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Record Turnout and Another Successful Year for the Baltimore Running Festival

This past Saturday, October 10, saw another successful turnout for the Baltimore Running Festival. The main event of the day was the Baltimore Marathon. On a somewhat overcast morning, with a few bouts of rain – perfect running weather – Alphonse Yatich of Kenya won the marathon in 2:14:04, while Iuliia Arkhipova, a native Kazakh who now lives and trains in Russia, won the women's title in 2:32:09. This was fast enough for Arkhipova to PR by over 2 seconds as well as set the course record for women, smashing the former standard of 2:35:44 set by Rima Dubovik in 2006. Arkhipova stated, "My goal today was to improve my PR ... I knew by 22 miles I would get the record." She finished more than three seconds ahead of the second place women's finisher, Tatiana Pushkareva of Russia.

Yatich was not quite fast enough to break the course record for the men, which was set last year by Julius Keter, another Kenyan, in a time of 2:11:54. But while Yatich was unable to best Keter's record, he was able to defeat the defending champion in his bid to repeat. Yatich and Keter broke away from the pack after only six miles into the 26.2-mile race and held a 31-second advantage by the half-mile mark. The eventual champion eventually broke away at 19 ½ miles, and Keter ended up dropping out after 25 miles.

The Baltimore Running Festival has been held since 2002. In 2008, it drew a record 17,992 participants. It continues to draw a record number of participants every year, making it one of the fastest growing marathons in the country. This

year's festivities again set a record, with a total of 20,364 runners. The prize money for both the top male and female finishers in the marathon is presently \$18,000. The total cash purse for the event is over \$100,000.

The marathon course begins at Camden Yards and travels through many neighborhoods of Baltimore, including the Inner Harbor, Federal Hill, and Fells Point, as well as Fort McHenry. The race ends at about the same place as it starts, with the finish line set up at M & T Bank Stadium.

Besides the flagship marathon, the festival also features a half marathon, a 5K, a few wheelchair events, as well as a relay option for the marathon. Competitors in the marathon relay compete in teams of four, with each team member covering roughly one-quarter of the course. (Incidentally, the top-finishing relay team did *not* have a faster time than those of the top nine individual marathoners.) This year's half-marathon was won by John Crews of Raleigh, N.C., for the men and Kayoko Obata of Colorado for the women. In the 5K, Ethiopian Bado Merdessa of the Bronx and DC resident Susan Hendrick ran away with victories.

There was some Loyola representation at the festival, with members of the cross-country team volunteering to hand out water and Gatorade at the marathon's 22nd mile water stop. Also, Jackie Truncellito, Loyola's head women's track and field coach and cross-country assistant coach, completed the marathon in 3:09:00, good enough for 71st overall and 18th among the women. This result ought to be considered none too shabby, considering that she was looking ahead to the race by thinking that she was going "just out for a run."