bronze medals at the IAAF World Cross Country Championships as well as the 10,000m silver medal at the 2009 IAAF World Athletics Championships in Berlin. A year ago, she finished 2nd in the Dubai Marathon. On April 5th, she comfortably won the Daegu Marathon in a time of 2:27:24. She is from the same training group as Girmay Birhanu.

Abebech Afework ETHIOPIA

Just 24 years old, Afework made her marathon debut at the 2013 Dubai marathon then went on to finish 2nd in Rotterdam the same year. Her confidence growing, she won the 2014 Houston Marathon and finished 5th in Berlin last fall. This year has started out well. Afework set a new personal best with a 2:23:33 clocking in Dubai (January 23rd) and then, as a test of fitness for Ottawa, she ran the Yangzhou Half Marathon in 1:09:14.

Agnes Kiprop KENYA

This 35-year-old mother of two young children is also a seasoned marathoner having recorded a personal best time of 2:23:54 in Frankfurt four years ago. A year ago she finished 3rd in Ottawa a little disappointed. If she is healthy she will be a force to be reckoned with. Kiprop has a history of Typhoid and dropped out of the 2012 Boston Marathon because of a bout with the disease.

Yeshe Esayas ETHIOPIA

A two-time winner in Ottawa (2012 and 2013 when she set a course record of 2:25:31) this year marks her fifth appearance in the nation's capital. She has a personal best of 2:24:06 from the 2013 Frankfurt marathon. Since turning to the marathon in 2007, she has won Daegu twice, Marrakech twice and finished second in Tokyo. Earlier this year she placed 6th in the Tokyo marathon in 2:30:15 and will be expecting a much better performance in Ottawa.

Sultan Haydar TURKEY

This 27 year old knocked three minutes off her best time at the 2015 Dubai Marathon in January recording a time of 2:24:44. Although she was born in Ethiopia she represented her adopted country at the London Olympics and also at the 2013 IAAF World Championships in Moscow. She will celebrate her 28th birthday on May 23rd the eve of the Scotiabank Ottawa Marathon. Haydar started out as competitive race walker in Ethiopia.



MEN

Girmay Birhanu ETHIOPIA

An ambitious 28 year old, Ottawa will be his fourth marathon in seven months. In April he won the Daegu marathon in 2:07:26 almost a minute ahead of his nearest rival. His best performance came at the 2014 Dubai Marathon where he ran 2:05:49 to finish 3rd. He hopes to beat the course record of 2:06:54 set last year by his former training partner Yemane Tsegay.

Dadi Yami ETHIOPIA

With a personal best of 2:05:41 from the 2012 Dubai marathon, Yami is clearly one of the contenders to win here in Ottawa. Training at home with the famed Ethiopian coach, Getaneh Tessema, the 32 year old has demonstrated a return to top shape after a disappointing 2014. In March he ran a decent time of 2:08:05 to finish 4th at the Seoul International Marathon.

Alfers Lagat KENYA

Another potential podium finisher is this 28 year old Kenyan. After running to a personal best of 2:07:11 at the 2014 Eindhoven marathon, Lagat turned his attention to Ottawa. A half marathon of 60:33 on March 22 at the Venlo Half Marathon (Holland) showed his preparation is on schedule.

Peter Kirui KENYA

A contender for top honours in Ottawa, the 27-year-old Kirui has a best time of 2:06:31 recorded at the 2011 Frankfurt marathon. He represented his country at the IAAF World Championships that same year finishing 6th in the 10,000m with a superb time of 27:25.63. A consistent performer at the half marathon distance in three of the past four years, he has dipped under on hour for the distance. A year ago he ran a personal best 59:22 for the distance in Prague. On March 28th he returned to the Czech capital and ran a very good 61:17 in preparation for Ottawa.

Chala Dechase ETHIOPIA

It has been five years since Chala Dechase, now 31, recorded his very fine personal best of 2:06:33 at the Dubai marathon. A few mediocre years followed but if his performance in the 2015 Dubai marathon (January 23) is any indication, he is once again ready to tackle world-class fields. He ran 2:08:11 in Dubai. He is a former winner of the Great Ethiopian Run, Africa's largest road race, which was founded by the great Haile Gebrselassie.