

HISTORY OF THE MARATÓ DE BARCELONA

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BY MIQUEL PUCURULL

For various reasons not relevant here, the information related to the history of the marathons held in Barcelona had disappeared. In an attempt to resolve this issue, I made a small summary of what I found most remarkable, from the first marathon held (1978 in Palafrugell) until the last one. I find it very rewarding to be able to keep its compendium. Hopefully, the potential readers find it also very interesting. **Palafrugell: a previous note**

The 1978 Marató (Palafrugell-Calella)

It has to be said to be consistent, that the Marató de Barcelona of 1980 was the first marathon held in Barcelona, but was a continuity of the two that had been realized in Palafrugell, one in 1978 and another in 1979. We therefore need to honor this small Emporda town for being the place where; due to imperative reasons - they could not do it in Barcelona city due to lack of permissions-; for the first time in our region a popular marathon was held, created and promoted by Ramon Oliu organizing entity presided by what was then the Commission Marathon Catalunya.



1- Poster of the first marathon.

2- Ramon Oliu, pioneer of popular athletics, crossing the finish line of the historic marathon of Palafrugell in 1978.

Therefore, it all started in Palafrugell.

The origins of this first marathon come from the fact that Ramon Oliu, a chemist by profession, had been transferred to Barcelona in 1977 by the American company where he worked. The man had started racing in the United States at the age of 47, and he had done the New York marathon. Thinking that running was also a popular sport here, once he arrived in Barcelona he went to ask the federation in which location was the next popular marathon.

Surprised by the query, they answered that only one marathon was being held every year, the Spanish Championship, one year in one region and another year in another; and that in order to take a part on it, it was necessary to have a certain level and to be federated to run, that is to say, not a popular marathon.

Then, just at that moment, he decided to organize one in order to run it. He went to the old facilities of F. C. Barcelona, a dirt track of 350 meters of rope where today you can find the Miniestadi, and he met there Domingo Catalan, the athlete who become later on the world champion of the 100 km, he was circling the track, training a 3,000 obstacles. Catalan had never run a marathon; actually he hardly knew what it was; but he became encouraged with what that gentleman who had just arrived from America explained to him about a test of 42 odd kilometers.

He recommended him to talk to someone who could become involved as well, "who along with a group of friends from a village on the Costa Brava, realized a run for miles, something like a marathon."

And Ramon Oliu went to meet Pere Pujol. It did not take too long to seduce the doctor to run a serious marathon, organized, and that had continuity. And the following year, on March 12, 1978, in Palafrugell, with Oliu, Pujol, Catalan, Pro, Jorba, Antentas, Noguera, Masllorens...through a circuit consisting of Palafrugell-Calella-Palafrugell-Rengencó-Pals-Torroella and return, it was the first popular marathons held in Spain, a month before the one held in Madrid in April.

In the first marathon of Palafrugell 185 athletes came out and 138 finished it. The marathon was won by the American Dave Patterson in the men category with a time of 2h23'15, and in the women category by the Catalan, Matilde Gomez, who made it in 3h55'33

Regarding the 150 arrived participants, an anecdote: the last four participants realized it out of control. The limit was set to finish the marathon was of 5 hours, but the organization wanted to wait for them and give them official time. The last one, named Von Gotz, did it with 5h22'30. In the typewritten list which was printed shortly after the arrival of the penultimate, his name and time was added handwritten by the same Ramon Oliu.

134	CAMPOS NOGUERAS, Jordi	27	Independent	4h. 55'03"
140	NOVELLON VAL, Josen	20	A.Tarrasa	4h. 55'25"
141	GONZÁLEZ GRACERÍA, Mico	16	J.A. Sabadell	4h. 58'31"
142	VILASPOCA NUALART, Jose	41	E.D. Braß	4h. 58'29"
143	VILLEGRA MORA, Antonio	26	Reus Deportivo	4h. 58'37"
144	MAS LLORENS, Alvar	15	Independent	4h. 59'07"
145	ALBEROLA SERRA, Alfred	41	Sant Angelo	4h. 59'58"
146	INES MARE, Ester	23	Sant Angelo	4h. 59'59"
FADA DE CONTROL				
147	VALCELLS FORCELAT, Ramon	15	San Nicolau	5h. 02'49"
148	MARTRET BURMISTER	37	BARCELONA	5h. 03'13"
149	BARTOLOME PEREZ, Jose	26	San Nicolau	5h. 03'37"
150	VON GOTZ			5h. 22' 30"

addition handwritten by Ramon Oliu.

Last page of the classification for the test, with the

And with this marathon the popular races movement was launched: a way to practice athletics avoiding the stadiums where up to then had been almost the only place possible to do so. A movement that at that time requested a lot of pedagogy, to publicize the virtues of running for the pleasure of running. A movement that has become a social phenomenon.

And with this marathon was launched the phenomenon of popular races and marathons: a way of practicing athletics avoiding the stadium, a place where until then had been the only place where to do so.

The 1979 Marató (Palafrugell-Calella)

In the second marathon, also in Palafrugell, the number of registrations rose to 308, of which 224 finished the race. (the test experienced many abandonments in both occasions which should be attributed to, in my opinion, the lack of specific training. Everything was to be done.).

The winner was again Dave Patterson (2h19'37) improving by four minutes, his previous year's time, and also Matilde Gomez (3h18'48) was the winner of the women category, lowering her mark by thirty seven minutes.



Start of the second marató Palafrugell 1979

The 1980 Marató de Barcelona

The Marathon departed from Avenida Maria Cristina, the same place where it does now, to hit the road of the Bordeta, several villages of the Baix Llobregat (El Prat Viladecans, Cornellà, Esplugues ...) to enter Barcelona by the Diagonal, and to continue by Pau Claris, Via Laietana, Passeig de Colom and Parallel, and to end up at the finish line located at the same point of departure.

The marathon, that first marathon in the city of Barcelona, was a first-class sporting event for the city (although it must be said that there were not too many spectators beyond the families of the runners at the arrival), because since 1955, on the occasion of the Mediterranean Games, no other marathon had been held through the streets of Barcelona. Still less a popular marathon ...



Right after the start, a front pack was created. 1980 Marató de Barcelona

The test was attended by 956 participants, and 716 finished it. A 25% abandonments, which proved that to finished a marathon was not yet attainable to everyone.

Of the participants that finished, 668 were men (97%) and 20 were women (3%). All - except three runners who took four or five more minutes - within the time limit for that year: 5 hours 30.

It was won by the English, Don Faircloth in the men category with a time of 2h19'42, and by Joaquina Casas in the women category with a time of 3h09'53.



The front-pack passing by El Prat: Antentas, Francisco, Catalan.

Although he arrived in second place, the champion of the marathon that year was Domingo Catalán (2h21'23), the mythic runner world champion of 100 km a few years later. He was a very loved athlete, who had many followers and a quite renown in the athletic world. The proof is that he made the cover of a magazine edited at the time.

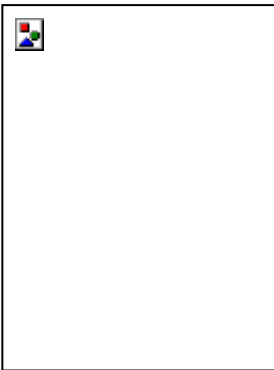
In addition to Domingo Catalan - and of course of the English athlete who won the marathon- the other winner of that first marathon in Barcelona was the Girona born athlete JoaQuimaa Casas, the also legendary Quima Casas with more than 100 marathons completed, who at the time, had been for less than a year doing athletics.

The first athlete not federated to reach the finish line, was a 24-year-old, Jaime Castro, who did it in 2h38, taking the 23th place overall. He debuted at the marathon, as many others young and veterans, of which we must include the good marks of Manuel Fernandez, 23 years, who made it in 2h25 (seventh), Ricardo Alguacil, 25 years (sixth, also with 2h25), Jesus Ma Justes, 22 years (2h30), Rafael Hernandez, 19 years (2h39) ... In contrast, we must emphasize the time achieved by the first veteran of more than fifty years, Jose Ma Torres from Valencia, who qualified 48 overall with a mark of 2h50.

One curiosity: when the 1980 Marató was held, the mayor was Narcis Serra and Pasqual Maragall was the deputy mayor. Both of them, said more than once, that right at the start of the test -given by the mayor with the traditional gunshot and simultaneously by the sound of the cannon from the Castle of Montjuic - they both came up with the idea of requesting the Olympic Games for the city of Barcelona, in view of the spectacular start. It was from then, when they started working with the project to organize the Olympic Games. Finally, as we already know, four years later we were awarded the mentioned games at a ceremony held in Lausanne, with the famous sentence from Samaranch "à la ville de ... Barcelona. "

That is to say, that the popular 1980 Marató de Barcelona was significantly, the origin of the 92 Olympic Games.

An oddity: the registration cost of the marathon at the time was 300 pesetas.



Cover of the magazine Atletas with the arrival to the finish line of the Domingo Catalán

The 1981 Marató de Barcelona 1981

The Marathon of 1981 departed from the same place as the one in 1980, from the Avenida Maria Cristina, making a similar journey going through El Prat, coming back to Barcelona and finishing in this case in the Serrahima stadium.

The number of registered participants (1.108) rose by 16% compared to the previous year, and the participants that arrived at the finished line (989), 38% more, which means that the lower number of abandonments which in this case was about 12% of the total, came to say that most people already trained.

It also confirmed the fact that the margin between the first arrived and the last arrived participant in four hours was 64% the previous year, and for this editions was 75%. And there was also some improvement in the percentage of those who lowered the three hours time: 14% in 1980 and 15% in 1981.

The winner in the man category was the British, Martin Knapp with a time of 2h18'56, and the winner in the women category was Iciar Martínez with a time of 2h47'12.

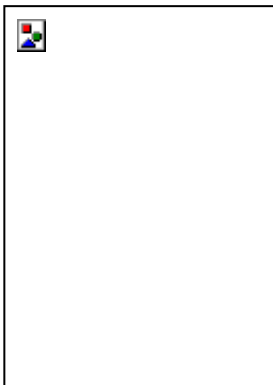
Martin Knapp made a good mark for the time - especially wonderful for him, lowering in four minutes the time he used to do - and the Madrid born Iciar Martínez even more. It was the best time of the female ranking that year in Spain. Today they would not have much value, but then, both marks were much discussed by the media specialist and had much impact in the running world.



The winner Iciar Martinez won the half-marathon. At her side, first from the right, Jose Maria Odriozola, when he wasn't yet president of the Spanish one

So good were the times achieved in this marathon of 81, that the test suffered some controversy orchestrated by the federation, which confronted to the Commission Marathon Catalunya, questioned the quality of the measurement of the 42.195 km, and even tried to invalidate the test. Without success which was a good thing. It seemed as though the outbreak of the beginning of popular athletics was a nuisance to the people that occupied the federation chairs, and these last ones created all kinds of obstacles, to the point of scheduling the Catalonia championships of 10,000m on track, the same day as the marathon.

It didn't help much either the "competition" that in the first issue of the journal edited by the organizers of the Madrid Marathon, contained a question about the real distance of the Barcelona 81 marathon. Fortunately, it only happened once.



Arrival of popular runners at the estadi Serrahima, 1981 Marató

The 1982 Marató de Barcelona

The marathon of 1982 departed from the fountains of Montjuic, and ended as the previous year, in the small stadium Serrahima after going back and from the Baix Llobregat.

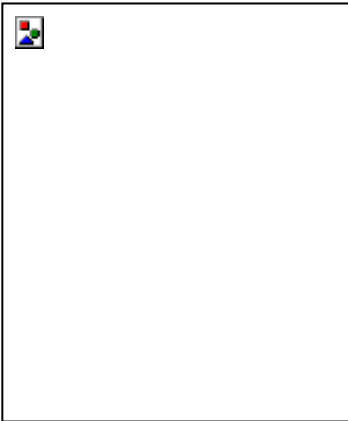
It had 1.310 registered participants, 18% more than a year earlier and 1.155 participants finished the race, 88% of the total, with a normal rate of dropouts (12%), confirming that, unlike the first three editions, people didn't decide to run a marathon if they were not trained.

The education done in this sense by the Marathon Catalunya, who organized the event at the time, with their Participants going around making speeches telling people how to prepare themselves for the race, began to bear fruit.

In this respect, most veterans must remember that all of us who had little experience at the time, listened to anything said by Oliu, Mates, Vancells, Antentas, Pesarrodonà ... and many other pioneers, related to the marathon. We were like infants, fascinated by the mystique surrounding the race, and if we had been told to run the marathon barefoot, for example, we would have done so.

In this sense, it's difficult to forget the advice of Francesc Mates - former Barça athlete - in 1982 in one of those conferences: "If you've prepared yourself meticulously, if you made at least 60 or 70 kilometers weekly, you can do the marathon. Do not exceed yourself; do not try to keep up the rhythm of others, since if you do this, you may not finish the race or finish it piteously. If you are able to realize half of the marathon in a good state, it will help you to convince yourself that you will finish the marathon well. Use vaseline before you start, and drink water in all water stops even if you are not thirsty. After the marathon, in the afternoon, take a walk, and for two or three weeks, run, but gentle, taking it easy, and if it is possible, on a grass surface.

In other of the conferences, the Commission took to Barcelona the famous German doctor Ernst Van Aaken to talk about the advantages of running long distances at a slow rhythm, a practice of which he was the predecessor. A doctor who was the first one in affirming that women were better endowed than men to run long distances



Start of the 1982 marathon

The first runner to arrive at the finish line was the north-american Michael Pinocci, with a good time of 2h14'30, and the first runner in the women category was the Portuguese Rita Borralho with a time of 2h46'58, which wasn't bad at all then.

A curiosity, the second place was for the same runner who had won two years earlier. Don Faircloth (2h20'48), and the second runner in the women category, was also the one who won two years earlier, Quimaa Casas (2h55'17), who although she improved in fifteen minutes the time of the year 80, could not with the Portuguese, who had a much better level.



Quima Casas right after her arrival, she is congratulated by another marathoner: doctor Pere Pujol.

Both winner marks were the race records. In fact, in 1982 all were records: more registered participants than in the previous year, more participants who finished the race, more foreigners than ever before, better marks than in the previous editions, more people on the streets encouraging the runners (but not many), more volunteers and even a better gift bag...

And speaking of statistics, note that just as the year before with regards to the previous edition, the quality of the participants' time improved: 79% finished the race in less than four hours, while in 1981 this was achieved by 75% of them. One last indication about the last runner, a woman in this case, well known in the running world then and now, Nuria Ruiz, who finished it with 5h25'41, just a few minutes before closing the test, set in 5h30'00 .

The 1983 Marató de Barcelona

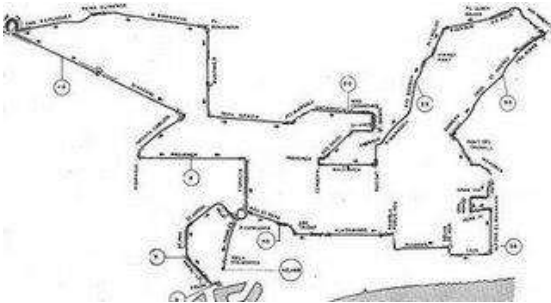
The 1983 marató made history due to a novelty established and that over the years has been a crucial rule: it was the first marathon in the world; that's what was said; in which there were doping controls. This had never been done before, and it was done for the first time in Barcelona: a total of ten athletes pass it, the three top finishers, and seven more randomly selected from among all participants.

More novelties: for the first year, as in all large marathons, an electric car was used to open the race -a mean of transport unusual at the time (and still unusual now, we must say) - to prevent toxic gases to affect the runners of the front pack.

Also, and for the first time, the 1983 marató was run entirely within the city boundaries, without visiting any neighboring city. The circuit was completely urban, and after the impediments of the first years from the administration to held the race entirely on city streets, achieving this was a milestone.

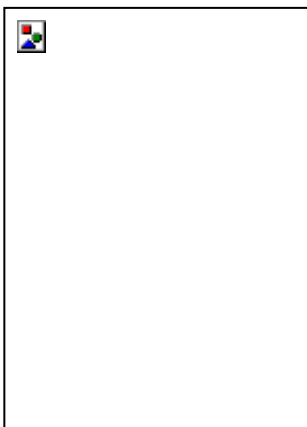
The new circuit also meant a great satisfaction for the runners, who assumed -naively- that they would always be surrounded by crowds of people. Nothing could be further from the truth: at that time, to watch some guys in shorts running around the streets didn't mobilize anyone. We must say that neither now, but then, considering that the start was at eight in the morning, Barcelona was a desert. Only upon arrival, which was at the Ramblas, several hundreds of relatives and foreigners gathered to cheer the runners.

The 1983 maratón had a new and beautiful route, but it could be considered a flat marathon: it started in front of the monument to Colom, and, in general lines, passed by Parallel, Rondes, Passeig de Gracia and Provença, you hit km 6 at Avinguda Josep Tarradellas (then Infanta Carlota). It continued all the way up to the square Francesc Macia (I cannot remember if the square was still called Calvo Sotelo), and was continued all the way up throughout the Diagonal to the height of the park Cervantes. Then, it headed right to the road Esplugues and Passeig de la Bonanova up to the square bearing the same name where was located the km 15, the highest point of the test. Nine kilometers of hill and in total 125 meters above sea level.



Luckily, we went all the way down Muntaner to Travessera de Gràcia, but then, other ups and downs to end up on top of Via Favencia, which was quite tough. We went down to find the neighborhoods of La Sagrera, Clot, Southwest of Besos, Poble Nou...and reaching Arc de Triomf, Ronda Sant Pere, Plaça Catalunya and down the Ramblas to the finish in the same Rambla de Santa Monica.

Although it was not a very benign route, the first runners made some excellent marks. The Danish Allan Zachariasen, who had the best time of all participants did it with 2h11'05, an international renown mark at the time, which was over fifteen years - until 1998 when it was beaten by the Moroccan Abdeslam Serrokh, 2h09'48- the record of the test. Domingo Catalan, with a magnificent time of 2h17'46 was the first athlete from the state and fifth overall. We must add, that the winner of the marathon in 1980, Donald Faircloth, made it with a minute and a half more than at the time, and then came in twelfth position.



The Danish Zachariasen arriving at the finish line

The Ukrainian Anna Domoratskaya with 2h48'21 was the first woman, taking advantage of the favorite's abandonment, the Portuguese Rita Borrallo, winner of the previous year. And as anecdote, we must note that Quimaa Casas, the best Catalan marathon runner of those years, came in second for the third consecutive year.

Probably attracted by the lure of running a marathon within the city, or because the Marató de Barcelona began to have prestige, the number of participants rose dramatically in comparison with the previous year. Of the 1,310 registered participants and 1,155 who finished the race in 1982 we passed to 1,879 participants and 1,773 who finished the race, ie a 43% and 53% increase respectively.



Winner trophies and statuette for everyone with the same design

From among all arrived participants, an anecdotal fact that has to be mentioned --the marathons are always full of them- is that the maratón was ran by the three Catalan climbers who had tried unsuccessfully to climb Everest on October 14th, 1982.

It seems, as it was said then, that in failing to climb the highest mountain in the world, they decided to tackle another challenge as it was to run a marathon.

And all of them did it, the most well-know of them, Oscar Cadiach, with 4h22'27, without any special training as it was also said - though this is doubtful because five months had past- using the good shape achieved preparing themselves for the Everest expedition.

However, they all finished the maratón. Like the other 1,773 participants, 53% more than the year before, which proved that the maratón de Barcelona was evolving strongly.



The arrival at the Rambla, *completely full, of a popular runner*

The 1984 Marató de Barcelona

Definitely the year 1984, the maratón de Barcelona had really taken roots. You just need to see the details of its evolution since it was created up to that year:

1978 Registered participants: 185, Arrived participants: 138

1979 Registered participants: 302, Arrived participants: 224

1980 Registered participants: 956, Arrived participants: 716

1981 Registered participants: 1.108, Arrived participants: 989

1982 Registered participants: 1.310, Arrived participants: 1.155

1983 Registered participants: 1.879, Arrived participants: 1.773

1984 Registered participants: 2.894, Arrived participants: 2.387

I believe that the high percentage of increases - a spectacular 54% more in 1984 in comparison to 1983 – with help of the great number of foreign runners who every time in greater number signed up for the race. Stimulated probably by the fact that Barcelona had been nominated for the 1992 Olympics with many chances to be elected, they wanted to get to know it. Also from the rest of the state, but the foreigners, each year were more.

The maratón of that March 18, 1984 was won by a Zurich policeman, Werner Meier, with a time of 2h14'50. He was not a well known marathoner, this was his fourth experience in this kind of test, but from the first moment, leaving the Avenida Maria Cristina, he went at the front, almost alone, only accompanied by another Swiss runner during the first three kilometers. Neither he was very young: 35 years, he came to confirm the theory, prevailing then, regarding the best age for a marathoner was about thirty-five years old.

The women category was won by the English Margaret Lockley with a time of 2h41'42, which meant a new record that lasted five years. She was also an athlete of a certain age: 38 years, physics professor, who as has the male winner, improved her mark.

It should be mentioned with regards to this aspect of the runners age, in particular in this marathon of 1984, besides the winners, the home athletes played a very special role, Rafael Garcia (ranked fourth with a time of 2h16 ' 06) and Quimaa Casas (second with 2h45'32), of 35 and 38 years respectively.



An anonymous participant (with typical beard of the time), entering exulting the finish line in the presence of Ramon Oliu.

The route was exactly the same as the previous year, with the start in front of the Colom monument and the arrival at the Ramblas, this year with a little more public.

The next day the headlines spoke about "Over 220,000 people present at the popular maratón applauding the 3.000 registered athletes". Obviously, the reporters wanted to contribute to the maratón with their messages, because there weren't that many spectators. What else we would have liked to see.

Speaking of headlines, there were ineffable: "On the streets of Barcelona, the athlete gave some brushstrokes of color and sports to the city," or "A novice, who work 44 hours per week as a policeman, stood out from the first meter of the race and won the marathon". As it is, but the important thing was that some media started to say something about a test absolutely unknown to many people.

However, one of the major problems, especially that year, was the drivers. One of the same newspapers I referred to previously, said that "... more than one runner had to stop and wait for the signal of a policeman, anxious about making the vehicles circulate promptly". Although they were unaware that the vehicles had to wait for the signal of the policeman. Or they did not want to know it.

The traffic was still one of the main problems, within the many improvements achieved and that made the organization of the Marató de Barcelona a reference. For example, the beginning of the test, which was at 9 AM instead of 8 AM of the previous year, increased the animations: devils, giants, big-heads, music...

Or the quality of the symposium held the day before, where they talked about the nutrition for long distance racing

The premises where it was held were completely full – not even a needle could fit - the runners absorbing all the words mentioned by the speakers, among other doctors, Pedro Pujol and Ramon Perecaula, renowned athletes like Domingo Catalan or Rafa Nogueras, or the biologist José Maria Odriozola, the current president of the Spanish Athletics Federation, who participated in the maratón, finishing it with a superb time of 2h39'50, at the age of 45 years.

One key conclusion, which was also significant of that year and which demonstrated the occurring boom, was that of the 1,000 more runners who participated in the maratón in comparison to 1983, half of them did it for the first time. This made that the percentage of participants who finished the race with more than 4 hours - 22% of the total - was particularly

high, but served to confirm the eminently popular character that the Marató de Barcelona was striving for.



Poster of the 1984 Marató

The 1985 Marató de Barcelona

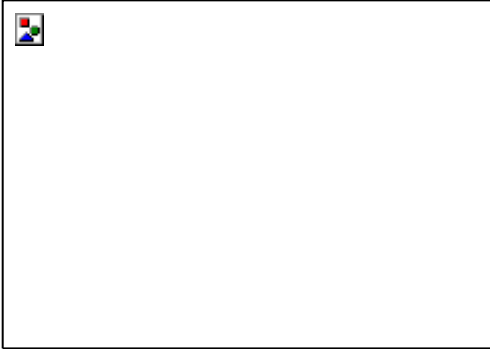
The first noteworthy fact of the 1985 Marató de Barcelona, is that, curiously, the test had fewer participants than the previous year. Specifically, eighty-four less registered participants (2,810 against 2,894), while fourteen more participants finished the race (2401 against 2387). The differences aren't much but it's surprising that the extraordinary progress experienced over the seven years before became then paralyzed.

The causes? The million dollar question (which is now called). For me, the most significant was that the organizer Marathon Catalunya had lost its charismatic leader a few months before the end of the 1984 Marató. Ramon Oliu had returned to the United States (he came to Catalonia for seven years for work-related reasons, and due to work-related reasons he had to return again), and things were no longer the same. At least on that first year - and on the next one- his absence was crucial, in my opinion, regarding the maintenance of the evolution of the test.

However, the attention to the runner - a characteristic feature of the Marató de Barcelona- continued, and even improved. For example, when it came to the public order, which was substantially better than the previous editions, and that the traffic did not mean any major problem.

Something that may have also influence the lesser participation was the replacement of the circuit of the two previous years for another one. This change was an unfortunate circumstance, since it's known that marathoners like, of course, to repeat the same route a year after another in order to measure their progress. It has been said that the itinerary changes were very frequent during this decade, probably due to administrative impositions.

In 1985 we departed from right in front the França train station, and after going around the city with a continuous rise until km 24 at Vall d'Hebron, with some streets which had cobblestones at the time, and suffered a day of strong wind, which it's know that always blows against one - we went down to meet the Parc de la Ciutadella, where was located the arrival which was a splendid place for this purpose.

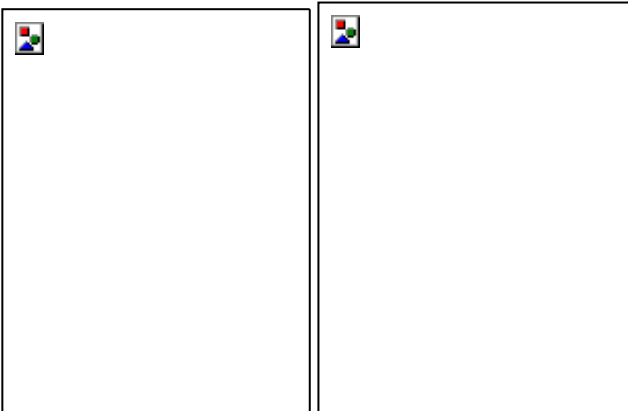


In this maratón, the winners, and for the first time were the Catalan: Rafa Garcia and Quimaa Casas. Rafa, with a time of 2h18'16 beat his opponents after the abandonment at the km 27 of the favorite and winner of the 1983, the Danish Zachariasen; and Qima, who with a time of 2h48'01 also beat the foreign runners who accredited a better mark than her.

Although with a strong cold and a sore throat, and having arrived extremely tired, due to the effort of the marathon of the Spanish championship that she had run recently, Quimaa got her second victory at the Marató de Barcelona. A maratón which as she told the press: "I must feel really bad (she said "fucking bad" but they stated "really bad") for not taking part in this race".

A story about the triumph of Rafa Garcia: as it was cold and the wind blew, to protect himself, Rafa put on a white t-shirt on top of his club's t-shirt, when he remove it, just a few feet of the arrival, there was a strong ovation from the public, not so much, as he said, because of the arrival of the winner, who almost anybody knew, but because he did it ... wearing the Barça t-shirt!

It's important to know that Rafa García (although not well-known), was one of the best half distance runners in Catalonia on track, becoming Spain's champion of 1.500. He left the Athletics for six years, to return to its practice with the maratón. An anecdotic case!



1- Rafa Garcia at the moment of the start, in the center of the picture with a white t-shirt

2- Arrival of the winner with the Barça t-shirt

1986 Marató de Barcelona

Again, for the second consecutive year, the maratón of 1986 had less participants who finished the race than the previous year: 2.808 registered participants (the same number as in 1985) and 2.152 finished the race, which meant 251 less.

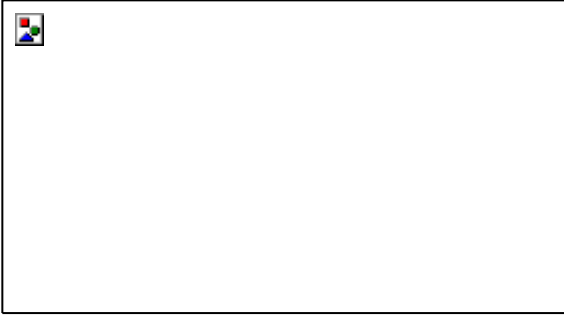
The truth is that we, the anonymous runners, we were not affected by this decrease because we appreciated the services we received. Neither the organizers seemed to be too concerned about this because they let us know, and they proved us that their option was to create a popular marathon, not a big event. Undoubtedly, we noticed that above all, the most important was the runner. It was not surprising, for example, to see how the entire organization would wait for the last participant even if this last one had exceeded the 5 ½ hour time limit, without touching any service upon arrival, or even a banner.

No doubt they all would have been happier with more people, and the entity Marathon Catalunya that organized the test during the first years, but we must say that they maintained a very good spirit, and we recognized the effort they engaged, without earning a penny by the way.

Unfortunately, the circuit was changed once again, almost certainly with the objective to minimize the interference with the traffic. Again the interests of motorists - those who complained bitterly on those Sundays of March- prevailed over those of the athletes. And although it took place entirely within the city - the following year was not like this - it seemed as if the streets had been carefully chosen to annoy the motorist at least as possible.

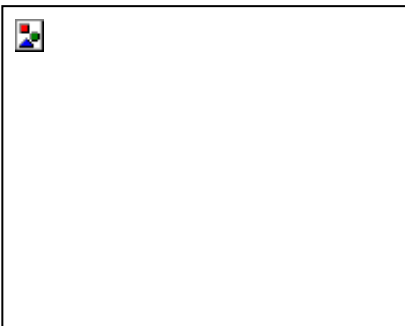
The start was at 11 am, (the TV also had some saying on this), a good time for some, but disastrous for the bulk of the race, let alone the last ones, because even though it was March 16th, it was already quite hot.

We left the Passeig Marítim to go find the highest point located on km 16 at the Road of Esplugues, to then go down by Gracia, dealing the best way we could the paving of Travesera at the time, and going up a little by Sagrada Família and then it was flat again, and then we went up a little until Horta, to go down definitively, to arrive, again like the year before, to the Parc de la Ciutadella.



The winner was the Belgium Frederik Vandervennet, a very small runner, but with a powerful stride, who did a good time of 2h15'45. And the winner in the women category was the English Deborah Heath, who also a small woman, who ended the test in 2h48'22. The second man classified was the Catalan Balser, Rafa Garcia, winner of the year 1985 had to abandon, exhausted, at km 31. The second woman, of course, once again, Quimaa Casas.

Both the winner of the man and women categories, and other foreign athletes who participated were not renowned marathoners, something impossible to achieve because the renowned athletes requested a high fixed amount to start the test which our marathon could not gather apparently and so they claimed, that's why at international level it wasn't a well-known test. (Until the next year, it was not seriously considered the question of cash prizes for first winners).



The Belgian Frederik Vandervennet crossing the finish line at the Parc de la Ciutadella

In any case, the marat6 was starting to get known, as demonstrated in 1986 it was televised live for a while for the first time. Needless to say that this made us all very excited, thinking that we would go out on TV. Naively, because as always, the only ones that went out was the front pack.

Another novelty in this case led by the spectators -maybe due to the influence of the television broadcast of the New York marathon a few months before, or because there were many foreigners in Plaça Catalunya and Las Ramblas, watching, many of them encouraged the runners with shouts of Go, Go, Go! ...

It was also very exciting the departure time, because we expected a larger number of spectators, which is always appreciated. And that was actually true - not like the New York crowds- but there was a lot more people on the street. It was frequent that day to find many children –and people also not so young- especially at the arrival, who offered their open hand to the runners so we could touch them. They must have seen on TV that they did it in the New York City Marathon, in fact, it turned out to be a nice thing at the beginning, but if you wanted to correspond to everyone, you ended up exhausted.



Statuette for the 86 Marató for all arrived participants

The 1987 Marató de Barcelona

In those years, and 1987 was no exception, on the contrary, the City Council put many obstacles in holding the marathon inside the city. And once again we were sent far from the center: to the Zone Franca in this case, from km 25.

There, around Mercabarna, through streets that instead of names they have letters and numbers which makes them less-than-welcoming and the cinturó del litoral, near the cemetery of Cantunis, we had to run about twelve kilometers of almost the end of the test. The most deserted place where a man (never better said) can run a marathon.

The truth is that it was flatter than the previous years. The highest point was 45m at the height of Serrahima on the level of the start, which was next to Passeig Picasso next to Parc de la Ciutadella, which was also the arrival, but willingly, we would have preferred the Diagonal rise before the funeral and barren landscape that we had to go through. Everything can always be improved, but I think that the circuit of 1987 went down in history as the most wicked of the Marató de Barcelona.

Another thing that made it terrible (I know I'm torn, excuse me, but it is clear that these writings do not pretend to be poetry), was that the Guardia Urbana (transit police) was completely committed to keeping the circuit closed for 4 ½ hours and that was it. Needless to say, how happy was the crowd of participants at the tail had to hear from a man with a motorcycle and a cap things like this: "The circuit is now open. You are running under your own responsibility". To your command!...

The test was won by the Swedish Paer Wallin with a good time of 2h13'59, and in the women category, and again for the second time Quimaa Casas, with 2h43'45, setting a new record of Catalonia which she, herself, had achieved a few months prior at Calvia.



Quima Casas, a myth of the marat6

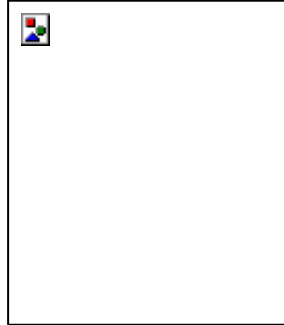
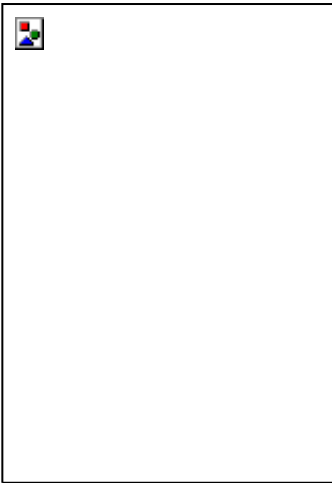
That year, the level of the first marathon finishers was very good. Perhaps the reason is that the Marat6 de Barcelona gave cash prizes for the first time, half a million pesetas for the winners, man and woman, and other quantities if they achieved records - but the quality of the front pack was very good. We just need to say that the tenth classified, the Catalan Fernando Diaz, who also won a prize of 10,000 pesetas, did a time of 2h21, something that it's difficult to happen today in marathons in our country and many others.

Another thing that shows that level: the Swedish Wallin doubled it. He did exactly the same time in the first half as in the second half of the test (1h07 and 1h06'59). And the second, the English Steve Brace, who finished the marat6 with 34 seconds more than the first, also nearly doubled it (1h07 and 1h07'33).

There was 2930 athletes registered and 2443 arrived. All together, we can say that during the years 85 to 87 we felt like the marat6 had peaked in terms of participation. Then it was not, but during those three years it was indeed. In this respect unlike other marathons around, it was losing its appeal. Nothing to do with aspects of attention to the runners and the dissemination of marat6 runners by what was then the entity Marathon Catalunya. For instance, every year the symposium the day before was getting better, that although a good part of it was conducted by doctors, there were speakers who were also athletes.

That year in 1987, Moracho and Abascal spoke, two monsters of athletics of the era, we were all astonished, although they were not runners, by their morning and afternoon trainings.

An anecdote: in one of these congresses, I do not remember if it was this year -came to give a lecture the Olympic champion Frank Shorter, gold medal in Munich'72 and silver in Montreal'76. The day before the conference, he went to run alone in Montjuic, and as he was running, another runner approached him to chat with a guy who looked like a foreigner and trained at a very slow pace. One of the things that the stranger said to Shorter was "- they say that tomorrow an Olympic champion will give a lecture in Barcelona on what to do to win a marathon", and he replied to him "Oh, really? Well, I'm interested. I'll go listen to him. Do you know where he is going to give the lecture? ".



1- Poster marató'87.

2- Allegorical statuette, in small but identical to the first trophies, all participants received one upon arrival

1988 Marató de Barcelona

The marató of 1988 meant a break on the stagnation of the last three years before as regards as the number of participants.

Of the 2,930 registered participants in the year 1987 we passed to 3.250. And in the case of the arriving participants: from 2443 to 2653. This eleven percent and nine percent respectively was great news, because whether we like it or not, the fundamental aspect of a marathon is the evolution of its participation. And it went pretty well.

The other aspect that we must highlight is the circuit, and we must say that here, once again, the route, which as usual was again a different one, was not too good, to put it mildly.

The start and the arrival was at the straight line of the Estadi Montjuic.

I do not know if they knew that the marató of the 1992 Olympiad was set to be finished at the Estadi and they wanted to make a sort of trial, but the fact is that the rise in the last two kilometers - after two: to go to Horta at around km 20, and then to climb up by Muntaner street until Bonanova at km 28 - was not very rewarding.

Even though it had been said in some newspapers that this was "a marató with Olympic flavor, for most of them (us) it was eternal the way from Plaça Espanya until the arrival at the top, next to the stadium, in front of the Picornell swimming pools.



And since we are talking about newspapers that year they were more careful than the years before with the estimated number of spectators cheering in the streets of the city. They talked of 100,000, far less than half of the mentioned in 1984, but even so, it still seems too many.

In considering the merits or not of a circuit it depends on how it went for you. For example, the winner, the catalan Fernando Diaz – an athlete of very good level and always very close to the populars, a mechanic of Renfe – who did it with 2h19'58, told the press "... it's a circuit that I liked. It is not conducive to make good marks because the final two kilometers of ascent are very hard, but I think it is a circuit that invites you to win." The second classified, the Madrid born Ricardo Alguacil, who arrived just three seconds off Diaz, had a different opinion: "... the circuit is hard. Here it will be impossible to make good marks. I would ask them from here to the Games to consider smoothing the circuit".

Apparently the circuit didn't displease the winner of the women category, the British Deborah Heath- also winner in 1986 - with a time of 2h 45'35 she took ten minutes off the Galician Esther Pedrosa (2h55'16). The third one, at twelve seconds, was the Scottish Leslie Watson, an attractive marathoner assiduous in Barcelona, who, painted as a vampire, always ran surrounded by several runners, who probably were trying to appear in the photos of newspapers the next day.

And speaking of women, the number of those who participated in this maratón were 103, almost 4% of the total arrived participants. It is appropriate to check the information, to see the progression of women who join our home maratón every year, a test in which they had been forbidden to run in the Olympics until four years earlier.

1985: 70 women arrived (2.9% of total)

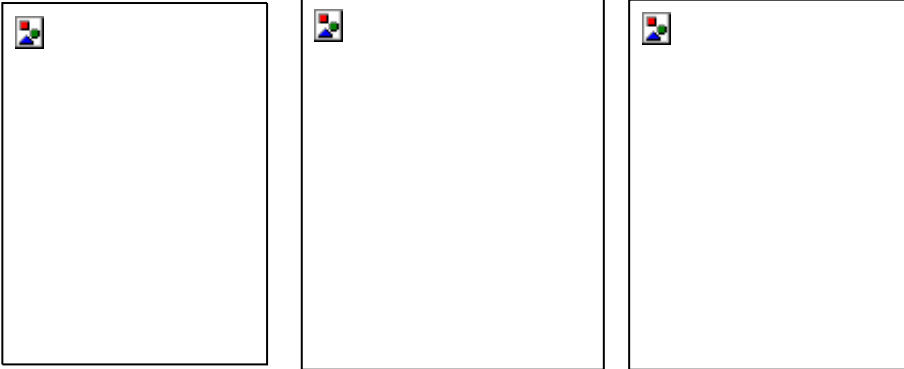
1986: 79 women arrived (3.7% of total)

1987: 93 women arrived (3.8% of total)

1988: 103 women arrived (3.9% of total)

As a reference we can take the year 2007: 763 women arrived (12.1% of the total)

We were going in the right direction and we keep going well!



- 1- On the terrible hill, many arrived walking
- 2- Others completely exhausted
- 3- But some euphoric ...

The 1989 Marató de Barcelona

The year 1989 was a maratón that had, for the umpteenth time, another circuit different from previous years. But this time it was more than justified. The criticism from the runners about the two terrible points of the year 1988: the Muntaner rise and the rise until the end to the Picornell were very numerous. And if we add the bad times that everyone scored (the winner did the worst time of all the marathon races in Barcelona until then), all this made that the organization considered changing the circuit.

The start was at Tarragona Street, approximately where now is located the km 9 of the current maratón, then it went down to Zona Franca and return to Gran Via, and go down the Rambla to find the Poble Nou neighborhood, Horta, Sagrada Família ... and Córcega street until the Passeig de Gràcia...And although we had to climb from there to the top of the Diagonal in the last stretch of the race, six kilometers ranging from km 31 to km 37 - to hit the Sants neighborhood and then down to the arrival at the top of the Parc de l'Espanya Industrial, the new route was much softer than the 1988 and was quite pleasing to almost everyone.

But everything cannot be beautiful, the maratón that year had a very restricted time limit: 4 hours and a half. A measure imposed by the traffic authorities, as they were the ones who opened and closed the streets they called the shots, and nobody of course, could do anything about it. A step backwards in this aspect because the runners who exceeded the time limit ran at your own risk. Luckily, however, the organizers, as always attentive to the interests of the real protagonists who were the runners, waited at the arrival for the last participant although he had done it with more time than regulated, considering him/her a participant and giving him/her the statuette, bag and the diploma.



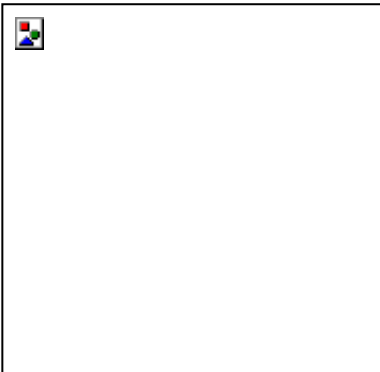
nowadays

Moments after the start direction Plaça Espanya, on a Tarragona street very different than

The 1989 maratón was surrounded by a matter that had to do more with politics than with sport, it's worth explaining. Domingo Catalan took part in this maratón - an athlete very dear to everyone - that was sanctioned by the Spanish federation for political reasons since he raced some days before in South Africa without prior authorization. It was said by Arcadi Alibés in his chronicle as director of the magazine Marathon of the time, which, with your permission, I'm going to quote.

"The twelfth edition of the Marathon Catalunya was a special edition. Several circumstances contributed to the fact that the test will not go down in history as one more race. First, the affair related to Domingo Catalan, who had raised all sorts of comments on previous days, caused a very special atmosphere at the start. The athletes, most athletes were for the "Mingo", and many decided to run with several inscriptions on their backs for the Catalan and against Jose Maria Odriozola. But also made an appearance some Participants of the Antiapartheid Action Group, who wanted to express their disagreement with some banners about the participation of the Catalan in the Marató, even if he participated without a bib number"

Domingo Catalan, champion and world record-holder of the 100 kms at the time, started, and though he did not enter the finish line, he always maintained himself among the front pack and probably he was the athlete most applauded of the route. Perhaps even more than the one who won, the American Doug Kurtis, he crossed the finish line with 2h16'37 in a very even final, since the runner-up, Tommy Hughes, and the third classified, Patrick Joannes, did it with 2h16'43 and 2h16'57 respectively.



Doug Curtis arriving as the winner

The Belgian Martine Van Der Gehutche was the winner in the women category with a superb time of 2h37'41 and broke the female record of the test. The second classified was the British Deborah Heath with a time of 2h41'48, and the third the Catalan, Elisenda Pucurull (my daughter) with 2h42'39.

This time, the number of participants was almost the same as the year before: Registered participants 3300, which represented a 1.5% increase, and arrived participants: 2656, three more athletes.

In any case, however, the number of female runners increased substantially (139 arrived participants against 103 of 1988, which meant a 35% more), they represented a 5.2% of the participants versus 3.9% of the previous year.

Another thing which was improved with regards to the year 1988, was the average time of the athletes that finished the test. This was a trend that is often produced and that came to demonstrate that more and more people trained better to participate in the maratón, this rule was only broken when the circuit was terrible, as it had been the 1988. 1989 the average time difference was almost of three minutes: 3h28'19 3h31'01 against the average time of 1988.

One more thing, this refers to the last arrived participants. Beyond the 4 hours and a half which was the time limit, 12 athletes arrived, the last one of all, Jean Louis Combas with 5h'20.00.

The 1990 Marató de Barcelona

Known as it was that it would be the circuit for the Olympic marathon two years later, in the year 1990 they wanted to do the same: departure from Mataró and arrival at the Estadi de Montjuic.

It was a good idea. Although the final climb - no need to say - was really tough, that route was much celebrated. Entering the stadium running a marathon meant a great attraction for everyone, except perhaps for the elite athletes since this prevented them of making a good mark.

The fact that the start was so far away could mean a problem for many athletes who had to travel from Barcelona city, in addition to the family, but it was not like that: everything worked extremely well. The organizers put a few special trains available for the runners who went out from the Sants station, and which left us at the Mataró station, from there we had to walk up which went very well for stretching the legs - until the start, which was located besides the Parc Central, the same place, from where the half marathon starts nowadays.



Start of the marató BCN'90 at Mataró

About the organizers: I do not want that criticisms I made in the writings of previous marathons related to circuits and serious traffic problems to be interpreted as a criticism to the work done from Marathon Catalunya which was the entity that organized the marató. Quite the contrary. The responsibility of these issues was not theirs, but of the City Council, who considered - nothing to do with the current situation – that the marató was a nuisance to the citizens. I want to make this clear, to say that the efforts of the MC of that time, heirs of the legacy of Ramon Oliu, was superb, and repeatedly praised by the runners.

The race started from Parc Central, which is on the top part of Mataró, at 10.45 AM. A little late, but we know that the TV ruled. The first few kilometers up to the road of Litoral were going down and it was convenient not to let ourselves carry by the euphoria given the large amount of applause from the spectators who were in that stretch. There were also quite a lot of people encouraging the runners passing through the villages on the coast: Vilassar, Premià, Badalona, Sant Adrià... finally reaching Barcelona entering from Guipuzcoa street, and going through the neighborhood of Poble Nou – then going to meet- Passeig de Colon, Paral·lel, Lleida, Les Fonts, INEF building, Palau Sant Jordi... and then entering the Estadi Montjuïc.

The participation that year was slightly higher than the previous year: 3349 registered participants and 2832 arrived participants versus 3300 and 2656, and-curiously-noteworthy that the percentage of dropouts (15%) was much less than in 1989 (20%), despite a difficult arrival and having started in an hour that could have influenced to quit at mid-race. (Of course: how does anybody return home from Vilassar or Montgat?).

The winner was the Danish Allan Zachariasen, who had already won it in 1983. The year 1990 he did a worse time (2h16'30) in comparison to the time done seven years before, where he obtained the record of the test, but considering the height difference from Parallel to the stadium is not bad!.

Second was the Mexican Castillo, with almost two minutes difference (2h18'43), and for the women, the winner was Helena Pucurull (Needless to say, my daughter?) who arrived with 2h43'11. The second, the Galician Esther Pedrosa (2h43'48), who two years earlier had also arrived second with twelve minutes difference.



Arrival to the Estadi of the winner excited.

The 1991 Marató de Barcelona

The year 1991 was the same route back to the year 1990.

Eureka! Said someone..., because the constant change of route of the marató had been very damaging for the test, and it seemed that it had finally found the ideal route, despite the final three kilometers of the climb to the Estadi de Montjuic.

It was also said to be the route used for the Olympic Games marathon the following year (and it was indeed with some variation) and this added an extra charm.

Start from Mataró, that year at 10.30, a quarter of an hour before the previous year, not that much of a difference but very much appreciated because of the heat suffered because of the TV by those who do it with more than 3 hours and a half, which are most...

Special entertainment through the coastal towns, like the year before, Cabrera, Vilassar, Premià, Masnou, Montgat, as well as last year one realizes how great and long is Badalona - where was located the indicator of the half marató -Sant Adrià...and needless to say Barcelona.

We had to run quickly, because they gave us four hours and a half... But the volunteers, food and drinks stops, doctors, the people who gave you the statue upon arrival, everyone waited for the last remaining athlete, bypassing the bylaws (I believe it that's the way it's called) that closed circuit with a curious Germanic punctuality.

We said that the people who made it with more than 3 ½ hours are the majority, so let's see: the total arrived participants 2890, of which 60% did it with more than 3.30. This figure, good news for me, contrasted with the earlier years - in 1983 was 47% - and came to confirm that increasingly there were more new runners who wanted to participate in the marató, not with the objective of "making a good time."

Referring to the data, increase of arrived participants in comparison to the previous year of 2%, and of the women, very encouraging trend, was of 15%.

That year was we repeated the experience of a year earlier, which consisted of a race for older children and adolescents of 8 to 17 years (the age at which they could participate in a marathon was 18), with categories and prizes for all. It was called the Mini Marathon and was carried out at the Anella Olímpica, departing and arriving at the Estadi realizing a tour of 4.3 kilometers, while the rest of us were around the Maresme.

The first classified of the maratón (the one for the adults) was a Japanese called Kasid Nishimoto, who did it with 2h16'32 - curiously two seconds longer than the time of Allan Zachariassen the previous year (and the Japanese are already known to be methodical ...!)- and the second was the Algerian Sid Ali Sahra with 2h17'11. In the women category, the winner was also Japanese, Satoe Minegishi, with 2h38'37, and the second was a Catalan, Elisenda Pucurull with 2h42'27.

One more fact: although the time limit was 4 hours and a half, many athletes exceed it, actually 261. A clear demonstration of the healthy trend of runners, and locals to the civil disobedience.

The last of these undisciplined was Juan Soler (5h59'20), and the last woman, the veteran Pepa Pont (5h55'54), who I remember was diabetic. She used to say, and probably she was right, that she ran marathons with 60 something years to help control the sugar.



1) Mini 1991 Marató

2) The Japanese winners in the presence of the then Mayor Maragall

The 1992 Marató de Barcelona

The maratón of the year 1992 was not one more marathon. It was held on March 15th, just four and a half months before the Olympic Games, and the legend it contained, doing the maratón itself, was a very important incentive for people to try to do it.

6,586 registered runners, and it was finished by twice the double number of participants that the previous year.

The fact that there were 1,593 of them who did not participate in any marathon ever - 28%, ie an odd number - might seem that many were attracted by the myth attached to it, and without

the necessary training. But it was not the case. 5,694 arrived, which means that there were not many more dropouts than expected. Rather, the dropout rate - 13% - was lower than the previous two years of the marat6, races on the same circuit: departure from Matar6 and at the Estadi de Montjuic.

Great day for the marat6 de Barcelona that year. The data in comparison to the previous year in all other aspects were overwhelmingly positive. Worthwhile to summarize them:

	1992	1991	1990
Registered:	6.586	3.452	3.349
Arrived:	5.694	2.890	2.836
% vs any previous year:	+ 97%	+ 2%	+ 7%
Man:	5.338	2.760	2.723
Women:	356	130	113
% dropouts:	13%	16%	15%
Time average:	3h44'06	3h41'06	3h40'39
1 st marathon realized	1.593	781	----
Catalans vs total:	2.396 (42%)	1.828 (63%)	----
Spanish:	1.428 (25%)	250 (9%)	----
Foreigners:	1.870 (33%)	812 (28%)	----
Average man's age:	40	40	----
Average women's age:	39	39	----

Speaking of the many new runners that year and the low percentage of those who dropout, the detractors released the rumors that they have seen many take the metro, with bib numbers and everything, and then getting out at Plaça Espanya and into the finish line. I cannot confirm if the rumor was true because I didn't see it, although I read it. You know: the traps are not new to the marathon. And the next day to tell friends from work that you have participated in the "Olympic" marathon and have done X time (as if the friends - who immediately asked him/her what was the time of the first – knew anything about times of marathons!), is priceless.

However, with or without cheats, this is pure anecdote, because the most important is that the marat6 that year 1992 increased unsuspected in figures of participants.

As said before the circuit was the same as two years before. Well, was not exactly the same: it left the yard in front of the station of Matar6 in the middle of the road, rather than from above the city, and the final kilometers were inside the Parc Forestier de Montjuic, making a longer journey than the marat6 of 1990 and 1991 through the mountain, to attenuate the final climb.



1) 1992 start from Mataró

2) The 40 km is always a great indicator. This one was located around the Fuxarda

We must say that this last one, the Route Forestier as it was called, was a success. Since it was longer, the rise was less direct to the Estadi. To illustrate this I would extract from the magazine Marathon of that year, the source of which I'm basically using to trigger my memory-synthesis of some superb sentences about that new last section realized by Joaquin (I do not know the name), one of the architects who designed it.

"The route Forestier born into the park, passed the km 38 of the maratón, when flustering the theater Grec goes up towards the Font del Gat. A detour to the right, discrete, humble and steep, opens the door to adventure. Suddenly we note a change of scale measures and concepts; up to now the race had elapsed between large spaces, open (by the coast road passing through the villages Vilassar, Premià, etc.), or through avenues and streets more or less wide (Badalona, Barcelona and Sant Adrià). Now, suddenly, we enter an intimate space, where the man, the athlete will be the sole protagonist.

And it was true, the forest where we explore Montjuic, unknown to most, made the last 4 km to the end much more bearable than the route of two years earlier.

The winner was John Burra of Tanzania, with a good time of 2h12'46, followed by the athlete of Leon, Rodrigo Gavela with 2h14'27, who became champion of Spain (that maratón of 1992 was the national championship), and the Japanese Kenichi Tsurusaki, third with 2h15'19.

In the female category the Czechoslovak Monica Estarvoska prevailed with a magnificent time of 2h34'07 that meant a new record of the test. Second and Spanish champion was the athlete of Palencia, Ana Isabel Alonso, and the third the Catalan, Maria Luisa Munoz.



Maria Luis Muñoz

Some more data: First the less good: the registration fee was 2,000 pesetas if you join before February 15th. If you did it later: 3500. Finally, the good news: that year the time limit was once again of 5 hours.

The 1993 Marató de Barcelona

This post from the year 1993, unlike what would be normal, I will start by talking about the last runner who crossed the finish line. I do note that, reviewing the classification, this athlete, named Juan Soler Barraquer, was also the last arrived participant in the marató two years earlier. I do not know who he is, and obviously he is not known in the athletic world, but his achievement - everyone is a winner in a marathon - is well worth a mention in this modest history.

I had an interest in seeing the results of other years and worth knowing them: he appeared in 1990 finishing it with 4h31'03 leaving three hundred runners behind him, next year he is the last one and he takes almost one hour and a half more (5h59'20), this doesn't affect him- I have already said that I don't know him, but I imagine it - and in 1993 he does it again with (6h00'32) to be the last one once again. Hats off!

In another dimension, the first three classified did the following times:

1. Volmer Herbstrith: 2h13'25
2. Francisco Villameriel: 2h16'58
3. Benito Ojeda: 2h17'50

And the first three women:

1. Emma Scaunich: 2h36'16
2. Marina Prat: 2h48'32
3. Irina Roubanis: 2h49'46



Ready for the start, everyone with the chrono ready

The winner, a Brazilian who had been living in Barcelona many months before the test, trained some 300 kilometers a week, as she said, running through the streets of the city and through the Carretera de les Aigües. He had even run the race of the Corte Ingles the year before.

The favorite, was not the Brazilian, it was the Kenyan Gabriel Kamau, who had 2h10 in marathon and 1h02 in half marathon, and had won many marathons (Chicago, Los Angeles, Pittsburg, Charlotte, Montreal. ..), he was the ninth (2h 22), seven minutes from the Brazilian. Maybe because the number of kilometers per week of the Kenyan were, as he said, only a maximum 150?.

Emma Scaunich, who was also a runner of very high level, who had run the Olympic marathon of 1992 a year before qualifying in the 11th place - which was fine - but with a time of ten minutes worse than the time she made that March 14th, 1993 when she finished victorious.

The route was the same of recent years: Mataró – Estadi de Montjuic, although the start returned to the Parc Central on the city's top area, rather than from the road down, as in the year 1992.

That Sunday was a day of heavy rain and humidity. However, arrival times were pretty good, not only for the front pack, but the majority: the average time was 3h38'31, five and a half minutes less than a year earlier.

Something that was widely celebrated, as it is nowadays: the availability of a hares (they were called practical at the time) who wore indicators with the time in which they would complete the maratón, to help those who wanted to follow them. That year one of those hares was Arcadi Alibés, who was wearing a sign on his back that said "If you want to do a time of 3.30 come with me".



Arcadi Alibés (428) with a good group around him

In terms of participation, it was very shocking the decline of athletes compared to the previous year. Please note that the 1992 Olympics had an effect, but even so, it was surprising that less than half signed up: 3.106 against 6.586, and finished the race 2,637 against 5,694. And the numbers were not just less than those of the Olympic year, but also of the three years earlier.

It took officially five hours to finish it, because over this time thirty three athletes arrived (among them the one mentioned at the top).



Poster of the 1993 Marató

The 1994 Marató de Barcelona

The marathon of 1994 was used to "discover" a new value, the Catalan Benito Ojeda, who won it the second time he ran the test after having already been third the previous year, and who since then is a reference in the marathon world in the country.

He did so with complete authority because from the moment of the start, he was at the front, - no need to say it – that this is particularly difficult with a test like the marathon. He covered the distance in a time of 2h15'14, with over two minutes of advantage from the second, the Portuguese Domingo Neves, and more than three from the Russian Kolesnikov.

Every marathoner has his own way of training, and in that sense, I think it may be interesting to know how Benito Ojeda did it. I'm going to reproduce what he said days later in an interview realized by Rafa Nogueras in the magazine 42.195 of the time.

“ Let’s talk about training. How many times per week do you train and what kind of training do you realize?

I think my training is quite special compared to other runners. I train twice a day and I do long distances. For this marat6, I only did one day 28 kilometers, and the other days I didn’t do more than 20 km. What happens is that since I train in the morning and in the afternoon, I can do 170 km per week and that’s what gives me the foundation to finish the marat6.

- What do you give more importance to and how do you diversify your training?

- In the morning I usually run about 15 or 16 kilometers of continued race. One or two times a week do a reinforcement circuit or a race on the beach, and two or three days I do interval or installment trainings, according to whether there is a race or not on Sunday”



Benito Ojeda, with the bib number 8, was right at the front pack from the start of the race

In the women category won the Russian Marina Ivanova with a 2h40'30, followed with nine minutes difference by the Italian Manzone, and then the Catalan Marina Prat ten minutes later. (Speaking of the training of the winners, the Russian winner said she realized between 150 and 200 kilometers per week.)

The number of participants in the marathon of 1994, was 2,853, of whom 2,565 reached the finish line. Three percent less than a year earlier.

It is difficult, when speaking about marathons of the mid nineties, to have to admit that the Marat6 de Barcelona was not developing at all well in terms of number of participants. Although the organizers postulated that it was not the most important aspect, it was disappointing to see that except for the unusual number of athletes from the 1992 Olympic, not only it didn’t grow but it even decreased.

Something was happening. Maybe it was the obstacles that the administration placed on the test?. The final climb to the Estadi was excluding? Or, although the runners continued feeling well treated, the organization had become semi-professional, and had lost the pioneer and altruistic nature of their beginnings, and consequently, its dynamic development?.

Whatever it was, it was not normal that while the number of participants in marathons in other cities - Madrid for example – was increasing without stop, in ours was reversing. And this trend didn't stop in 1994, but continued. Let's see:

1993 arrived participants: 2.637

1994 arrived participants 2.565

1995 arrived participants: 2.518

1996 arrived participants: 2.419

And we should say it to know it exactly, at least with the data in hand, that our maratón went through difficult times. And more that would come.

The 1994 maratón began at 10 AM and the enrollment fee cost 2,500 pesetas, it had again the same circuit of the last four years: Maratón - Barcelona, with a final climb to the Estadi, after passing through the coast villages, in which the population were still some great cheering fans. Much more comparatively to the spectators from Barcelona.



We cannot say that the Barcelona spectators encouraged much the runners at that time.

One last comment: in this maratón of 1994, if I'm not mistaken, the correca pcr35, was ranked 46 and in second place in its category with a time of 2h39'59.

The 1995 Maratón de Barcelona

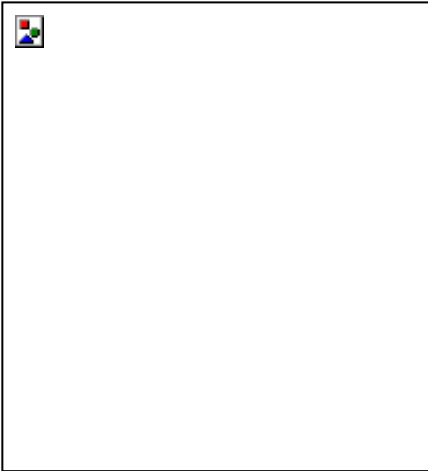
The maratón of the year 1995 is remembered as the "Maratón of the chip". Why? Because for the first time in Barcelona for the first time within the state, was used this unusual tool for timing the times of the runners.

Now it seems essential and normal, but twelve years ago, knowing exactly at what they had done independently of the time taken to cross the finish line thanks to a small device, imported from Germany by the ChampionChip of Andrew Ballbé, technical manager of the maratón - linked to the marathoner sneaker, was absolutely revolutionary. And besides: it was used to establish the average time per kilometer, indicate the time of passing through the half marathon, etc., and help detecting cheaters – there are always some- was something similar to science fiction.

The only drawback was that at the time the chip could not be bought – when you got your bib number, they lend you a chip- it was quite annoying having to detach it and return it upon

arrival. It was very tedious, to have to bend at the end, after 42 km, to remove it. But the benefits justify it, and willingly we accepted that plastic, that when you passed over a carpet it realized a piiiiip noise, which was very nice ... especially the one of the last step realized!

The race was won by a Russian of twenty-one years, little-known and with not many bright marks, Igor Tchouprakov with a time of 2h21'12, and in the women category, the Catalan Nuria Pastor with 2h44'19.



The first and second crossing the finish line

In contrast to previous years, in 1994 there were many elite foreigners missing and the level of the first in both categories was not very good. Without pretending to be a snub at all, but simply in order to illustrate the facts: the winner's time was the worst in the history of the Marató de Barcelona, and the winner from the women category was the highest time of the past seven years.

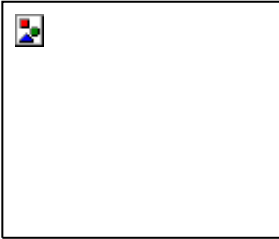
Needless to say, in favor of Igor Tchouprakov that his fighting spirit made him a winner. He entered the Estadi next to the Moroccan Abderrahime Ben Radouaire - a runner who lived in Barcelona, much more expert and who had a better mark - and when it seemed that he would be the winner, the Russian did a 20-meter sprint to the finish line and overtook him.

Pastor wasn't either very expert in marathons – she had run one in 1993 and again in 1994 - but she was an athlete who participated regularly at popular races - winning four times the Cursa de la Mercè and five times the race of El Corte Ingles, and half-marathons. She did not have the competence she expected from the Russian Marina Ivanova - the winner of the previous year, who did a time of six minutes more - and she won for two minutes difference over this last one.

The number of registrations that year was 2.876, and arrived participants 2.518. In this regard, one more advantage that allowed the chip was to know exactly the number of dropouts that had occurred during the test. Until then, attributed to the difference between registered participants and arrived participants, although it was not real, since some although they were registered, did not show up at the start.

In particular, the number of registered participants that didn't show up that first year in which it was possible to count it were 71. This gave a dropout rate of 3% of those who actually started the test, this percentage was much lower than what was provided until that date.

Additionally, the chip was also used to find out the percentage of those registered but who didn't show up at the start, this was the first year we could obtain this data and it was 10%. And it was also helpful to catch nine athletes and disqualify them, who didn't pass by all the carpets – they only passed through the departure and the arrival carpets - with the intention of cheating and show off who know of what and in front of whom.



The great invention of the chip

The 1996 Marató de Barcelona

Two years before the 1996 marató, the test was won by an athlete who was not famous in the marathon world: Benito Ojeda, and this year, in the same circuit he won again.



Benito Ojeda at the time of arrival

The first time he won we could have said he was a promise the second time he was already a reality. He had become a runner of very good level, who raced often in races of all kinds that took place in our region, and proved victorious in most of them. An example: two months before

the maratón of 1996, he won the half marathon of Sitges, one month before the Gavà one, and three weeks prior the one of Montornès.

I do this appreciative eulogy, because the Catalan Ojeda was a landmark for over a decade and continues very high up. For instance, in October 2006 with 40 years old, he won the Mediterranean marathon with 2h25 and became the champion of Catalonia.

That March 18th, 1996, ten years before, he did it naturally with less time: 2h16'57, but this athlete of Santa Coloma deserves a recognition in this collection of maraton de Barcelona for his significance to same ones.

The first woman was a 26 year old Maltese, Gisella Camilleri with 2h48'17, the first marathon she had done in her life. Very different from the number of tests that had the runner who came in second, the Catalan Marina Prat, and even the fourth one, Quima Casas, two other references, needless to mention it.



Marina Prat passing by the Vila Olímpica

The chip was once again praised by everyone. Well there is always people that complain about everything, and who complain about the nuisance of tying it up or unleashing it. To the point, that we found out that 300 runners decided not to do it!

The participation, once again, was lower than the previous year. Little difference (2,477 versus 2,518) but was, again, a subject that was taking too long to be resolved. Even less foreigners than the past three years earlier.

Now we complain about the prices of the bib numbers at the races, but this issue comes from far away. In 1996 the registration cost 2,800 pesetas, and if you registered late (I cannot remember the time limit), 5.000.

About the circuit: it was the same as the previous year, with the departure from Mataró and arrival at the Estadi de Montjuïc, but the end stretch was modified slightly in order to mitigate somewhat the climb, the criticized Achilles heel of that route. There is no point to repeat the assertion of the supporters to end the test at the stadium due to the attractiveness of finishing the race there. Even some recalled the argument of a marathon legend, Ron Hill, who said: "There is no simple and easy marathon. If you want to run a flat marathon, then you should run

in a running track". The climb was terrible, and therefore was banned by most participants, that 1996 was the last year that the marat6 was finished at the stadium.

The 1997 Marat6 de Barcelona

I didn't remember it. Upon reviewing the data available of the year 1997, the name of the runner who came in second, was the Guipuzcoan Diego Garcia, who fatally died four years later. I mention it firstly, to tribute him.

Diego Garcia was a great marathoner: he had been recordman of Spain in 1992 with 2h10'30; Olympic in Barcelona1992; runner-up of the European marathon (do you remember him? hugging Martin Fiz and Alberto Juzdado at the arrival of the European Championship of H6lsinki'94, all three on their knees, after arriving second, third and first); again at the Olympic Games in Atlanta in 1996... He retired in 2000 with 39 years after having run 30 marathons at a very high level. Away from the high competition, he continued participating in some popular test, and sadly, four years after the marat6 de Barcelona 1997, March 31st, 2001, while he was training, he suffered a heart attack and died.



Diego Garcia, always with a band on his front head

One minute before Diego Garcia, who did it with 2h13'42, entered the winner of the race, the Moroccan Abdselam Serrock with 2h12'53. Third, the Kenyan Mbarack Hussein with 2h15'26 and forth a lot of good athletes with outstanding marks, as a result of, probably that the fixed amounts to start the race for that year must have been high, and therefore some important figures were encouraged to come Barcelona.

One of these figures was from Palencia, Ana Isabel Alonso, Spanish record of all times in marathon at the time (and now), who obtained it two years earlier with 2h26'51. That day in Barcelona she did 2h30'04 and obtained by far also the best time of the test. Behind her two Spaniards with good marks: the 39-year veteran Josefa Cruz (2h37'49), and the young Natalia Requena (2h39'18).



Ana Isabel Alonso

Overall, that day, the men and women in the front pack got pretty good times, this is an issue that favors the pedigree of marathons. A day by the way, March 16th, which was really hot for the season.

A notable aspect of the maratón 1997 was that finally, after several years of downward trend, the participation rose dramatically. The number of registrations was 3,448 and arrived participants 2,949 against 2,727 and 2,419 of the previous year, and increase of 26% and 22% respectively, which allowed a justified optimism.

It is unclear whether the reason for this increase can be attributed to the fact that they removed the final climb to the stadium that year.

The circuit started as the years before from Mataró and then the coastal towns, but in Barcelona, to compensate for the kilometers they had reduced at the end, instead of climbing directly to Parallel through Passeig de Colom, the circuit went all the way up Via Laietana to hit Jaume I, and Ferran street to the Ramblas. Now it climb up to Plaça Catalunya, and turned down the other side of the Ramblas to Les Drassandes, and it climbed up to Paral·lel and with a final climb through Lleida street then you reached the esplanade behind the fountains of Montjuïc where was located the finish line.

The end of the new route was also not flat either, and some, among them myself, preferred the rise to the stadium of two kilometers, instead of the solution of going up and down the Ramblas when you were about 5 or 6 km to finish the test.



Human statues on Las Ramblas with the maratón passing by.

One stimulating data: each time there were more runners who dared to do the marat6 for the first time:

	1997	1996	1995	1994
1st marathon done:	808	744	738	623

Another data: the runners were increasingly older in age. And interestingly, the women increasingly matched those of men. Confirms the following data:

	1997	1995	1993
Average age of men	40	39	38
Average age of women	40	39	37

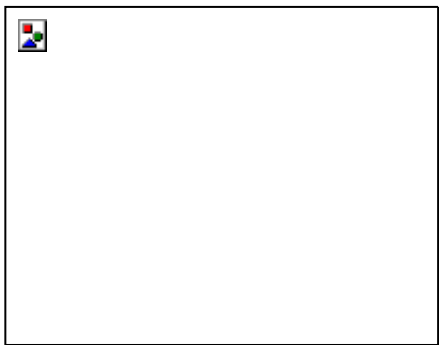
Overall must say that the marat6 of 1997, a year in which the entity organizer of the test had a new President, Domingo Catalan -in replacement of Adolf Torruella, who years before had replaced Raimon Vancells, successor of Ramon Oliu - was a success. Important aspects such as the increase of the number of participants, renowned athletes, good marks, the smoothing of the final stretch, and as always, a great attention to the popular runners.

The 1998 Marat6 de Barcelona

If the year 1995 is remembered as the "Marat6 of the chip," the 98's it's the "Marat6 of Records".

It was obtained by the first man and the first woman: the Moroccan Abdselam Serrock with 2h09'48, and Ana Isabel Alonso with 2h30'05. Two marks that remain after nine years as the records of the test. The same two athletes were also the winners of the marat6 the year before, he did it with three more minutes, and she, who also broke the 1996 record, with one more second!

The winning time was highly commented by the press and the marathon world because it was at that moment, the first time that someone lowered the 2h10 mark in Spain.



Historical moment: record of the test!

The route was the same as the recent years, Mataró-Barcelona, but with an improvement: in this, and with respect to the year 1997, after the Plaça Catalunya you didn't have to go down the Ramblas, you went to hit the Street Sepulveda through Pelayo, Ronda Universitat and Ronda Sant Antoni, and the arrival was located at Avinguda Cristina directly from Paral·lel, and Plaça Espanya, avoiding the climb through Lleida street of the year before. And also, we ran one more kilometer inside of Mataró compared to other editions in order to compensate for the cuts of the route in Barcelona.

In particular, much better. The three top finishers, men and women were:

Abdselam Serrock: 2h09'48

Andrea Nade: 2h15'39

Benito Ojeda: 2h15'47

Ana Isabel Alonso: 2h30'05

Elefenesh Alhemu: 2h32'06

Natalia Requena: 2h39'15

Apart of the records, the quality of the marks of the front pack was very similar to the other years. Good as the previous year, the top ten dropped from the 2h22. However, the first seven women were under a time of three hours, while the previous year there was only five women under that time.

In any case, the average times of all runners were better than the ones for the 1997 maratón, probably due to the improvement of the circuit, and especially because it wasn't so hot. Even there were fewer dropouts: 80 versus 121 (3% against 4%), although we must consider that the number of arrived participants were also less. Incidentally, about the total arrived participants - and registered participants- that 1998 the number decreased in comparison to the year 1997. When the recovery experienced made everybody assumed that the trend up would continue in 1998, it didn't happen, and again, and strangely, the participation was again sadly the pending issue of our maratón. The data is conclusive:

1997: Registered: 3448; arrived participants: 2949

1998 Registered: 2,818; arrived participants: 2520

Due to the fact that I'm fond of the Marató de Barcelona, it is difficult for me to be critical about the points that they could have improved. But to reflect the reality, I must say that in 1998 there were a few, apart from the aforementioned decrease in participation.

As always, the city of Barcelona didn't connect with the maratón, and unless somewhere very central such as Plaça Catalunya and the arrival, the route didn't have animation or spectators. This is not something attributable to the people who arranged the test, but they also surprisingly, suppressed the pasta party, they were lacking solid food and isotonic drinks for most runners, and at the arrival, the people who did between 3h30 and 4h00 hours, we had to

make an endless line up – including a cold - to get the bag. It is clear: what happens often in some races and is now reason for complaints in the forum is nothing new. History repeats itself.



Who said there were no spectators. Even some had some privilege sites.

The 1999 Marató de Barcelona

That year, the test did not have as many elite athletes as the previous year (the year of the "Marató of Records"), as evidenced by the fact that just the first one dropped the 2h'20 time, when in 1998 six were able to do it, and only eleven athletes dropped the 2h30 time while a year earlier twenty-three had been able to do it.

There were many expectations about the Spaniard Jose Ramon Rey, who had a mark of 2h10, but he quit at kilometer 32. No wonder that he did, because, in my opinion, when elite athletes see that they can't get a good mark, they just quit. It is an attitude that surprises those who are popular runners, but - also in my opinion – they do it so their CV is not affected by a bad record.

The first man was the Kenyan Daniel Komen with 2h16'24, and the first woman was the Catalan Eva Sanz, with 2h37'56. Both of them won in the first marathon they did in their lives. He had a good mark in the half marathons (1h03, Sitges), and she was a regular runner of races of 10 or 15 km, who was frequently seen on the weekends training at the Carretera de les Aigües, with her father following her on a bicycle.

After the Kenyan, came in Benito Ojeda -winner of the same maratón twice, and behind him-the runner-up a year before-the Moroccan, Jaouadi-Hassan, Barcelona resident for some years, who speaks excellent Catalan indeed. Both with 2h20'34 and 2h22'58 respectively. The second woman was the Galician, Fatima Paz, with 2h55'41, and the third the Catalan, Rosa Maria Mas (first and second of the two marathons that took place in Vic at the time) with 3h00'14.

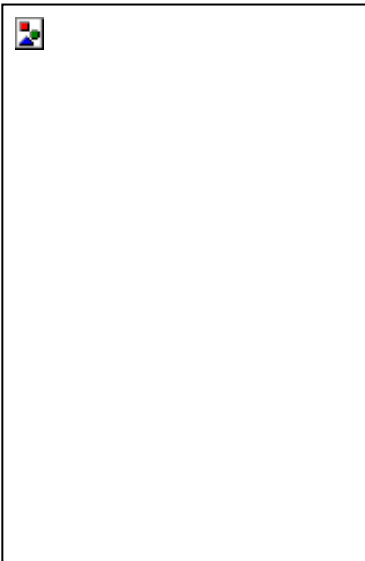
A little recognition, after speaking of the first pack, for those who arrived last. With the number 2.194 Pere Bertran of 68 years with 5h19'49, and with the number 2.195 Juana Cardela, of 61 years, with 5h20'33. Since we are talking about random participants, I must say that in the 15th place overall was classified a good friend of mine, Jaume Aragonés, the paradigm of the popular athlete with a time of 2h30'57. His image in front of a group that day, was the cover of the magazine 42,195 Marathon (which I have already said is the main source for these pages), some months later.



Jaume Aragonés, with the bib number 38.

I read in that magazine that this was also the first marathon of another illustrious friend: Xavi Bonastre, of whom I will transcribe a portion of an article he wrote himself. He wrote it that same afternoon, several hours after finishing the race, and he expresses, brilliantly, his experience in the last kilometers before the arrival:

"The wall from kilometer 30 I have not felt it at all. When I passed by the 30km I thought: "I still have 12 km remaining. If I keep the rate I'll achieved the prefixed time (lowering the 3h30). "Let's say that the so feared wall was like a hill that was going slowly. But I never felt an insurmountable fatigue. (...) La Rambla, km 39: people encouraging you, as it had happened throughout the race. When I climbed Pelayo street I saw the sign of km 40, and I was hallucinating. I made 40 kilometers running! Me, who had run at the maximum 28 km! It could no longer escape. It was clear, and on top of it also under 3:30. Sepulveda street...and at the end, Plaça Espanya ...when I entered the finish line I could not avoid being extremely excited. The people screaming my name and cheering us all ... It was too much. As if we were the winners of the race! To me it fell like a great victory. "



Xavi Bonastre a few meters from the finish line

Unfortunately, once again the number of participants reduced compared to the previous years. This was something that did not affect much the people who took part on the maratón, but, undoubtedly, didn't favor at all the development of the test.

1999 Participants: 2775 and arrived participants: 2195

1998 Participants: 2818 and arrived participants: 2,520

That maratón was the number twenty-three of the meetings, and the volume of runners was the same as in the ninth test, many years ago.

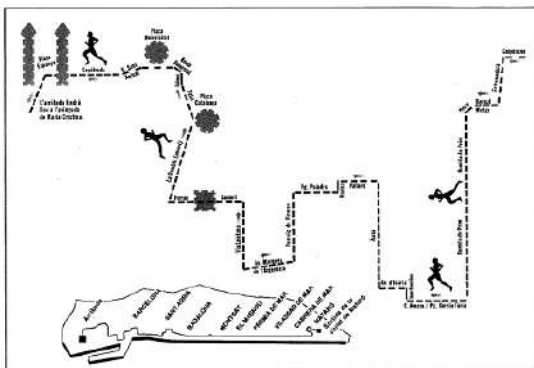
1999 Participants: 2775 and arrived participants: 2195

1986 Participants: 2808 and arrived participants 2152

We should also mention about that maratón the poor quality of the Runners Expo. It was held at Plaça España, and surprisingly, unlike those that had been realized before, runners like this kind of exhibitions to be quite animated, it was downright depressing for the little number of exhibitors.

Since its inception, the maratón used to be held in mid March. The year 1999 as well: It took place on March 14th, which was the second Sunday of the month.

That year we were lucky: the wind blew from the back the whole journey, a journey that was just the same as it had been for the last few years, Marató, Barcelona, and with the same arrival of 1998, to the Avinguda Maria Cristina.



The 2000 Marató de Barcelona

With the same circuit as few years before, the 2000 maratón was the last of the maratons that came out of Mataró.

Certainly, the journey of Mataró to Barcelona pleased many runners because at the start and the first few kilometers until you reach the road there was much festivity ambience. Also lots of festivity in the coastal towns, where the crossing of the maratón on those second Sundays of March had become a party. As if it was a local party, with the present of giants, bigheaded, graellers, music, kids excited, and girls and boys with megaphones encouraging the runners...



Picture a few moments after the last start from Mataró

However, it was necessary, that the maratón de Barcelona had to be a street circuit, and if ten years ago that route with the start from 30 kilometers out of the city was chosen, it was in order to avoid traffic jams, and not to annoy the drivers.

But, well, focusing on the 2000 test, this last one was used to keep track of all the hopes that one day, the maratón de Barcelona could become something more than a popular marathon as it had become in recent years, because finally the number of participants rose suddenly in a substantial way.

2000: 3,100 registered, 2,532 arrived participants

1999: 2775 registered, 2195 arrived participants

1998: 2818 registered, 2520 arrived participants

I have said that the participation increased suddenly, which does not mean by chance. We all knew that the organizers fought hard with so-called limited budget - to promote the test and introduce improvements, and those efforts gave results that year.

Who knows if the ads about the recovery of the pasta party helped out, which had been suppressed in previous editions, or the ability to have shower, or the improvements on the support services, or reducing the registration fee those over 50 (3,000 pesetas instead of 4,000 to a group that represents 15% of runners), or the novelty to find out news about the test through the internet.

Who knows if the fact of being the maratón of the new millennium, a circumstance that was very attractive in many aspects of life, helped out. Who knows whether the announcement that many high level athletes would come to run the maratón, which is always encouraging, helped out.

Who knows if having announced Benito Ojeda-winner of the test two years before- as a director of the maratón encouraged more than one person to run it through his contacts.

Who knows if the budget that year was not so scarce. The truth is that, as regards the front pack, they did it under 2h20 eight runners (the first seven, all foreigners) instead of just one a year earlier. And under 3h00, twelve women (eight of them, including the first four, foreigners) while in 1999 only two did it.

The first pack with fairly good marks and similar arrivals:

1. William Mustoki, Kenya: 2h12'18
2. Benjamin Matolo, Kenya: 2h12'19
3. Wiily Cheruivot, Kenya: 2h 12'25

1. Griselda Gonzalez, of Argentina: 2h31'12
2. Marlene Fortunato, Brazil: 2h33'35
3. Galina Zhuleyeba, Ukraine: 2h2h34'54

A note: Benito Ojeda was the technical director of that maratón, and Albert Caballero interviewed him in an article that was published in 42'195 Marathon, of which I will extract some extracts. I think as a document that describes the good and bad of that maratón, and also describes the state of the event.

"(...) I thought that the participation would continue to recover gradually in the upcoming editions in parallel with the improvements of the service to the popular runner (in relation to the increase of participants compared to the previous year), but after everything that happened in 1999 I expected a punishment vote from the marathoner.

" (...) Clearly, the ideal would be to cut off the streets for seven hours, but we assume that while the maratón doesn't become more popular among other citizens, we cannot improve in this direction

" (...) I take the blame (the indicators for the first 10 kilometer points were not properly exposed). Even though it was planned correctly, this point did not work out.

" (...) It is vital for runners to have a shower, good medical services, runner expo, pasta party ... and here we have made great efforts, human and economic.

" (...) I would like that through the places where the maratón passes by everyone would be aware that there is a maratón. I remember that last year when my friend Roselló arrived at Barajas to run the Madrid marathon, the taxi driver who picked us, just to see us in track suits and without knowing who we were, he said "you guys are coming to run the marathon, right?". I cannot imagine a taxi driver from El Prat asking the same if the day before the maratón he saw a person wearing a tracksuit"



A smile in a food stop is very welcoming

The 2001 Marató de Barcelona

The 2001 marató was again a street circuit, although not entirely within Barcelona.

The start was from the Avinguda Maria Cristina, overlooking the fountains of Montjuïc. Then we went back to L'Hospitalet, going down the Gran Via, and then entering Sant Adrià and Badalona, turn and return to Barcelona through the Vila Olímpica. Then going up the Ramblas, to go hit Pelayo and Sepulveda streets. (This last street -allow me some literature- closely linked to our marató, the trees of this street, if they could, they would explain some epic scenes, that would shock us) Then once again, to Avinguda Maria Cristina.

The circuit had stopped going to Mataró after many years of doing so, and not everyone liked the new circuit. Many said it was cold, and missed the animation of the coastal towns arguing that the stretch between Plaça Espanya and Hospitalet was a desert, and which ranged from 20 to 35 km. Maybe they were right, but we must also say that despite this animation, the solitude was total in the sections between the towns, and the festivities diluted as you were getting closer to Can Fanga. In Badalona and Sant Adrià, the spectators were few.

In any case, running the marató de Barcelona within the city had long been a demand for many runners and organizers, and although it was not one hundred per cent within the city, it was worth to accept willingly the new circuit, which with the exception of the climb through the Ramblas just three kilometers to the end, was actually pretty flat.



Another important improvement: to resemble the big marathons around, was the arrival time limit was, and for the first time, six hours time limit, which meant a conquest in traffic, unthinkable years ago. It seemed as if that year, the City Council was more involved than ever in the maratón (the return to the city indicated it) and the Federation, which had always been quite outside the popular movement. And it was obvious. Interestingly the senior managers of these estates, the Councillor and the Director of Sports, Albert Batllé and Albert Solé, respectively, and the vice president of the Catalan federation, Josep-Maria Antentas, all three runners were active marathoners, and certainly influenced what seemed a decisive choice to energize the test definitely.

Surely all this helped that the 2001 maratón had a good number of participants: there were 3,482 registered athletes, of which 2,958 finished the race. Again, for the second consecutive year, the data increased regarding the previous two years, with an exciting 12% and 17% respectively.

In the category of men, the maratón was won by the Tanzanian Benedict Ako in a time of 2h13'53. And when it comes to women, the first one was the Brazilian, Leone daSilva with 2h40'32. The first Catalan, Benito Ojeda, came in seventh with a time of 2h20'36, and Rosa Maria Mas, the first Catalan and 190 of the general with 2h58'03.

That year, the Marató de Barcelona was also the Spanish Championship. It was won by Benito Ojeda and Maria Jesús Zorraquin from Zaragoza, third overall with a time of 2h51'22.

The 2002 Marató de Barcelona

With regards to the front pack, in the 2002 maratón they were all Africans. It was nothing new, but rather a classic that the front pack of the half marathons in the country, but what was surprising was that, with the exception of Benito Ojeda -who sneaked the ninth place- eleven of the top twelve runners came from that continent.

1. Benjamin Rotich of Kenya 2h12:07
2. Benedict Ako of Tanzania 2h15:26
3. Sammy Kosgei of Kenya 2h15:28
4. Wesley Ngeno of Kenya 2h15:29
5. Sebastian Panga of Tanzania 2h15:32
6. David M. Kimutai of Kenya 2h16:34
7. Abdeslam Haimad of Morocco 2h17:10
8. Daniel Kipcheru Komen of Kenya 2h17.30
9. Benito Ojeda 2h17:40

10. Chala Kelile of Ethiopia 2h18:35

11. Peter Musyoki of Kenya 2h19:03

12. Odilo Ajy of Kenya 2h25:25



Four of the eleven Africans in the front pack of the marathon

No one could say, then, as it happened a few years ago, that high level athletes did not come out to Barcelona. You couldn't say that, because besides the man, the top women were also foreigners:

1. Galina Zhulyayeva of Ukraine with 2h40:33

2. Tiziana Di Sesta of Italy 2h41:14

3. Ludmila Smirnova of Russia 2h44:43.

The first Spanish was the Basque Leire Elosegui (2h57:43), who came in fourth.

That year the maratón began at 8:30. The place of departure and arrival was again the same place as a year earlier, Avinguda Maria Cristina, and the route, similar to last year's, with a portion of it in Hospitalet, was introduced the variant of not going to Badalona and Sant Adrià. Instead of doing so, you went up a little through Sant Andreu to hit Trinitat Vella (km 23 and peak height of: 29.3 meters) and back down to find what is now the Forum and from here, again the identical circuit of 2001: roughly, Vila Olímpica, Colom, Ramblas, Universitat, Sepulveda, and the arrival (triumphant? Yes, always!).

Not to go to Badalona and Sant Adrià represented an improvement for two reasons, the first because some areas of both towns had always been criticized by many runners due to the lack of animation and having to go through industrial sites where there was not even a soul. And the second because it was a new advance in order to run a maratón of Barcelona in Barcelona.

Even though, that year, we made several kilometers outside the city, in Hospitalet, just in case someone requested the road to circulate.

Again, we had six hours of official time, which was also an advance. Far from the days of years before when we had a close circuit for four and a half hours and then we had to fend for

ourselves. Another novelty was the ability to register on the Internet...However, the increased participation was not like the year last before. A modest 2% more registered and 3.5% of arrived participants.

2002 Registered: 3.550; and arrived participants: 3.062

2001 Registered: 3.482; and arrived participants: 2.958

2000 Registered: 3.100; and arrived participants: 2.532

put it clearly, one hundred runners more than a year before was a very slight increase. The changes of targeting since 2001, when the City Council and the Federation took the decision to get more involved in the maratón, did not seem sufficient. Anyway, the hope of the runners as a result of the changes existed. It was justified because they had made some improvements, and because the inclusion of the two bodies referred above, envisaged an appropriate development. The participation was still an issue, but there were signs of wanting to restore the quality levels achieved years before. **The 2003 Marató de Barcelona**

After six years with victories of African runners, the maratón in 2003 was won by the athlete from Madrid Alberto Juzdado; that marathoner who along with Martin Fiz and Diego Garcia created a historical triplet in the European championship in Helsinki nine years before, in which he was third. The winner came on a pretty good time: 2h10'53, and also he did a few kilometers alone near the end in search of a record of the test, established by the Moroccan Sherrokh five years earlier and still-current that he couldn't reach for a little over a minute.

Juzdado was then a high level runner. At that time he had done 22 marathons, including one with 2h08'01. He used to train every day of the year for 4 or 5 hours, and to run the maratón de Barcelona he was training for two months, at the end of which he reached the 240 km per week.

Behind him, the Kenyan Benjamin Rotich with 2h12'30, and third was a man from Andorra, Toni Bernado, whose mark (2h14'25) was used by the athlete to obtain the minimum to participate in the Athens Olympics the following year.

For the women, the winner was the Moroccan athlete Wahbi Kenza with 2h38'36, a runner very common in races of Catalonia (she resided in Perpignan), as demonstrated by having won twice the El Corte Ingles race, the Half-marathon of Granollers and Girona. Second was the Siberian Osaka Koutzmitxeva with 2h40'47 and third Olena Rozhko from Ukraine, with 2h48'17.



The winners, Juzgado and Kenza

The last runner to come in was a French runner, named Olivier Bieber, who finished with 5h57'52. Two places earlier with 5h53'38, the last woman, the famous marathoner and ultra marathoner Nuria Ruiz. And speaking of famous marathoners, we should mention that Quima Casas ran her 154th marathon that day.

The circuit itself was exactly like the previous year. The start right in front of the fountains of Montjuïc, to go down the Gran Via to Hospitalet and after a tour of about twelve kilometers then we went back to Plaça Espanya and continue along Gran Via (the longest street in Barcelona) to climb towards Sant Andreu and almost Trinitat Vella once past the Plaça de les Glories. Then going down from there to go find the neighborhood of Poble Nou, passing by Vila Olímpica, and to go find the Paseo de Colom, Las Ramblas, Plaça Catalunya, Pelai, Plaça Universitat, Sepulveda, Paral·lel, and the arrival at the site of the start, Avinguda Maria Cristina.



With regards to the participation a setback again! The objectives were not met, and if a year before the increase was not as the expected, this was even worse because the number of runners dropped alarmingly.

2003 Participants: 3300 Arrived participants: 2783

2002 Participants: 3550 Arrived participants: 3062

It must be said that the attention received by the popular runners was great. They were always so, but an event like a marathon requires a high number of participants so that these same people enjoy participating on this one (confirmed by the excitement of taking part in an

experiment like the marathons of New York, London, Paris..) and also because the organizers need sponsors that would flee if there is not many participants.

Additionally: the chairmanship of the Association Marathon Catalunya, passed from Domingo Catalan to Rafael Salinas. The association was in charge of the general organization of the test along with Grau & Barrau, the company that among other events organized and organizes the Jean Bouin, and now the Mediterranean marathon.

One more fact: the registration fee was 35 euros and 45 if you did it too late, thirty days before the test.

The marathon that year was held on March 16th, exactly one month after the historic manifestation against the war in Iraq. Along the route we saw several signs asking them to stop the war, even some runners who showed a banner.



As a counterpoint, there were runners who once they finished the maratón, and as usual, they wanted to show their infinite joy. And although without a banner, they seemed to express their rejection by "make love, not war."



The 2004 Marató de Barcelona

The 2004 maratón de Barcelona was the last one which took place before the abolition of the maratón the following year. A thing that we could not imagine the people who that Sunday realized the 42 and something kilometers, neither that we were going to run a third of the maratón, which was a distance that was added to the celebration, to run it with simultaneous start to the maratón.

Probably there were internal problems within the organization that cause the suspension of the test in 2005, but the anonymous runners never felt it. Perhaps the most veterans perceived that the spirit which prevailed at the time of the pioneers of the first period had changed to make way for a different one, dominated by commercial issues, but nobody could imagine that there would be such a convulsion a few months after that Sunday, March 21th, 2004.

One Sunday, by the way, really hot. Although the test began at 8:30, those who took more than four hours to do it, we suffered quite a bit due to the heat. This aspect: the heat that the runners had to endure, was increasingly more important in order to establish the date of the maratón. It was more convenient to be at the beginning more than at the end, and to start early, because the group that came in with more than 4 hours time was every time larger. Specifically, that 2004 those who made the maratón with more than four hours were 33% of the total, while fifteen years earlier they were 13%. The type of runner was changing. As the vice-president of the Catalan Federation, Josep Maria Antentas, mentioned: "While the elite is increasingly faster, however, the mass of runners was ever more slowly."



Poster of the 2004 Marató de Barcelona

The circuit was also identical to the year 2003. Also, as in recent years, we had six hours to finish the test. The registration fee was not the same, interestingly, it cost 30 euros, which represented five dollars less.

Before beginning, we must recall that the attack occurred in Madrid ten days before, the sad memory of "11 M", was remembered with a minute of silence and the take off of 200 white balloons in tribute to each one of the victims of that day.

The maratón was won by the Moroccan Driss Lakhouaja with 2h15'59, followed by Toni Bernadó of Andorra for the second consecutive year as second with 2h17'45, and the third one was the Kenyan Peter Kipserem with 2h17'50. The Swedish of 42 years old, Karin Schon, with 2h42'54, was the first woman, the second was the Greek resident in Barcelona, Alexandra Panayotou - a regular runner on the carretera de les Aigües- with 2h48'35, and third the catalan, Esther Solera, with a time of 2h51'59. That year, the maratón was University Championship, and was won by Ricard Verge. The third part - which was not exactly a third of a marathon (14,065 meters) but actually 13,500 meters – was one by Roger Roca with 41'46, and Laura Rosell with 50'00.

The participation that year increased significantly. 4,150 registered at the maratón, of which 3,361 arrived (20% more than in 2003). In addition, at the third part there were 1.970 registered and 1,460 arrived participants.

However, and as it was said, they failed to meet the objectives of participation that were set for that year and the immediately preceding years- the participation had been the pending issue for many recent years- and there was no understanding between the Athletic Department of the City Council and the Association Marathon Catalunya. And after a few months came out the news that the maratón 2005 was suppressed.

The 2005 Marató de Barcelona

The summary of the 2005 Marató de Barcelona is the easiest thing to do: it was not held.

I must recall and reflect in this compendium, that this year, on April 3th, passed away the who created it, Ramon Oliu.



Ramon Oliu

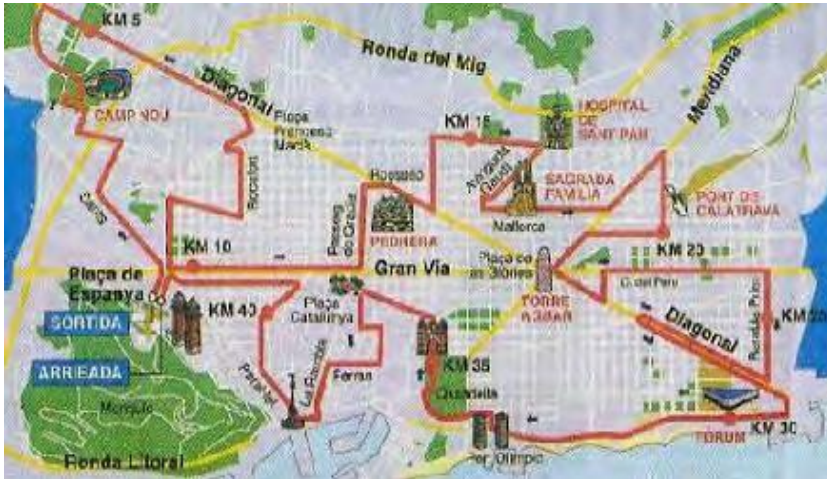
The 2006 Marató de Barcelona

The 2006 Marató de Barcelona occupies a special place in the history. That's because after the suspension of one year before, its celebration on March 26th, was a real event for the people of the running world.

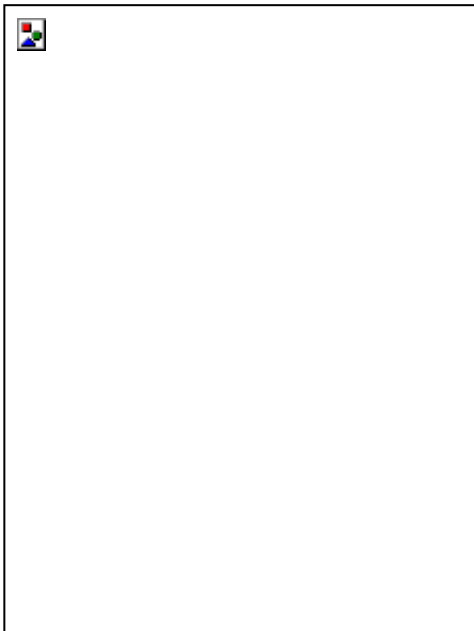
The technical organization of the test was commissioned to the company RPM, subsidiary of ASO, the French Organizer of the Paris Marathon, and was constituted a promoter committee which included the area of Sports of the City Council, the Federation, and the Platform Marató de Barcelona (PMAB).

Incidentally, we must talk about the Platform in this summary: the PMAB was (is) a sports association formed by some two hundred popular runners who became involved through the web "10 of 1000", which had been very actively claiming the return of the maratón. They were asked to be part of the organization in order to be able to hear the opinion of the popular runners and as a consultative organ for three years, and precisely a member of this association, Pablo Pluvinet, was the responsible for the creation of the circuit. It was measured with the endorsement of the IAAF by Bep Soler, who was at the same time the technical

director of the test. The circuit was the best in history: the jewel of the crown. It was run entirely within the city, something that for many years hadn't been possible, and it went through each and every one of the most emblematic locations of the city.



Known that one of the things that people who run marathons like the most is a beautiful circuit, the rediscovered maratón was and still is: superb. To be able to run inside the Camp Nou or in front of monuments such as the Dona i l'Ocell at the park of the Escorxador, the Casa Milà or the Pedrera at Passeig de Gracia, Hospital de Sant Pau, Sagrada Família and the Tower Agbar, to cross The Forum, run in front of our twin towers at the Vila Olímpica, to cross the Arc de Triomf, Plaça Sant Jaume, down the Ramblas, admire Colom and Les Drassanes if the fatigue allowed it, and enter the finish line under the Venetian Towers of Plaça Espanya, was priceless. After the bad experience of the year without the maratón, it seemed even better.



Athletes passing in front of La Pedrera

Even before the test took place, everything looked great. Although the technical organization was ran by a company, there had been many workshops in which participated -in addition to the City Council, the Federation and the PMAB- the *Senate of the Marató*, which was a particular group of people knowledgeable of the race (doctors, runners, organizers of

marathons and half marathons, specialized journalists, former athletes, former directors, etc..), who were asked to collaborate in the counsel.

They recovered the symposium which took place the day before the maratón. This time, led by PMAB, prominent personalities of the marathon world took part on it such as the athlete Isabel Eizmendi, her coach Antonio Lopez, or the Dr. Peter Pujol among others. As usual, there was pasta party, and a runners expo ...

The maratón was won by Joseph Nguram with 2h12'36. Benjamin Pseret was second with 2h13'46, and the third Kipkorir John Chamgwony a few seconds later: 2h13'58. All three of them were from Kenyans, like the other four who entered behind them. Victor Gonzalo, who was the first Catalan and the first one from the state, came in eighth with 2h25'31. The first woman was the Ethiopian Kebelush Haile with 2h41'23 also followed by the Ethiopian Gurmu Muliye Lemma with 2h42'30 and Nigatu Etaferatu Cherkos, third with 2h52'34. Ana Rosa Moreno was fourth overall and the first Catalan and the first Spanish with a time of 2h59'38.

They had established a prize for the oldest runners (male and female) who finish the maratón in memory of the creator of the Marató de Barcelona who passed away the year before, Ramon Oliu Trophy, and was won by Aquilino Soto from Sabadell, of 80 years old, who finished with 4h58'42, and the Netherlands, Coby Vlasveld, who was 69 years old, with 4h54'38.

It was also held, with simultaneous start to the maratón, a test of 10 kilometers, so that the people who made that distance were forwarded to reach the finish line at Plaça Espanya.

The total registered for the race were 4636, and arrived participants 4,183 (3,845 men and 338 women), which besides from the maratón of the Olympic year, it was the largest number of participants. There were also shortcomings. The most severe was that in the water stop of km 35 km, before crossing Arc de Triomf, there was no more water for the participants of more than four hours. And equally important but less severe: the slowness in collecting the bags before the start... but the maratón was back on the streets of Barcelona, and this in itself was great for everyone who was fond of the event and everything surrounding it.



Water stop next to Arc de Triomf

And the 2006 maratón was a success in many aspects: the first and most important to me, that the event was recovered after its suspension that initially seemed indefinitely. One small drawback: the day we had to be up early because although the test began at 9AM, it was set on the same date on which we change the clocks due to the daylight saving time and that meant that everyone slept one hour less. For the organism it was actually 8AM.

The 2007 Marató de Barcelona

The feature that stands out the most about the 2007 maratón was undoubtedly the participation.

In this aspect, so important for the development of test, some spectacular data was achieved, we exceeded the number of registered and arrived participants of the Olympic year, which stood as the record of participation for fifteen years.

2007.Registered: 7413 and arrived participants: 6311

1992.Registered 6586 and arrived participants 5694

2007 Men arrived5,548 and Women arrived 763

1992 Men arrived 5338, and Women arrived 356

About this, a data which I believe is crucial in order to achieve the growth of a maratón is the number of runners who make it in more than four hours (in the major marathons the percentage of this group is very elevated: in New York, for example, this group represents more than 70%) and on the other hand, the fact of having many women. In this sense, the comparison is also very significant, not only with regards to the maratón of this year, but because the trend is very positive for the future.

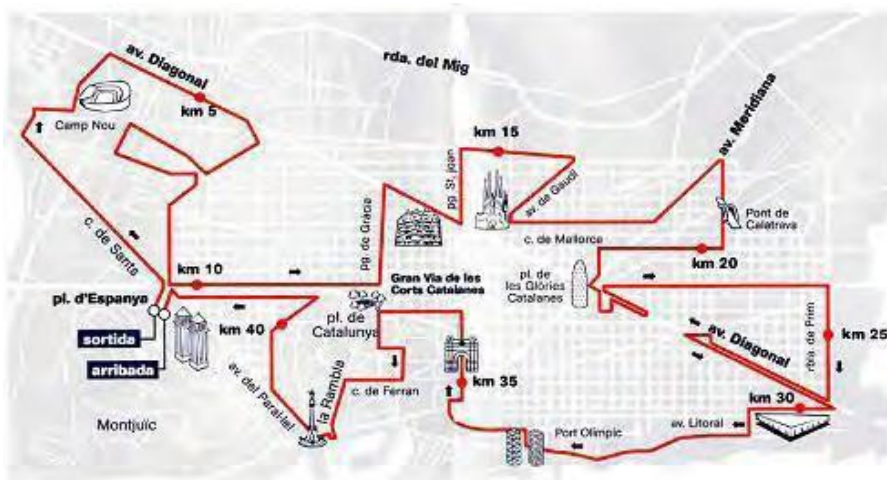
2007: percentage of participants arriving with more than four hours: 42% of the total

1992: percentage of participants arriving with more than four hours: 29%

2007: percentage of women: 12% of the total

1992: percentage of women: 6%

The circuit in 2007 was almost the same as last year's.



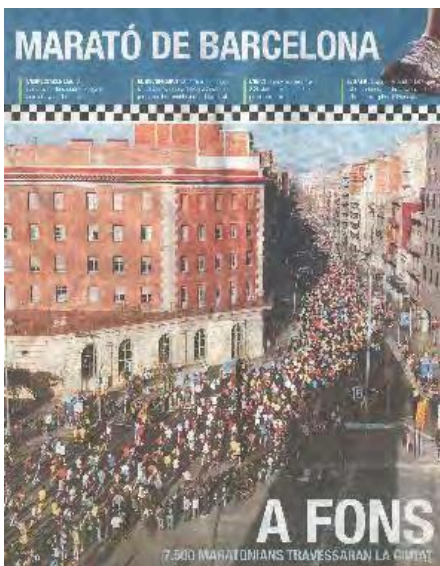
Small changes were made to smooth the route, and also required due to works that were taking place, but the appeal of the circuit had not been altered, as in the year 2006, passing by

the icons of the city. Thus, unlike the previous year, instead of going all the way up to the Diagonal once leaving the Camp Nou, you would take a shorter way to arrive at the height of the Hotel Princesa Sofia. On the other hand, you didn't turn in front of the monument of Tarradellas to go to find km 9 on Tarragona Street, instead you did a tour around the district of Les Corts and then you went back to the monument. Another variant was not to realize the turn of Sagrada Familia on the four sides, and just passing by the front of the temple on Marina Street. It was also a little bit different the circuit around the Agbar Tower and the Forum. And some small differences, unimportant.

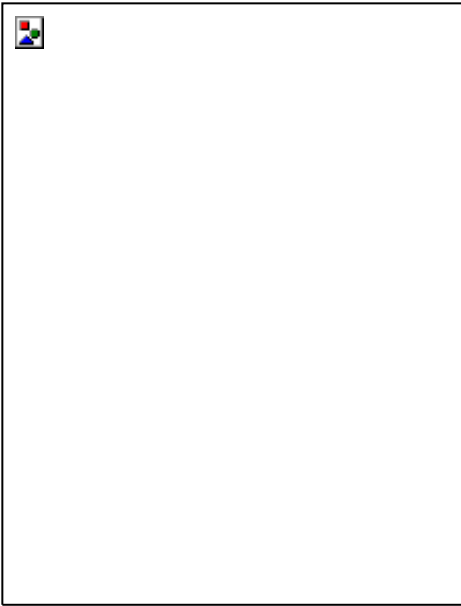
Overall, because the route was almost the same as the one in 2006, with the advantage of having to climb less within the first kilometers, so that the highest climb, not the hardest, was the Passeig de Gracia at km 12 and the Passeig de Sant Joan km 14.

I would not like this sound like a summary of praise for this marathon in 2007 because there are many things that have to do much better, but the fact is that there were some aspects that have worked quite well.

Apart from the outbreak of participation -it has been corroborated by most of the runners- that it was the year with the most people on the street cheering up. It may have contributed to this fact the promotion and information campaigns carried out. Since a few months before the test, advertising of the same appeared in various media, and in the daily Sport and in El Periodico, and once in a while, they published special pages talking about the approaching marathon.



Furthermore, the City Council, now completely involved in the test, also promoted the event in the city, and published quite a lot of information addressed to the citizens about the presence of the maratón through different streets and recommendations about the use of public transport on March 4th. The neighborhood associations and other groups were very sensitive to the test, and there was very good animations in 16 points of the route.



A novelty that year, although unimportant, demonstrates the desire of improvements, was the possibility of having a bib number with the name of the participant, so the runners wearing it could be encouraged by the spectators who shouted his/her name.

I also want to put this in writing, due to the relevance of this, in my opinion, in the running world, that this year again at the Runners Expo (a sample that was visited by 37,000 people), was held the Symposium of the Marató. This year, three doctors who knew a lot about marathons took part on it: Ricardo Ortega, MD and elite marathoner (2h11) in the 80s, Ricard Serra-Grima, cardiologist and marathoner, and Pere Pujol, doctor at the arrival of the New York City Marathon. Then there was a brainstorming, in which, besides the speakers, joined in the vice-president of the Catalan Federation, Josep Maria Antentas, also a marathoner, Rafa Nogueras, specialized journalist and marathoner, Domingo Lopez, national coach, and Javier Cortes Huete, current international athlete of marathons with 2:07.

Let's talk about the winners. The front pack and for the umpteenth time in recent years, were Africans, with the intrusion of Andorra runner Bernadó. The first one of all, Johnstone Chebil of Kenya, finished with 2h12'04; the second, also Kenyan, James Mibei, he did almost three minutes later: 2h14'48, and the third, Toni Bernadó, four seconds after : 2h14'52, a minute ahead of another Kenyan, Hosea Kosgei, and Roger Roca, who was fifth with a time of 2h16'32.



Roger Roca, after crossing the finish line

The first five women, 1st Krizstina Loonen of the Netherlands with 2'h42'02; 2nd the English of 45 years, Maxine Mc Kinnon, with 2h49'52; 3rd the Belgian Veerle D `Haese with 2h51'48; 4th the Ethiopian Kelemua Yadete with 2h54'27 and 5th the French Silvie Dubras with 2h55'12. The first Spanish was Luna Garcia-Miguel, with 2h58'52, who came in sixth, and Meritxell Portillo ninth and first Catalan with a time of 3h09'52.

The wheelchair winner was Jorge Madera, and the veteran of 77 years Juan del Sol, with a time of 4h25'04 grasped the Trophy Ramon Oliu to the oldest participants.

It was also ran the distance of 10 kilometers with simultaneous start to the marató (a test that was also done the year before, but will not take place next year), and was won by the British Tom Payn and also the British Tracy Morris, with the excellent time of 29'30 and 33'45 respectively.

I do not think that I'm mistaken in saying that the 2007 Marató de Barcelona-the last one of this series I had the pleasure of summarizing in order that people get to know its history and especially under my modest vision- it meant the confirmation that the test can occupy a prominent place in the concert of the best marathons in Europe, and why not - let me dream – of the world.

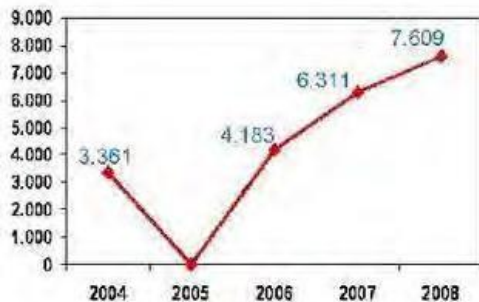


The 2008 Marató de Barcelona

In the marathon of 2008 was repeated again the iconic route from the previous year, which was essentially the same as the year 2006, the return of the test. That is, to pass beneath the Venetian Towers of the Plaça España, the Camp Nou, the Pedrera, the Hospital of Sant Pau, the Sagrada Família, the Calatrava Bridge, the Agbar Tower, the Forum; the Twin Towers of the Vila Olímpica, the Arc de Triomf, the Plaça Catalunya, the Cathedral, the Plaça Sant Jaume, the Ramblas, Colom, Drassanes, the Parallel...and the most beautiful and desired street to find the day of the marathon: Sepulveda Street.

If the most unique feature of the 2007 Marató was to beat the number of participants which remained unchanged for some 15 years, in 2008 that number was again exceeded, and was established, with 7.609 arrived participants, another record.

Undoubtedly, the high number of runners has been the most prominent aspect of the 2008 Marató. And it is very encouraging to note that participation is becoming a constant in recent years, as evidenced by the evolution of the total number of arrivals in the last five years (the 2005 was not held).



Many people were surprised that in the 2008 Marató there was a significant difference between the number of registered participants (9.121) and the number of arrived participants (7.609). We must say that it is not surprising, because this is a circumstance that occurs in all marathons: many registered participants do not show up at the start line. For example, the percentage of -17% of arrived participants with respects to the number of registered participants for this year is inferior to the -19% of the year 2004 also in Barcelona.

In any case, what is remarkable is the increase of both registered and arrived participants in the 2008 Marató with respects to the 2007 Marató.

The increase of registered participants with respect to last year was of 23%, of which, with regards to gender, the women were +32%, and the males +21%:

Registered	2007	2008	Increase
Women	914	1.202	+ 32%
Men	6.519	7.919	+ 21%
Total	7.433	9.121	+ 23%

The proportion of women of the total, although the increase is almost the same as last year's: 13% vs. 12% in 2007. With 13% of the total, the female participation remains very low in our marathons (as it is the case for the rest of Spain). And besides it is also noteworthy that the vast majority were foreigners: in particular, 80%. However, a positive figure regarding the female participation: the number of marathon women in Catalonia and the rest of the state have increased greatly this year. It has gone from 125 arrivals in 2007 to 193, which means an increase of 54%. Regarding the origin of registered participants, it is noteworthy that the highest increase represented the runners from Catalonia.

<u>Registered</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>Increase</u>
Catalan	2.690	3.445	+ 28%
Rest of State	840	1.037	+ 23%
Foreigners	3.903	4.639	+ 19%
Total	7.433	9.121	+ 23%

This year, unlike the previous two years, the 10 km race was not held before the maratón. One thing that should be considered as beneficial for the maratón. Any marathon with a significant number of participants doesn't need any added elements, to do so helps increase the number of registrations, and is probably necessary when the test is not well established, but, fortunately, this is no longer the case of Barcelona. And certainly, the additions (10 kms, thirds, etc.), to some extent distort the event.

Another feature of the 2008 marathon was the amount of people cheering in the streets of the city. We cannot say that Barcelona was like New York, but it wasn't bad at all. Moreover, what is sure -confirmed by everyone- is that it was the time that the maratón had more spectators. Maybe it was matched to that it was the year with more participation, and we know that family and friends often help in this aspect, but anyway, it should be noted.

However, bearing in mind that this document is not intended to be a praise, although we have to say that there were still places where the people's warmth or the organized animation, with music for example, was missing. There were many animation points in almost the entire route, even spontaneous ones, but the stretch of the Gran Via between km 23 and km 25 of the Litoral and from km 30 to km 33 there was not a soul or they were very few.

Another thing to say is that the Barcelona marathon needs top-level athletes. While it is true that the strategy has been to achieve participation as a first objective, it is necessary to obtain from now on, more renowned elite athletes than those who have come lately.

This has been true even with regards to good athletes from the state, aggravated because the best Spanish marathoner of the time, Chema Martinez, who was registered, fell ill a few days before the test. We must point out that the first Spanish woman, Noelia Roman made it in 2 hours 58.58. Very commendable because she was a journalist who did the test to explain in her diary the experiences lived in the maratón, but it is clear that the quality of front pack both men and women is long overdue.



Noelia Román

About the experience lived by Noelia Roman- a popular runner who had done two marathons and trains about an hour five or six days per week, a magnificent chronicle written in the newspaper *Publico* the same afternoon, after finishing ninth and first Spanish in the test. I have extracted the last paragraphs:

(...) It is fantastic to start camouflaged among the elite, surrounded by almost 8,000 athletes and move at the pace set by the hares of three hours with their colorful balloons. I left them, after a mile, once reached the Camp Nou, because they make the rubber and the pace of that small group in front you that suit you more. Or so you think.

To continue there, surrounded by men, at the passage of Plaça Espanya, the Pedrera and Sagrada Familia, which are full of people who do not know you but encourages you, shouting the name that shines on your bib, simply for the fact of being the female of a territory still very masculine. In any case, it is grateful. Because in these encouragements there is also a recognition.

And then, you approach the half marathon and you decide to leave the group because their progress rate is too strong: 1h28m. The heat tightens. You drink water, catch a half banana and continue at your own pace, seeking occasional allies to do it a bit more bearable. I keep seeing people and people on the sidewalks, cheering. They congratulate you because the locals have decided to join the party. Now comes the fateful kilometer 30, the wind blows and the calf starts to complain; quadriceps loaded, legs stumble.

The doubts appear, the fear. But the mind is imposed upon, the heart can do it. You readjust the pace and continue. Burning kilometers, crossing everyday places, the Ciutadella, the Arc de Triomf.

We somewhat get recovered. And suddenly, you find a new ally who, silently, leads you to the Ramblas and the Paral·lel. And when you do not know if the legs can resist, you have already passed km 40, and you say to yourself: "Come on, it's almost done, you did a fantastic race, under three hours." I do not know where do you get the last strength from, you cross the finish line and watch the clock: 2h58m. You throw away the subway ticket that you had saved just in case and you say to yourself: "It was great!"

And finally, we must mention the first classified: the winner was the Kenyan Hosea Kosgei with a time of 2h 14'42 " followed by the also Kenyan Johnstone Chevi with 2h 16'32" and the Catalan Roger Roca with 2h 16'53. In women, the Ethiopian Tadesse Mihret came first in 2h 42'12 ", second was his compatriot with Anam Mihret 2h 43'43" and the third Kenyan Kibet Tabitha in 2h47'49.



The 2009 Marató de Barcelona

By 2009, Barcelona showed that the maratón de Barcelona was on track to become one of the best in Europe. The fact of the increasing progress in the number of participants from home and abroad, reaching almost 10,000 registered participants, confirms this.

The route was again the same, with some slight modification (the most notable of the last two years, not reaching the Hospital of Sant Pau and not going down the Avinguda Gaudi), as the one been carried out during the last years, with the happy circumstance of going through the most beautiful places in the city.

Let's prove it: Start Avinguda Maria Cristina, arrival at the Camp Nou- this year without going into the facilities because with the increase of the participation, it was not advisable to do so due to the narrowness of the entrance - go to Plaça Espanya, also through a slightly different route than in recent years; Paseo de Gracia, Sagrada Familia-unfortunately without going through the Hospital of Sant Pau; going all the way up -it's a saying- until the end of the Meridiana; the Calatrava Bridge ; the lower part of the Diagonal, up and down, with the Agbar Tower, the Forum, the Twin Towers through the avinguda Litoral, the Arc de Triomf after skirting the Parc de la Ciutadella, Plaça Catalunya, Catedral; Sant Jaume Square, Ramblas, Colom, Drassanes, and through Paral·lel going to find Spùlveda ... and arrival at Avinguda Maria Cristina in front of the Montjuïc Fountains.

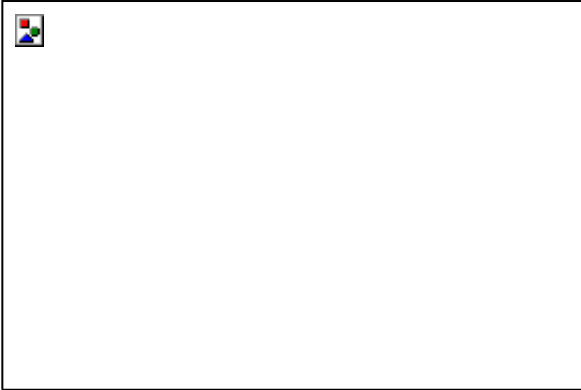


And once again, going back to the subject of the participation, a dramatic increase of Catalan athletes was reached.

It was because the influx of foreigners, even though it represented half of the total, did not grow compared to the previous year. But the number of Catalans increased by 20%

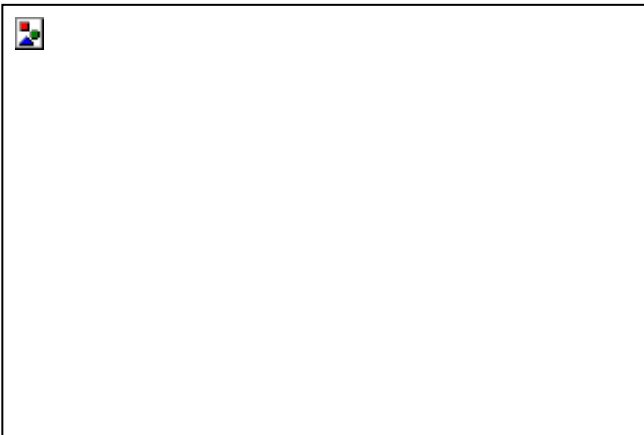
More things to note: the number of women from Spain (Catalans and the rest) that ran the maratón was the highest in history. We often regret -myself in the first place- of the scant participation of women in races. But there is a fact that invites to optimism. Overall, the arrived participants at the finish line were 10% more than last year, but the number of Spanish female runners (213, mostly Catalan) increased by 21%.

In any case, the most spectacular increase in all-and one of the most desirable- was the number of spectators cheering along the route. Never during the years that the maratón de Barcelona has been held, the event had seen as many people on the street. Does this mean that the pending assignment which involves the lack of entertainment in the city to go see the maratón has changed the sign? Hopefully.



An aspect also to take into account is the emergence of marathoners coming out of the association Corredors.cat. An entity that is channeled through the Internet, which is becoming increasingly important in the running world. In this marathon there were 105 members - many of them running the test for the first time- who took part in the Marató. Not only that, those who did not run it have been responsible for one of the food or water stations, the loudest, and most dear to us of those who are part of this group which has only a couple years of life.

This marathon has begun to see some participants who have run for altruism. Few, we must say, compared to what happens in other marathons, like London or New York, where many of the runners who do it to raise money for charitable causes. There have been few, but it is a good sign. Someday it will also have to be developed in Barcelona. There is no reason not to do so. In line with this, the association Corredors.cat has carried out an action called "sabatilles solidàries" (supportive shoes) consisting of collecting used shoes in good conditions to send to Africa.



Corredors.cat en el encuentro de antes de la prueba.

As for famous athletes with who you can achieve a mark of prestige, this is also an unresolved assignment of the maratón de Barcelona. They do not come. This is not a criticism to the organization, I am aware that Barcelona chose, once the test was retrieved in 2006, so that, first of all it was supposed to be popular race with growing participation, and this has been achieved. But the reality is that good athletes do not come. The mark of 2h14 for the first male, the Kenyan Chebii -who had won in 2007, with two minutes less- and of 2h39 for the first female, the Ethiopian Biru, confirms that what has to be paid to obtain top athletes to come is still not available. However, as is customary in major races in our region, the rulers of the test were the Africans, the first four, followed by our Roger Roca.

1. Chebii Johnstone 2:14:01
2. Hosea Kogei 2:14:06
- 3 Teshome Gelana Etaba: 2:14:32
- 4 Demelash Denkis Habte: 2:16:35
- 5 Roger Roca Dalmau: 2:17:41

And as for women, the first one was an Ethiopian, the second a British, the third a Italian, the fourth and fifth an Irish and a Catalan.

1. Tadelech Biru Zeit: 2:39:43
2. Helen Lawrence: 2:54:02
3. Paola Sanna: 2:55:52
4. Claire McCarthy: 2:56:02
5. Ana Rosa Moreno: 2:57:56

We must regret the death of an Irish runner of 35 years in this 2009 maratón, named Colin, who fell at the km 34.5 km struck the ground. They could not do anything for him although he was attended really fast, it was impossible to return him to life.

In this 2009 maratón, the Greek athlete rooted in our house, Alexandra Panayotou, participated in it reaching one of her deeds: to finish the maratón in 4h27-after coming from Palafrugell running nonstop . In total, about 220 kilometers.

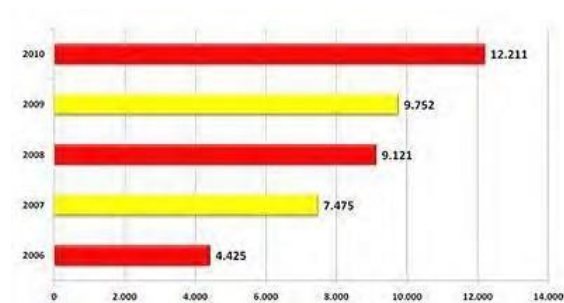
The 2010 Marató de Barcelona

Two things that stand out above all at the 2010 maratón: the ten thousand benchmark of arrived participants was exceeded, namely 10,120, and he the record of the test was beat in the men category: 2h07'30, which is also the best time ever done in a marathon in Spain. Both are high value targets that serve to enliven the Marató de Barcelona internationally. The number of arrived participants places the Marató de Barcelona as one of the largest in Europe. And when the record was broken, it was the best European mark of the year and the fourth in the world.

The participation of Catalans was also a noteworthy aspect. They enrolled 16% more than in 2009. On this issue, the marathon runners from our house, it is encouraging to note that those who dare to run the maratón are increasingly more. In 2006, the year of the return of the test after the suspension, the Catalans were 2.619, this year 4.830. This means that in four years there has been more than 2,000 of whom we can consider as "new" marathoners.

Speaking of the number of participants, we should mention in terms of the women participation that it remains very low: 14% of the total registered participants, and most were foreigners. The women from Catalonia and the rest of the state have increased compared to previous years, but the number is very low: 360 registered.

In any case, even with the unresolved assignment regarding the female participation, we are pleased to note that the Marató de Barcelona has undergone a radical change in comparison to the way it was developing before the suspension of the event in 2005. You just need to see the evolution of the number of registrations (12,162 this year) from that unfortunate year in a graph.



Figures taken from the oficial web site of the test

Actually, the Marató de Barcelona has completely changed. Today, even the most reluctant to change –there was some who were reluctant even before the resumption of the test in 2006- admit now, bluntly, that the suspension was a painful but necessary solution.

The circuit is basically the same in recent years. In relation to last year's, there were some small modifications due to works being carried out in the city. Basically, the temporary barracks of the fire station in Aragon Street/Parc del Escorxador, and the works of the Ave in the area of the Sagrada Familia, were the cause of said modifications.

For example, last year when we came in to Avinguda Madrid and once we hit Numancia Street we would go down until we found Avinguda de Roma and then we would go-Besos direction- all the way to Calabria to seek Aragon, this year we crossed Numancia and we continued to Berlin Street, which is an extension of Avinguda Madrid, all the way to Rocafort. Then, we went down Rocafort to Avinguda de Roma, that we took turning on our right -Llobregat direction- to land on Tarragona. And then Tarragona Street all the way down to Plaça Espanya.

The second amendment we found it once passed the Sagrada Familia. Going down Marina, we took Valencia Street, instead of Mallorca, to reach Avinguda Meridiana. Also, at the height of km 26-27, we shortened a bit the small section of Parc Central del Poble Nou (instead of going through Marroc Street we went by Cristobal de Moura street). And finally, after passing beneath the Arc de Triomf, rather than continuing climbing up Passeig de Sant Joan until Ausias March, we turned left onto Ronda Sant Pere to go to find Urquinaona Square.



In blue the changes from the previous year

A further improvement, small but valuable: the interest of being able to register as a participant from Catalonia, had been a long requested demand, and this year, "Catalonia" was included as country of origin in the personal registration form.

The prices of registration, by the way, were as follows: 45 € until December 20th, it went up to 55 € until January 31st 2010, and since then until the last day it went up to 65 €. No changes were seen from the previous year.

The average age of the participants in the maratón this year was 41 years for the men (specifically 40.94) and 40 in the women category (40.06).

Speaking of ages, the youngest was a north-american girl Margaux Flannery, 18 years old, who finished in 4h56.58. And the oldest, the Dutchman Dolf Van Den Broeke, 78 years old, who did it in 5h43.45 (winner of the Trofeo Ramon Oliu as oldest arrived participant, in female category it was the Japanese Nishiwaki Noriko, 69 years old , who ended it in 5h36.48.

An anecdote about the question related to the age of the participants: in the 1980 Marató only 2 runners from the elderly category took part on it, in particular two men of 60 years old. In this 2010 Marató there was 279 participants over 60 years (255 men and 24 women).

The winner of the race, and as mentioned, new record for the maratón de Barcelona, was the Kenyan Jackson Kotut, 30 years old, who made it in 2h07.30.



Jackson Kotut

The previous record had been achieved by the Moroccan Serrock in 1998, with 2h09.48, and not only the previous record time was lowered by the winner, but also by the first six arrived participants, all Africans, they did a better time.

The Catalan Marc Roig was the first European: he came in 15th place, making a time of 2h18.53.

In the women category, the winner was the Ethiopian Debele Wudnesh, 29 years old, with 2h31.50, followed by five African women. The first European came in seventh place, and the first Spanish woman was Maria Raquel Miras who came in tenth place with a time of 2h56.11. The first Catalan, Ana Rosa Moreno, entered in the 14th place with 2h58.55.

A singular fact: Arcadi Alibés ran his 100th marathon in this test. Since his debut in distance running in New York in 1983, our friend Arcadi has run up and down, on all continents, reaching the hundred marathons. Also, a few days before the Marató de Barcelona, he published a book called "Córrer per ser feliç" (Running to be happy), which is becoming a best seller in Catalan in Catalonia.

Another, the Belgian Steefan Engels took part in the marató as part of an interesting challenge, to enter the Guinness record book: running a marathon daily, 365 consecutive marathons in 365 days-from January 1st to December 31th. She did it in 4h16, slightly faster than her average, which is 4h30.

It is noteworthy that this year, there was more entertainment spots than ever before. According to the organization, 40 entertainment spots. A 15 more than last year's and triple more than in the 2008 edition. However, there are sections such as the Gran Via before reaching the Besos neighborhood, and the Litoral, where there should be some more.

The people on the streets, cheering the participants, was also a feature of this marató. It is estimated that over 100,000 people were the ones who did it, the most in its history. Certainly, the marató de Barcelona has made giant strides in recent years, since its recovery in 2006, and it is being ranked among the best in Europe and, let me say also, the World.

The 2011 Marató de Barcelona

Everyone is surprised by the spectacular development of the Marató de Barcelona, our marathon, in recent times. And, in many ways, today has nothing to do with a few years ago. Those who also ran then can say that. This year we have achieved several goals, the most important, the number of participants: more than 15,000 registered participants, a fact that forces you to rub your eyes because it seems more a dream than a reality. Some say they would prefer a more homemade marathon ... that they are stunned...that so many people is too much. They don't know what they are talking about. A popular marathon has to be crowded; it is inseparable from the very party that represents the event. In this regard, we are on the right track. Everyone makes bets about when the test will reach 20,000 participants. I'm predicting that within two years.

But let's focus on what happened in this 2011 Marató.

The first thing to say is that the legal disputes that arose from the suspension of the test in 2005 due to the clash between City Hall and the Marathon Catalunya entity, that was the one who organized the test until 2004, were finally resolved, and we can declare that the present event is a continuation of the previous ones. So, this year's has been the 33th edition of the Marató de Barcelona, and thus this fact has clearly been stated in all the promotion done.

The circuit of this year was the same as last year's, which means that basically it was the same in recent years. Except for two small alterations due to the works in Plaza de las Arenas which were being finalized, the route had the same appeal.

Thus, in the Km 11th, we did not reach the Plaza España as in the other years. We made a turn in Diputación Street down to Tarragona Street, in front of the bullring, to reach Vilamarí and then go down this street until reaching Gran Via. And at the end of Km 35th, in order to recover the missing meters forced by the previous variant, rather than taking Ronda de Sant Pere just passed Arc de Triomf, we go up a little on Passeig de Sant Joan until we reach Ali Bei Street, and then join Ronda de Sant Pere after passing by the monument dedicated to Rafael Casanova.



Marked with a circle the areas with variants

regarding to last year's

The runners always like the racing circuits to be the same from year to year; we are giving it to them!

When it comes to the number of participants, what was said earlier that it was so important for the echo of a marathon, this year we have reached 15,134 runners, meaning a 24% increase over last year's, which we don't have to precise that is very high. Certainly, any race which is held in Catalonia increases the number of participants from year to year, but not so much. 24% in a marathon is very high!

Since we are talking about numbers, it is interesting to note that the registered participants have been:

Catalonia: 6.445 (an increase from last year of: 33%)

Rest of Spain: 2.123 (increase: 58%) Total State: 8.568 (increase: 39%)

Outside Spain: 6.566 (increase: 10%)

Total registered participants: 15.134 (Increase: 24%)

We all know that enrollees in any marathon is a notable finding, but the number of arrived participants is more notable. They have been 12.521, a number that place la Marató between the first six or seven marathons in Europe in this regard.

Making the distinction between registered and arrived participants, and while the two sections have broken the record achieved last year, it may seem that the difference between the two figures is great. It is not, judging by what happens in the big marathons, a rate of about 15% of registered participants is not present at the departure gate, and we must add the dropouts which are usually a 5% of those who have started. In particular, in this Marató de Barcelona, the numbers were:

Total Enrolled: 15.134

Present at the start: 13.062

Dropouts: 531

Total arrived participants: 12.531

Another very good data for the world was the great time obtained by the winner of the Marató. The Kenyan runner, Levi Matebo Obari, 21 years old, who won with a mark of 2'07''31, the fourth top of the year in the world until that day. He already had a good personal mark (2'12''06) but reduced it by more than four minutes. And for one second, he failed to match the record of the test (2'07''30), obtained last year by Jackson Kotut, another Kenyan runner. With two seconds! Less-two seconds! – He would have beat it.

A curious fact, Matebo Obari is the sixth marathoner from Kenya to win the Marató de Barcelona in a row. That is, since the test came back after the suspension of 2005, all the winners are Kenyans.

2006: **Joseph Nguram**: 2'12''36

2007: **Johnstone Chebil**: 2'12''04

2008: **Hosea Kosgei**: 2'14''42

2009: **Johnstone Chebil**: 2'14''01

2010: **Jackson Kotut**: 2'07''30

2011: **Levi Matebo Obari**: 2'07''31

Also quite good data for us, were the times of the five that went behind the winner (all of them are Kenyans too). Joseph Kimeli Langa, second in 2'10''05, Josephat Yego third in 2'10''44; Joash Muta forth in 2'13''45, Isaac Kosgei fifth in 2'14''44 and Nathan kimeli sixth in 2'15''00. The first Catalan was Marc Roig, reaching the ninth place in 2'18''08.



A group of Kenyan athletes around Km 25

In the women category, the winner was the Swedish Josephine Ambjörnsson in 2'45''31. Second came Nuria Prieto from Madrid (2'56''59), and third the British Martha Hall (2'57''51). Rosa Espachs was the first Catalan, fifth, in 3'00''24.

An observation about the first to arrive: it seems that an issue related to the exit visas with their country, prevented a group of Ethiopians, who were expected to take part in the test, to run.

However, with respect to the men category, the role made by the Kenyans was very good. Probably, if the Ethiopian athletes had been able to participate, the first times for the women category would have been better.

As for the popular runners, the essence of the Marató de Barcelona, it is worth noting several things: first, even if I have no data, I have the impression that this year more than ever, there have been lots of beginners. Going from 4.830 Catalans last year to 6.445 this year (1.615 more), besides they were inscribed just a few days before and at the same start, makes me to believe so. And the challenge of doing a marathon for the first time - some say it is one of the most important things you can do in a year ... if not more- is very attractive and encouraging.

This year, the organizers have had to deal with a problem created by the Spanish Athletics Federation related to the data of those enrolled in the test -related to the Runners Card - and fortunately, it has been resolved. Let's explain it: few months before the test, the Federation pulled off a kind of license to run, priced at 9 €, designed for the popular runners. Due to the poor reception given to the "invention", they had to rectify it and make it free. However, they established that the organizers of all races in the calendar of the RFEA had to send the data of the participants to Madrid Capital. If they didn't do so, the race would be excluded from the calendar and therefore would lose the homologated status. Understanding that the measure would be a control-like, like the famous card, in Catalonia they did not accepted the adopted measure at all. The runners were against it, considering the measure an imposition. "The federation never wanted to know anything about us, and we believed that they wanted to benefit from the current running boom to get money from us sooner or later, and we were against it." A popular rejection movement was created, the popular runners developed ourselves without ever being linked to the federation, and almost all organizations of our Spain supported us. The organizers of the Marató decided not to send the data under no circumstances, resolved the issue of the non-homologation, which could affect the elite athletes, by realizing two starts, one for the federated runners and again shortly after for everyone else.



Statement that many folk carried around in several races

The "official" animations of the Marató have been numbered as 42, which is a record. But aside, there have been many spontaneous animators. Regarding the latter, I'll explain the curious story occurred to a friend, Albert, who played an electric guitar to cheer the runners at the Forum. There, he met a lady with her granddaughter who said to him, "Good morning. ... Look, we have seen you and, listen, I do not know if we are right or wrong, but we take the subway quite often and we see people in the hallways ... people in need, you know. The little girl told me, she has always seen it like this... please accept that." And Albert was amazed - the good grandmother gave him two Euros coins.

Knowing that one of the most difficult moments of a marathon is between km 30 and km 35 (not that those who follow are not malicious, but it is in these kilometers that often appears "the wall", which leaves you stuck), and since in the Barcelona test these kilometers are located in a place where there is usually no one, as is the Coast, this year a call was made through social networks (facebook and twitter) and letters to newspapers, asking the citizens to come over to this the area to support the runners. The theme was "Help us to overcome the wall." It worked very well. Within four days the group already had 300 members in facebook, and finally, there were over a thousand. And as expected, on the Marató day, between the Forum and the Hotel Arts, there were more people than ever before.

Also, I must say that the marathon this year echoed many media before the test. Not just sports newspapers, which is quite normal. I remember it also appeared in some generic newspapers. For example in *El Periódico*, an article by Ed Wilking. And radio stations, as is the case of the program "*El Suplement*" by Tatiana Sisquella. And after the conclusion of the event, they made a report in "Entre Linies" of TV3, which is also a non-sports program. Something unusual some time ago. Clear evidence that the marathon seems that is beginning to create interest not just among those who are its "socios".

And not to say, in this sense, the number of spectators that each year, takes to the streets to cheer the passage of the marathon. A lot of people on the arrival (from Calle Urgell, Sepulveda ...), but also in places such as Passeig de Gracia, Sagrada Familia, Plaza de las Glories, Arc de Triomf, Plaça Catalunya, Plaza de la Catedral, Plaza Sant Jaume, Colon... Also in that we are improving. And I tell you, you just have to see what they say the participants from outside Catalonia through athletics websites on the net. Everyone talks about it in fantastic terms.

No shortage of parallel events to the Marató, as the Breakfast Run the day before, or presentations and lectures at the Expo Marathon (it's now called Expo Sports), this year, by the way, has collected 100 exhibitors, which contributes to improve the event.

Of the conferences, I'll stick to the one conducted by Enric Masllorens recalling what was the first Marató, origin of the current one. Glossing the figure of Ramon Oliu, the creator of the race, explaining what was like that legendary marathon in 1978 in Palafrugell, in which he competed.

In another ceremony, the prizes Marató de Barcelona were awarded to the swimmer Erika Villacija, the Guardia Urbana of Barcelona, the Athletic Club Sport i Natura, Domingo Catalan and myself. They said they were "in recognition of our work", in my case, exaggerated. But it is fine to do so.

In any case, as everything is never as nice as you wanted, I must say that our Marató is short of something: the participation of women. This year there was 1,918 women enrolled, although they were 13% more than last year, but the ratio women/men (13/87) is very low. Moreover, the majority are foreigners. Although far more have participated in Catalonia and the rest of Spain than in other years, the number remains very low.

Foreign women enrolled: 1.361 (increase vs. last year: 3%)

Catalan women enrolled: 428 (increase vs. last year: 41%)

Women from the rest of the state: 129 (increase vs. last year: 55%)

Regarding the organizational aspects of the test, I must say that it is improving from year to year, which is appreciated by the participants. Every time there is a decrease in complaints and the shortcomings are minor. You could say, however, that we have seen an improvement in the access to the departure to avoid smart-asses who put themselves where they do not belong, but the question is not yet fully resolved.

Something that is missing is that in our Marató there are few runners who take part on it for a worthy cause. I mean what it's called the "Charity Run" abroad, which is to participate to raise funds for an NGO or foundation. They are few, but very few compared to those who do so in London or New York, for instance, where it is a great majority of the locals.

This year, in Barcelona some friends have done it: Josele Ferré from the Bloggers Running Team to raise money for research on Rett syndrome; Pablo Pluvinet for the study of strokes realized at the Clinic, and Marc Minguella for an NGO that helps children in Africa. Probably there have been more similar actions, but not many. It is hoped that someday, hopefully soon, in our Marató some similar projects are launched seriously, here, this might be called "Running for altruism."



Josele Ferré ran the marathon to raise money for Rett

Syndrome research

In the photo, running with his daughter, affected by the disease, together with some friends

One thing worth to note is the registration price.

This year was;

50 euros if done between March 8th, 2010 to December 19th, 2010;

60 euros from December 20th, 2010 to January 30th, 2011 and

70 euros from January 31th, 2011 to February 20th, 2011.

To conclude this letter, I break the rule I set myself at the start of this history, which is nothing other than reflect what has been happening in each of the marathons held in Barcelona, without personal chronicles. I will include some experiences of mine, written on Monday, March 7, the day after having run the marathon this year.

Chronicle of the Marató BCN'2011

I have run. I have enjoyed. I have suffered. I've been cold. I had heat. I have not noticed the "loneliness of the runner." I've been in good company. I've seen more people than ever cheering the runners. I have taken pictures. I saw a blind man who ran. I have been greeted by my name on the back. I've greeted a lot of known and unknown people. I hit the outstretched hand of many children passing by. I have suffered. I thought it was logical to suffer. I have seen my grandson playing a drum. I have been touched on the provisioning of the Cathedral and on the arrival. I made it in 4h47. I finished my forty-second marathon. I have embraced. I have been embraced. I have been hung a medal. I have enjoyed. I have suffered. I'll be back next year.

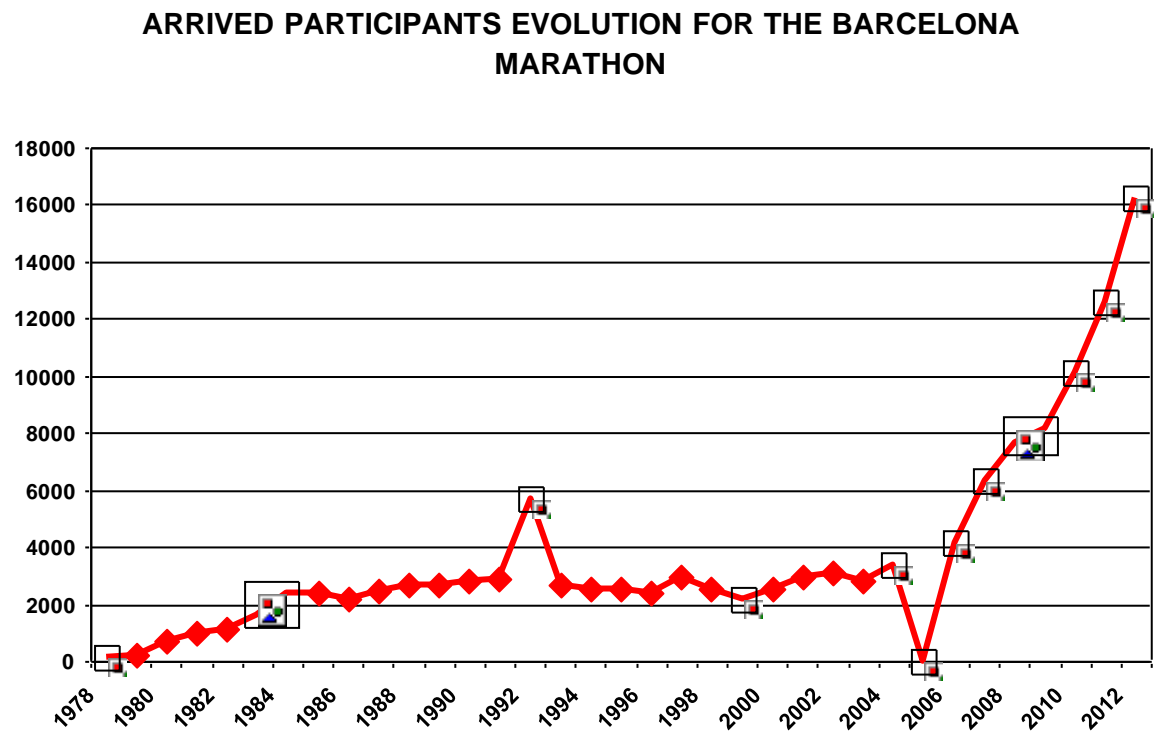
Barcelona Marathon 2012

The first I would like to mention about the 2012 marathon is that, myself - and I think the whole world was wrong in the estimation of the number of participants that would run it.

For those who have a special sympathy for this Barcelona marathon, it was exciting to hear, month to month, week to week, day to day, how the enrollment increased from a year earlier. However, nobody could assume that eventually so many runners would enroll in it: 19 507 (I find it exciting just to write the number), which meant a 29% increase over last year.

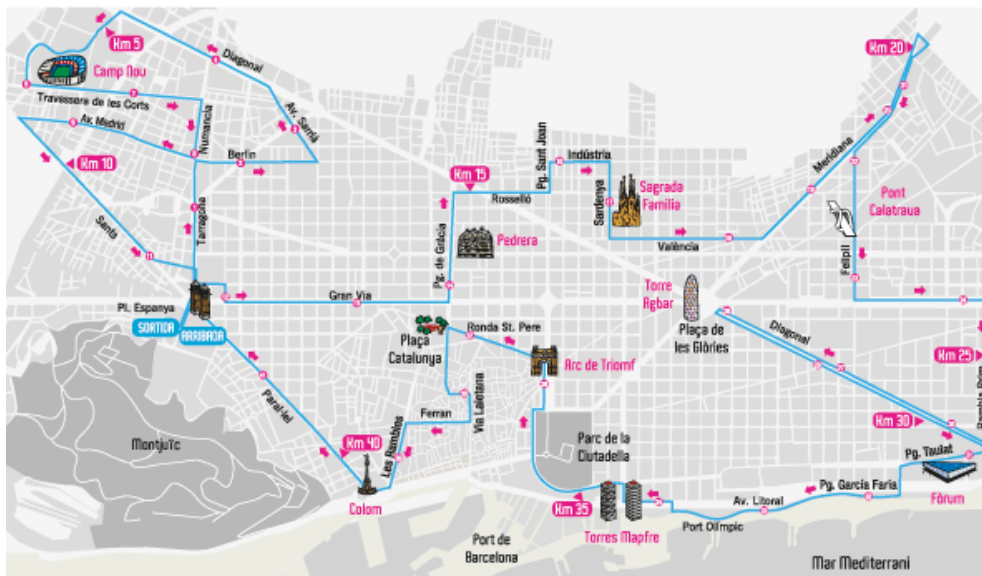
When I say that the number gives me the chills, is no exaggeration. Those who have followed the developments that the test has experienced since it was first held, in any way we could imagine that in such a short time, after its suppression in 2005, the progression would have been this one.

For the fans of statistics, as myself, I think it might be interesting to see this reflected in a chart:



Although, the truth is that what counts in a marathon is not so much the number of enrollees but the number of runners who arrive at the finish line. But also in this case, the 2012 marathon was a record. They were 16,216 runners, 29% more than in 2011. No need to say anything more.

Regarding the course, this year there were some variations, although the essence of the emblematic itinerary was not distorted. Due to the avalanche of participants, it was decided to take the race all the way up Tarragona Street right after the departure, rather than through the streets of Creu Coberta and Sants, in anticipation that those streets would be too narrow. Thus, the first 12 km had a different sense of direction: to find the Hotel Princesa Sofia and the Camp Nou through the Diagonal, counterclockwise to other years.



There was another major development: there was three staggered starting times. The first one was for the elite athletes and runners up to 3:30 hours, the second for those between 3:30 and 4:00, and one last one for the rest. The last participant started 20 minutes after the first batch.

Something that increased a lot as well was the number of spectators. As a result of the increase in runners, the number of family and friends to encourage them, and those who are on the street attracted by the echo of the event, has been spectacular. There was even many people in places like the coastal area, the pending issue in terms of participants animation.

Speaking of animation, the "official" animation points where you could find (drummers, bands ...) have been 53, twice the amount of four years ago. Furthermore, the volunteers were almost 1,500.

For the record, the enrollment rates were the same as last year's: 50, 60 and 70 euros depending on the moment you enrolled in it (until December, and until January to February respectively). Also, note that the organization assumed the cost of fees imposed by the Spanish Federation so the test could be

approved and part of the calendar.

As for the results of the first classified, the race record in the women's category was broken, one of the pending challenges in this new period of the marathon, which was kept since **Anna Isabel Alonso** from Palencia established it with 2h30.04 in 1997.

The winners were the Kenyan **Julius Chepkowony** in the men's category and in the women's category, the also Kenyan of similar family name, **Emily Chepkomy**. He crossed the finish line in 2h11.14, and she did it in 2h26.56. A record that lowered by more than three minutes the previous record, and that meant the best time a woman had ever done in Spain.

The records in the male category were not as good as the last two years (2h07.30 and 2h07.31), perhaps, to some extent, because one of the Kenyans' pacemakers abandoned in the second kilometer due to a sore knee.

1 ^o Julius Chepkowony (Kenya).....	2h11.14
2 ^o Japhet Kipchirchir (Kenya)	2h11.32
3 ^o Willy Kimutai Kangogo (Kenya).....	2h11.35
4 ^o Samuel Woldeamanuel (Ethiopia)	2h11.47
5 ^o Ivan Babaryka (Ukraine)	2h11.48
1 ^a Emily Chepkomy (Kenya)	2h26.56
2 ^a Biruktayit Eshetu Degefa (Ethiopia).....	2h29.52
3 ^a Elena Espeso (Spain).....	2h30.52
4 ^a Berhane Dibaba (Ethiopia)	2h33.07
5 ^a Aroa Merino (Spain)	2h55.03

A remarkable aspect was that fifteen of the participating elite athletes (11 men and 4 women), achieved the minimum record to go to the London Olympics. A target sought by the Catalan Jaume Leiva and Chema Martínez from Madrid and which they were not able to achieve. Leiva, despite being 15th, did 2h19: 23 (the minimum established by the Spanish Federation was 2h14) and Chema had to retire at km 28.

Another milestone that must be mentioned, was achieved by the Paralympic **Abderrahman Ait Khamouch**, a Moroccan boy who lives in Catalunya, who broke the world record for athletes who are missing an arm. He lowered the record by more than a minute, arriving in 2h25.43, twenty-second

overall. Admirable feat of this boy, who arrived in Spain with a boat fleeing the poverty in Morocco, where he lost his arm while working in the field. He went to Barcelona and the first race he participated in, with a very good role, was the race of El Corte Ingles in 2003.

Regarding the female participation, 2.159 women have finished this 2012 marathon, 44% more than last year. Although, as always, almost 70% of them were foreigners.

It has always been said (I also have said so) that the participation of Spanish women in the marathon is a "pending issue". It's not a cliché, it is true. But in recent years, at least in Barcelona, the women participation has grown a lot and that offers a glimmer of hope. To give just a fact, in the year 2008, the women of the State who arrived at the finish line were 176 and this year they were 667. That's three times more than four years ago. And an observation that adds a little more optimism is the ratio men/women, who has always been very uneven. Referring only to the participants of the state, two years ago, in 2010, this ratio was 94/6 and this year the ratio was 92/8. And also in relation to the increase in percentage of participants for both genders, it has been greater for the women in these two years (+125%) than men (+84%).

In conclusion, a fact about the Barcelona Marathon of this year which makes me very satisfied: the number of arrivals 16,216 makes this marathon the 4th in Europe and the 13th in the world.

Maratons Top del Món 2011-2012

	<i>Marató</i>	<i>Total arribats</i>
1	Nova York	46.536
2	Londres	36.699
3	Chicago	35.670
4	Tokio	35.501
5	Berlin	32.991
6	Paris	32.980
7	Osaka	26.175
8	Boston	21.554
9	Washington	20.895
10	Kobe	20.103
11	Honolulu	19.078
12	Los Angeles	18.729
13	Barcelona	16.216
14	Estocolm	15.465
15	Shonan	15.278
16	Orlando	13.467
17	Roma	12.500
18	Frankfurt	12.425
19	Dublin	11.245
20	Hamburg	10.317
21	Philadelphia	10.313
22	Madrid	9.569
23	Copenhague	9.506
24	Minneapolis	8.531
25	Portland	8.461

Our marathon has a great appeal, both for locals and foreigners, this last group represents 50% of the total. As the Professor from the Ramon Llull University, Sixto Abadía, said in the *9 Esportiu* a few days after March 25th: The cultural and commercial offer, the architecture and the leisure are aspects that tourists greatly appreciate and favor the Barcelona marathon, which from the concept of the tourist bus, has established a course that looks very attractive for the visitors. So, if it is unthinkable to conceive a Paris marathon without passing by the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, Notre Dame and the Bastille, the Barcelona Marathon must pass by the landmarks such as La Pedrera, Sagrada Familia, Camp Nou and Rambla.

Miquel Pucurull Fontova

Maratón de Barcelona 2013

The 2013 marathon recovered the same beginning of the race of the years prior to 2012. So, after the staggered start to avoid jams, you go through Sants to go find the Camp Nou instead of the street Tarragona as last year. This changed the direction of the first 12 kilometers to get to the Gran Via.

There were other small circuit changes over recent years, the most notable were that -a shame- we did not pass by the Plaça de Sant Jaume neither the Rambla. Overall, I must say that the route, milder in the first few kilometers to the Diagonal, and with fewer turns in its entirety, it was a little softer than previous years.



Breaking the trend of high growth that the race had experienced since its return in 2006, the number of

participants, probably due to the economic crisis and the coincidence with the Rome Marathon on that same day, was lower than the previous year. The decline, which collectively represented an 8% less of participants than in 2012 (14.776 arrived participants versus 16.010), was much more pronounced among the foreigners (5.949 vs. 6.964), ie 15% less, the sum of the runners from Catalonia and the rest of the state (8,827 vs. 9,046) was only 2% less.

It should be noted, moreover, an important aspect: the number of women from the state who finished the race grew. Last year, 1,492 foreigners and 668 from the state completed the test and this year they did it 1,158 from outside of Spain and 855 from here. The foreigners were 334 less (22 % less) and the ones from the state 167 more (28 % more).

But Barcelona has consolidated itself for the second consecutive year as the fourth marathon in Europe in the number of arrivals. Behind London, Berlin and Paris and ahead of Stockholm, Rome, etc. Also, it stood on the fifteenth of the world ranking.

Let's say we had 18,389 enrolled participants and 15,433 took the start and let's leave aside the stats.

The Ethiopian Gezahegne Abera Hunde was the winner of the event with 2h10:17. After the Kenyans crossed the finish line in 2h10:48 Abraham Keter, and 2h11: 34 Linus Maiyo, while the best Spanish was the Catalan Jaume Leiva, who arrived fifth, with a time of 2h13:41 , eleven seconds more than the minimum requested by the Spanish federation to go to the summer World Championships in Moscow. The Extremadura athlete Pablo Villalobos was supposed to accompany him until half of the test, but he didn't feel well and he had to abandon at Km 12.

In the women category the first one was the Ethiopian Lemelem Berha Yachem with a time of 2h34:39. Behind her arrived the also Ethiopian Amelework Fikadu in 2h.35:53 and the Kenyan Irene Mogaka in 2h.38:46. The first Spanish was the Catalan Elena Hidalgo, who finished in sixth place with a time of 2h58:16.

We must consider a success the large audience along the entire route, except for the area of the Coast. It was the year that there were more people on the streets cheering the runners, which is not news: citizens enjoy the marathon. There were 48 points of animation along the 42 kilometers, and 1,500 volunteers, besides the organization's staff and the local police. Besides, the weather accompanied: it was a great day to run. All happy, the only thing that clouded the event was the unfortunate death of the popular runner from Hospitalet, Xavier Jimenez , 45 years old. He fell to the ground shortly after crossing the finish line and died of heart failure at the Hospital where he had been admitted.

Any major marathon also has an important Runner's Fair. This is the case of Barcelona, the Expo -Sports, where 169 exhibitors presented the latest developments in the field of running, was visited by over 60,000 people according to organizers, a figure exceeding last year 's record .

The registration fee was initially set at 55€. But a dramatic increase in the VAT forced organizers to increase it in September and it was set at 61,62€ up to the 10,000 registered participant, 72,82 € from the 10,001 to the 17,000, and 84,02€ from the 17.001 onward .

Taking place in mid-March, we all feared that heat would affect the development of the test. But thankfully it did not. We have already said that the weather helped, staying mostly in the 12 degrees. Moreover, for some time it rained intermittently. Both things were not an obstacle, in my opinion, on the contrary, to achieve good marks (those that did).

Confirming that the marathon is a test where age has little to do with it, if you are trained and eager to do it, thirty participants over 70 years ran it. The older, the Spanish Atilano Alfaro , 78 , and Maija Kainulainen from Finland , 73 .

On a final note: the day before the marathon, after the Breakfast Run, the City Council paid tribute to Ramon Oliu, the introducer of popular marathons in Catalonia, with the unveiling of a plaque on a monolith located in Montjuïc, a few meters from the current finish line, in the same place of departure and arrival of the participants of the first marathon held in Barcelona in 1980, driven by him.



Miquel Pucurull Fontova

Barcelona marathon 2014

With almost the exact circuit as last year's (except for a small variation in a loop at the Parallel), that is to say identical to the one from recent years since 2006, took place the 2014 marathon.

The growth over the past year has been spectacular in terms of the number of citizens who have taken the streets to cheer on the athletes. In recent years, and increasingly, Barcelona has become involved with the marathon, but –who writes this text can confirm so- never before so many people have done so as this year, turning this marathon into a city celebration.

The Ethiopian **Abayu Getachew**, 23 years old, born in Jato, the same village where was born the mythical *Abebe Bikila* and with a certain physical resemblance with him, was the winner of the event with a time of 2 hours, 10 minutes and 45 seconds, a record of more than 2 minutes better than his personal best. The Kenyans **Thomas Kiplagat Rono** and **Boaz Kimeli**, took second and third place, while, **Dickson Kimeli**, also from Kenya, who couldn't hold up the attack of the winner at km 40, finished fourth, and the fifth was the Moroccan **Samir Ait Bouchmane**.

In the feminine category, **Frahia Nyambura** from Kenya was first with a time of 2 hours, 32 minutes and 26 seconds, followed by the also Kenyan **Naomí Jepakogei**. The third was the Moroccan with Catalan residence and very familiar to our local races, **Hasna Bahom** who debuted in the marathon.

The fourth was the Catalan **Laia Andreu**, an athlete specialized in mountain races of very high level and for whom this marathon was the first one she has run. In fifth place was **Clara Angèlica Esparza**, Mexican established in Catalonia, who runs with a Catalan license. These three runners with records of 2h45.26, 2h49.38 and 2h56.26 respectively, came to become part of the selective group of 34 marathonians from Catalonia who have gone down of the three hours in all the times.

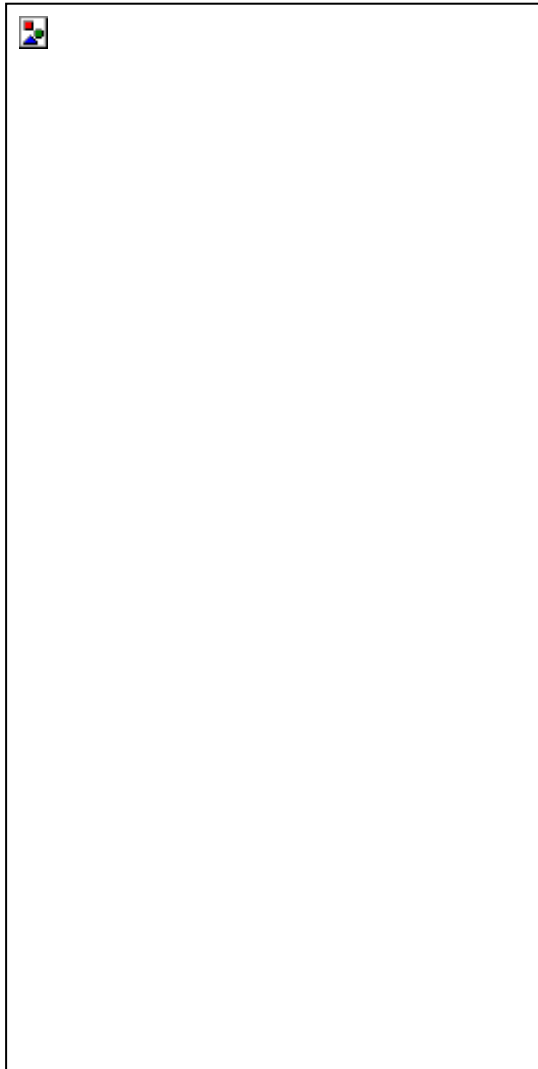
The first athlete from the State was the Catalan **Adrià Garcia**, classified in tenth position (2h24.30) in his debut in the distance. Adrià is the son of **Rafa Garcia**, who in 1985, after being the Spanish champion of 1.500 and after being away from the tracks for eight years, became the first Catalan to win this Barcelona marathon, with a record of 2h18.16.

As in the previous year –quite likely due to the economic crisis- there were less participants, especially foreigners, although the percentage of this reduction was not as huge as in 2013. To be concrete, the foreign runners to this test were 5.645 and the sum of the ones from Catalonia and the rest of the State was 8.578. In total, 14.223 arrived to the finish line of the almost 18.000 registered participants, which helped maintain the excellent position of the Barcelona marathon in the ranking of the European marathons, the fifth this year in number of finishers.

With the perspective of the last five years, the Barcelona marathon with more participants (not just from this era but from all its history) was the 2012 marathon, with a 30% increase over the previous year. In 2013 there was a 9% decrease and this year another decrease, although to a lesser percentage, 3%. The decrease of these last few years is more pronounced among the foreigners than the local runners. In 2013 we had 17% less finishers than a year before, and in 2014 a 5% less.

FINISHERS AT THE MARATÓ BARCELONA THESE LAST 5 YEARS					
	Year 2010	Year 2011	Year 2012	Year 2013	Year 2014
Gran total	10.115	12.468	16.216	14.766	14.223
Catalonia + rest of the State	5.128	7.112	9.047	8.827	8.578
Foreigners	4.987	5.356	7.169	5.949	5.645
Men Total	8.773	10.961	13.993	12.763	12.040
Catalonia + rest of the State	4.832	6.671	8.379	8.072	7.690
Foreigners	3.941	4.290	5.614	4.691	4.350
Women Total	1.342	1.507	2.223	2.013	2.183
Catalonia + rest of the State	296	441	668	755	888
Catalonia + rest of the State	1.046	1.066	1.555	1.258	1.295

To add more data, I include the list of participants to the Barcelona marathon all along its history. As you can see the participation since 2006, year in which the marathon was held again after the 2005 break, has grown progressively until 2012 and has slightly decreased in the last two years.



While stating the final reduction in finishers compared to last year's, we must note that the women who have taken part in this 2014 marathon have increased: eight per cent more than in 2013, of which 844 were Catalan runners and from the rest of the State. On a purely anecdotal, I must mention that in the first Spanish marathon, the one from 1978 in the village of Palafrugell, origin of the nowadays Barcelona marathon, was ran by 3 women. And in 2000, just 14 years ago, 157 ran in it.

Another aspect to point out is that this year –more than any other year- many participants have run the marathon for some solidarity cause. As it is done in many marathons in the US and in Northern Europe (there they call them *Run for Charity*), where runners raise money before the test among the people around them for some NGO, hospital, etc. We hope that this kind of initiative thrives as elsewhere. In the marathons of New York, London, Paris...just to set some examples, where most of the locals run for some cause and here, hopefully it will be the same here.

Marathon of Barcelona 2015

The marathon of Barcelona 2015 had a special meaning. They were fulfilled 10 years of that 2005 in which it was not celebrated. And it didn't disappoint. If it was cancelled one decade before because, apart from the lack of understanding between the entity that was organizing it and the City Hall, the Marathon of Barcelona was not growing and had about 3.000 participants during several years, in 2015 there were more than 19.000.

Also, regarding the animations, 2015 was a paradigmatic year. Never before as in this edition, citizens have supported the marathon of the city so much. It is difficult to quantify the big number of inhabitants who went out to the streets to encourage marathon runners. But it is sure that there were hundreds of thousands that, at both sides, even in zones without housing as that of the zone of the Litoral, met to encourage them.

There were some innovations: the most important one was the number of water station points during the race: from Km. 5 one each 2,5km. There was also the possibility that the relatives of the runners could follow a certain participant through an APP. The race was also broadcasted in TV3.

Also, and related to the Marathon, there was celebrated the day before some races for children in the arrival zone; the Avenue M^a Cristina. It was called the Kids Race; Pre-Benjamin ran 3 rounds to a circuit of 200m and five rounds the Alevin and Infante. It was a success of the organization.

As in the last years, the first classified were the African runners. From the beginning they were first the Ethiopian Daba Tolessa and Abdela Bodana and the Kenyan Cheruiot Kangogo. In Km. 35 the Ethiopian Tolessa had an advantage of 19 seconds, but little before coming to the finish line, Kangogo changed his pace and was the winner. It was his second marathon (2h20.02 in the first one 5 months before) and did a time of 2h08.16, the best third time in the history of the Marathon of Barcelona. The second one, Daba Tolessa, 2h09.41, and the third one, Abdela Godana, 2h11.38. The Catalan Carles Castillejo, the best Spanish, was fifth with a time of 2h12.03, his second best time.

In women, the Ethiopian did a spectacular race; three of them were the first ones, Aynalem Kassahun, won in her first marathon with a time of 2h28.17, Mula Diro, who suffered injuries in the last km was the second with 2h29.10 and Belaynesh Shifera, third with 2h31.08. The first Spanish woman was Teresa Pullido, who had been a mother 7 months before. She was fourth with a time of 2h44.53.

Precisely, women were outstanding protagonists as for the increase in the participation. This is an unquestionable aspect in the last years. To see it with perspective, it is worth to remind how has been the evolution since they started running. In the first popular marathon that was celebrated in 1978 in Palafrugell, origin of the current Marathon of Barcelona, 3 women ran. Two years later, already in Barcelona, the number of feminine participants who finished it was testimonial: they were 20. 10 years later, in 1990, the amount increased to 144. Ten years later, in 2000, the growth was insignificant: 157 completed the marathon. After another decade, in 2010, in the boom of running, things have changed very much and the women who finished the marathon were 1.343. And in the last one, in 2015, they were 2.401.

Certainly, the increase of participants from one year to the next one in the Marathon of Barcelona is a very important characteristic. To notice only with the mentioned years, the total of finishers has been:

Year 1978: 146

Year 1980: 716

Year 1990: 2.832

Year 2000: 2.532

Year 2010: 10.115

Year 2015: 15.387

Surely, besides other aspects (number of athletes of elite, antidoping tests, precision of the measurement, number of water station points, rapidity of the results, TV coverage, safety of the participants, etc), the number of runners that finished it has been one of the reasons for that the International Federation of Athletics (IAFF) has granted the category of Bronze Label to our marathon, placing it among the best in the world.

Barcelona Marathon 2016

The Zurich Barcelona Marathon 2016 surpassed for the first time, the 20.000 participants enrolled. And thanks to this, it will be remembered: record participation with 20.385 enrolled. In 2016, as always, there were people that couldn't make to the start line and other people who quitted the race (around 2%) before reaching the finish line.

For that reason, there were 16.899 finishers. In 2016 the Barcelona Marathon got the best numbers (runners enrolled and finishers) of its history.

We have to remark another record from the past year; the female record of the Kenian runner, Valery Jemeli, who reached the finish line in 2h 25'26". It's the best time achieved for a woman in any Spanish marathon.

The Ethiopian runner, Dino Sefir, won the race after crossing the start line in 2h09'31", two minutes after the best time at the Barcelona marathon, obtained by Jackson Kotut in the Barcelona Marathon of 2010 (2h07'30").

Valery Jemeli got her personal best last year in Barcelona with the 2h25'26", she is now the fastest runner in the Barcelona Marathon, before Aynalem Kassahum (2h30'51") who won the marathon in 2015. The Catalan runner, Marisa Casanueva, who debuted in this distance, obtained the 4th position and was the first Spanish runner who achieved the 2h34'57".

Dino Sefir, who was one of the favorites of the race, overcame Albert Korir (second on the podium thanks to the 2h10'08" time) and Jafred Chirchir Kipchumba (third on the podium with his 2h10'23" time). The first Spanish athlete arriving to the finish line was Francisco España (14th position with 2h18'36" time), and the first Catalan was Marc Roig (15th position thanks to the 2h23'28").

Other point to remark about the Barcelona Marathon2016 was the big citizen participation the day of the race. Over 300.000 people on the streets were cheering the runners along the course, 100.000 people more than last year. All this information regarding the citizen participation is very important because it means the well synchronization between the race and the city.

The major of the city, Ada Colau, who gave the starting shot, had the chance to live first hand the good vibes from the spectators of the marathon. She said: "Barcelona is a city where people practice a lot of sports, and it has a bit of everything: it's beautiful, the weather is nice and the citizens give their support to the athletes. As we can see, this year we had more participants and volunteers than ever". The statement from Juan Porcar, the CEO of RPM (company that organizes the race), help to encourage the philosophy of the race: "We are very happy with the reaction we had from the runners. They placed the Barcelona Marathon as one of the most important marathons in Europe". "We are not looking to become the biggest marathon in participation, but to be the marathon that gives the best services to the runners. And we will achieve it gradually".

The Zurich Barcelona Marathon 2016 has been set as the 5th marathon in Europe with a large number of finishers, and 43% of these finishers were foreigners.

Zurich Marató Barcelona 2017

Jonah Kikemoi Chesum was the winner of the Barcelona's marathon in 2017. It was an amazing surprise in great part because it was his first marathon but also because he was running as a pacemaker of the elites.

"I'm very happy of winning in Barcelona because it's the first marathon I've run in my life", said Chesum at the finish line. "I couldn't imagine that I, who came as a pacemaker, could finish this race. But at the km35 I realized that I was alone and I still had extra energy to keep going until the end".

The Kenyan runner started running the Barcelona marathon as a pacemaker but while the miles were passing, he saw the opportunity of his life. As a matter of fact, at the km 35 he decided to change his strategy and go for the first position in the podium with a really good time, 2h08.28, the sixth best time of the Barcelona's marathon history.

Kipkemoi Chesum is a Paralympic athlete. He has a malformation in his arm because of an accident when he was just a kid in his house. He actually ran at the 2012 Paralympic Games in London, where he achieved the 6th position in the race of 800 meters. And the 7th position on the 1.500 meters in the T46 category (Physical disability with affected limb).

Behind him, at the second and third position, arrived the Kenyans Jacob Cheshari Kirui (2h09.24) who also came as a pacemaker, and Justus Kiprotich (2h11.38). The Moroccan athlete, Samir Ait Bouchamane who is licensed by the Catalan Federation arrived in the 10th position with 1h17'28". The first Spanish to arrive was Daniel Barralés in the 13th position with a time of 1h32'30".

Regarding the women category there weren't any surprises. The winner of the race was the Ethiopian athlete, Helen Bekele who achieved a 2h25'04" the best time of the race in this category and also the best time for the athlete. Bekele is 23 years old and she was running her 3rd marathon. She was sharing the podium with Meselech Tsegay Beyene (2h26'44") and Robi Aberash Fayesa (2h27'04"). The Spanish runner, Dolors Palau arrived in the 8th position thanks to her 2h52'28".

In the past marathon there were 16.264 finishers, and it was a very special edition because we were celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Barcelona 1992 Olympic Games. The organization of the race invited to the Zurich Marató de Barcelona the 3 women and 3 men who did the podium in the '92 Olympic Games. All 6 were at the start to encourage the other runners. But only the German Stephan Freigang (49 years old) who got the bronze in '92 wanted to recall the 25th anniversary by running the full marathon. He arrived at the finish line in 3h03'49". The Spanish marathoner José Esteban Montiel who also ran the '92 Olympic Games in Barcelona ran the Barcelona 2017 marathon in 3h21'08".

An interesting anecdote: Adna Almousa Faramali, Syrian refugee who lives in Lebanon, came to run the Zurich Marató Barcelona in the wheelchair category. He's only 19 years old and just 5 years ago he got shot by a bullet. Since then, he must use a wheelchair.

Zurich Marató Barcelona 2018

Kenya was, as it is usual, omnipresent in the first positions of the Marathon of Barcelona. The Kenyan Anthony Maritim won it with a record of 2h8'8". The second and third position were for his compatriots Too Silas, who arrived 18 seconds later and Kipsambu Hillary, 44 seconds after. In feminine category, the victory was also for a Kenyan athlete, Ruth Chebitok (2h25'49) who was making her debut in a marathon. The Ethiopians Belanyesh Tsegaye (2h27'08) and Alemu Worknesh (2h28'19) completed the podium.

This marathon of 2018 was the 40th edition. The 38th in the city of Barcelona as the two first editions, 1978 and 1979, were celebrated in the village of Palafrugell, as it was not possible to obtain the permissions of the City Hall.

This year there was a reduction of participants regarding the previous year, due, undoubtedly, for the effects of the terrorist attack of August 2017 in the city and for the images of the police violence during the referendum of October 1. Both things influenced in this reduction. Despite this, more than 17.000 runners registered, almost the half of them foreigners, which make that the race continues being one of the 20 more important marathons of the world.

The route, in general, was fast as it is demonstrated by the first three who achieved their best personal record. Regarding the previous year, it was deleted the pass close to the cathedral because around, there have been placed some elements of prevention that avoid the entry of vehicles.

In the start, the temperature was of 13° and it raised until 16°, with a humidity of 75%.

The first 16 athletes were foreigners. The first Spanish man was the runner from Igualada, Albert Moreno, who finished 17th with 2h28'16. The first Spanish woman, 7th women, was the veteran Lydia Orozco with 2h55'04. The Paralympic athlete from Granollers, Jordi Madera, won in the category of wheelchairs, with 1h47'58.

Miquel Pucurull I Fontova

Zurich Marato Barcelona 2019

The route of the marathon of 2019 in its 42nd edition was slightly modified compared to the previous year, especially at the beginning, with the purpose of avoiding the ascent to the Avenue Diagonal. The Race Director, Cristian Llorens, said “we modify the circuit to make it faster, but without eliminating any of the emblematic points that characterize us. It was a very balanced marathon, very linear, with few curves and big avenues. Moreover, we reduced the positive slope by 20% compared to 2018”.

The changes worked as the favourites did a better time than expected. Thus, Alemu Bekele in men and Kuftu Tahir in women, reached historical records of the race. The first one, from Bahrein, finished in 2h6'04, breaking in more than one minute the previous record established in 2010, while the Ethiopian Kuftu Tahir reduced in 20 seconds the female record of 2017, with a time of 2h24'44. The race was very fast. At Km 30, there were 9 runners able to break the record of the circuit. In Km. 35 there were 6. at Km. 40 Bekele left alone for the final victory to finish in 2h06'04, seventh best world record of the year. The runner Miguel Ferrer, from Logroño, was the first Spanish and European to cross the finish line. He finished in 12th position and with his best personal record, 2h23'33, a bit before the first woman.

About the women's race, the great favourite, Jackline Chepngeno, 2h24, had to leave at Km. 25. At that time, a group of Africans and an Asian escaped, and from Km. 35, the winner Tahir Kuftu was taking advantage to arrive alone to the finish line. The first European, the Swedish Johanna Eriksson, with 2h39'27, was the 9th women. And the first Spanish, Cristina Silva was 15th with a record of 2h56'27.

The number of registered was 17.451, a slightly higher (2%) than the previous year, and the finishers were 13.444. Men, 10.857 and women, 2.587, 19% of the total, the highest percentage of all marathons celebrated in Spain.

An interesting fact is that more and more runners are running the marathon to collect money for different solidary purposes. A very frequent action of the participants in the marathons of the United States or North Europe. This is becoming very popular also in Barcelona.

Almost half of the runners (49%) were foreigners, from 107 different countries, another historical record this year.

The Marathon of Barcelona, respectful with the environment, used a car that opened the race that worked with hydrogen. It was the first marathon in the world to do so. The only emissions to the atmosphere of this model were water droplets that purify the air when circulating, which facilitated the performance of the athletes. On the other hand, the t-shirts of the runners were made of recycled materials, which contributed to reduce the emissions of CO2. Likewise, all the spared fruit of the water station points was delivered to the Food Bank to help those in need.

Zurich Marato Barcelona 2020

No competition

Zurich Marato Barcelona 2021

For the first time in its history, Barcelona's Marathon was not held in March of 2020. The reason was the Coronavirus' pandemic. Finally, the competition took place in November of that year, when the health authorities allowed it. The fear of getting infected had already subsided and neither PCR tests, antigen tests nor vaccination certificates were necessary to participate in it. Once again, the streets of the Catalan capital filled with citizens cheering the runners, who numbered around 15,000 turning a regular Sunday morning into a great celebration of popular sport. Also, above that, this edition was a record breaking marathon.

For the men's category, the Kenyan Samuel Kosgei, with a time of 2:06.03h, and for the woman's side, the Ethiopian Tadu Teshome, with 2:23.53h had overcome the records. So, it could be said that, after almost two years without a marathon, the joy of the anonymous participants, the goals of the professional ones and the organization of the event returned again with all the honors.

The tack of this test improved in comparison to 2019, in order to make it faster and more attractive for the runners. The ascent from previous years to Diagonal Avenue was eliminated, and the last three kilometers of Paral·lel were avoided, turning from Ronda Sant Pau to Sepúlveda Street, and from there to the finish line on Maria Cristina Avenue.

As it was expected and how it's currently happening, the contend was dominated by African athletes from the start to the end. At 30th Kilometer, there were 14 runners in a group, with the Kenyan Emmanuel Bor on the lead. But then, Samuel Kosgei broke away at 38th kilometer and won the race finally, beating the record set by Alemu Bekele in 2019 with a time of 2:06.04 h at Bahrain.

A part from the winner, the Moroccan Othmane El Goumri finished second in 2:06:30 h, and his compatriot, Mohamed Ziani, was third in 2:06:33 h. As a curiosity, it is important to add that, Kosgei, winner of this edition, ruined as the 'hare' of the legendary Haile Gebrselassie in Germany during his first thirty kilometers of Berlin's Marathon in 2008, when Haile broke the world record in 2:03:59h.

For the female category, the situation was quite similar. The Ethiopian athletes took the lead, with the winner Tinbit Gidey as the favorite and leader of the group. Quickly, it became clear that Gidey could achieve the test record, because he exceeded the 5th kilometer being 34 seconds faster than the mark reached by the also Ethiopian Kuftu Tahir (2.24.44h) in 2019. Moreover, Tinbit Gidey entered the finish line with almost a minute less of this time.

Following Gidey, in second and third place were her compatriots, Meseret Garganta, with 2:24.09 h, and Meseret Belete, in a time of 2:24.26 h. Indeed, both of them beat the record of the last edition. In addition, the assessment to consider of this edition is, while the men's event was won by a veteran athlete (35 years old), the women's category was won by a very young one (21 years old).

The anecdote of the Barcelona Marathon 2020 was that the group of professional athletes suffered a scare near 20th kilometer, at the Meridiana section, when they took the wrong route for few meters. This mislead could have led them to the loss of their marks. Fortunately, it was not. They passed the Half Marathon only 35 seconds later than the mark set by the test record, but they managed to make up for it thanks to their huge effort.

It was a day of records, a day of emotions. For his part, Eric Domingo broke the Guinness Marathon Record as he participated pushing a wheelchair in which he carried his mother, affected by multiple sclerosis. The two completed the 42-kilometre course in 2.53.28 h, a time that has allowed them to enter to the Guinness Book of Records.

Furthermore, there was another noteworthy fact of the last edition. Being common in athletic events to see how athletes who have been important retire and most have stopped running, this has not been the case of Quima Casas. Casas participated again in this marathon and she was the female winner of the Barcelona Marathon for three times in the eighties (1980, 1985 and 1987). In this edition, with more than 70 years, she also ran without caring about completing the race in more than 5 hours. Quima, a marathon legend, is still active and she has already accumulated 160 marathons on her personal list.

To conclude, it should be noted that, year after year, there is more atmosphere in the streets of Barcelona on the day of the Marathon. In fact, last year, there were more than fifty animation groups on the route, with the aim of entertaining the race for runners and spectators.

Marató de Barcelona

Summary Data

Year 1978

Date: March 19th

Participants: 185. Arrived participants: 150

Winners man category: 1.Dave Patterson 2:23:15, 2. Joseph Pro 2:27:17; 3.Fernando Francisco 2:28:17

Winners women category: 1.Matilde Gomez 3:55:33, 2. Montse Camps 4:00:41, 3 Ines Ester Mañé 4:59:59

Last participant: Van Götzen 5:22:30

Time Limit: 5 hours

Circuit: Palafrugell

Year 1979

Date: March 18th

Participants: 302. Arrived participants: 224

Winners man category: 1 Dave Patterson 2:19:37, 2. Antonio Canovas 2:21:17, 3. Pedro Fernando winners 2:23:14

Winners women category: 1. Matilde Gomez 3:18:48, 2 Maria Antonia Griñó3.20.06; 3. Montse Camps

Last participant: Martin Perez 5.32.45

Time limit: There was no time limit

Circuit: Palafrugell

Year 1980

Date: March 16th

Participants: 956.Arrived participants: 708

Winners man category 1. Don Faircloth 2:19:42, 2. Domingo Catalan 2:21:13, 3 Joseph Pro 2:23:14

Winners women category: 1 Quima Casas 3:09:53, 2 Matilde Gomez 3:15:40, Maria Antonia Griñó 3:17:55

Last participant: A. Lopez 5:35:04

Time limit: 5:30 hours

Circuit: Barcelona Baix Llobregat. Exit Avda. Ma Cristina and arrival Avda. Ma Cristina.

Year 1981

Date: March 15th

Participants: 1108 Arrived participants: 989

Winners man category: 1. Martin Knapp 2h18'56, 2. Amado Hernandez 2:20:18; 3. Matias Kostulski 2:20:25

Winners women category: 1. Iciar Martinez 2:47:12; 2. Quima Casas 3:01:33

Last participant:

Time limit: 5 hours

Circuit: Barcelona and Baix Llobregat. Exit Avda. Ma Cristina and arrival Stadium Serrahima

Year 1982

Date: March 14th

Participants: 1310. Arrived participants: 1155

Winners man category: 1. Michael Pinocci 2:14:30, 2 Don Flaircloth 2:20:48; 3. Taveres de Silva 2:22:13

Winners women category: 1 Rita Borralho 2:46:58, 2. Quima Casas 2:55:17

Last participant: Nuria Ruiz 5:25:41

Time limit 5 hours

Circuit: Barcelona Baix Llobregat. Exit Avda. Ma Cristina and arrival Serrahima Stadium

Year 1983

Date: March 13th

Participants: 1879. Arrived participants: 1773

Winners man category: 1.Allan Zachariasen 2:11:05, 2. Kjell Stahl 2:16:51, 3 Victor Semenov 2:17:05

Winners: 1. Anna Domoratskaya 2:47:12; 2. Quima Casas 2:49:11, 3. Vicky Rodrigo 3:00:42

Last participant: Mercedes Serrano 5:42:18

Time Limit: 5 hour

Circuit: Urban circuit within the city. Departure at Colom and arrival at Las Ramblas

Year 1984

Date: March 11th

Participants: 2894. Arrived participants: 2387

Winners man category: 1 Werner Meier 2:14:50, 2 Luc Waegemen 2:15:15, 3 Jose Revijin 2:15:47

Winners women category: 1. Margaret Lockley 2:41:42, 2 Quima Casas 2:45:32, 3 Anne Ruchti 2:51:52

Last participant: Max Bessoles 5:38:14

Time Limit: 5 hours

Circuit: Urban circuit within the city. Departure at Colom and arrival at Las Ramblas.

Year 1985

Date: March 17th

Participants: 2810. Arrived participants: 2401

Winners man category: 1 Rafael Garcia 2:18:16, 2 Paul Kenny 2:18:34, 3. Toew Coiny 2:21:23

Winners women category: 1 Quima Casas 2:48:01, 2 Leslie Watson 2:54:17, 3 Marta Munné 3:00:45

Last participant: Antonio De Dou 5:47:29

Time Limit: 5 hours

Circuit: Totally Urban circuit. Departure at França train station and arrival at the Parc de la Ciutadella

Year 1986

Date: March 16th

Participants: 2808. Arrived participants: 2152

Winners man category: 1. Fred Vandervennet 2:15:45; 2. Antonio Balseras 2:17:04; 3. Peter Fleming 2:21:23

Winners women category: 1. Deborah Heat 2:48:28, 2. Quima Casas 2:54:17, 3. Carme Paradell 3:01:42

Last Participant: Emilia Francolí 5:44:32

Time limit: 5 hours

Circuit: Totally Urban. Departure at the Passeig Marítim and arrival at the Parc de la Ciutadella

Year 1987

Date: March 15th

Participants: 2930. Arrived participants: 2443

Winners man category: 1 Pär Wallin 2:13:58, 2. Steve Brace 2:14:33; 3. Ramiro Matamoros 2:19:29

Winners women category: 1 Quima Casas 2:43:28, 2. Deborah Heath 2:45:45; 3. Marina Prat 2:46:49

Last participant: Time limit: 5 hours

Circuit: Barcelona, totally urban. Departure at Passeig Picasso and arrival at Parc de la Ciutadella

Year 1988

Date: March 13th

Participants: 3250. Arrived participants: 2653

Winners man category: 1 Fernando Diaz 2:19:58, 2. Ricardo Alguacil 2:20:01, 3 Hannu Makirinta 2:21:22

Winners women category: 1 Deborah Heath 2:45:35; 2. Ester Pedrosa 2:55:16; 3. Leslie Watson 2:55:28

Last Participant: Emilia Francolí 5:39 .42

Time Limit: 5 hours

Circuit: Totally Urban. Start and arrival at the stadium, in front of the Picornell

Year 1989

Date: March 12th

Participants: 3,300. Arrived participants: 2656

Winners man category 1. Doug Kurtis 2:16:3 , 2 Tommy Hughes 2:16:43, 2:16:57 3 Patrick Joannes

Winners women category: 1 M Vander Gehutche 2:37:42, 2. Deborah Heath 2:41:48; 3. Elisenda Pucurull 2:49:39

Last participant: Time limit: 4:30

Circuit: Totally Urban. Departure at Tarragona street and arrival at Parc de l'Espanya Industrial

Year 1990

Date: March 18th

Participants: 3349. Arrived: 2832

Winners man category: 1. Allan Zachariasen 2:16:30; 2. Maurilio Castillo 2:18:43; 3. Pawel Lorentz 2:19:52

Winners women category: 1 Elisenda Pucurull 2:43:11, 2 Esther Pedrosa 2:43:48, 3 Concha Climente 2:49:13

Last participant: Joan Viloca 6:30:29

Time Limit: 4:30

Circuit: Mataró - Barcelona. Departure at Parc Central de Mataró and arrival at Estadi de Montjuïc

Year 1991

Date: March 17th

Participants: 3452 Arrived participants: 2890

Winners man category: 1 Kashid Nishimoto 2:16:32, 2 Sid Ali Sahra 2:17:11, 3. Dacha Driss 2:17:11

Winners women category: 1 Satoe Minegishi 2:38:37; 2. Elisenda Pucurull 2:42:27; 3. Luzia Beleevea 2:45:30

Last participant: Juan Soler 5:59:20

Time Limit: 4:30

Circuit: Mataró - Barcelona. Departure at Parc Central de Mataró and arrival at Estadi de Montjuïc

Year 1992

Date: March 15th

Participants: 6586 Arrived participants: 5694

Winners man category 1. John Burra 2:12:46, 2. Rodrigo Gavela 2:14:27, 3 Tsurusaki Kenichi 2h15'19.

Winners women category: 1. Monica Estarvoska 2:34:07, 2. Ana I. Alonso 2:39:10, 3. Ma Luisa Munoz 2:40:09

Last participant: Franny Keyes 5:56:20

Time Limit: 5 hours

Circuit: Mataró - Barcelona. Start right in front the França train station and arrival at Estadi de Montjuïc

Year 1993

Date: March 14th

Participants: 3.106. Arrived participants: 2637

Winners man category: 1. Volmir Herbstrith 2.13'25; 2.Fran Villameriel 2:16:58 and 3 Benito Ojeda: 2:17:50

Winners women category: 1. Emma Scaunich 2:36:16, 2 Marina Prat 2:48:32, 3 Irina Roubanis 2:49:46

Last participant: Juan Soler 6:00:32

Time Limit: 5 hours

Circuit: Mataró - Barcelona. Departure at Parc Central de Mataró and arrival at Estadi de Montjuïc

Year 1994

Date: March 13th

Participants: 2853 Arrived participants: 2565

Winners man category: 1. Benito Ojeda 2.15.14; 2. Domingos Neves 2.17.32 2, 3. Nick Kolesnikov 222.18.37

Winners women category: 1 Marina Ivanova 2:40:30; 2. Maria Alda Manzone 2:49:41, 3 Marina Prat 2.50.27

Last participant: Antonio Frauca 7:45.00

Time Limit: 5 hours

Circuit: Mataró - Barcelona. Departure at Parc Central de Mataró and arrival at Estadi de Montjuïc

Year 1995

Date:

Participants: 2876. Arrived participants: 2518

Winners man category: 1. Igor Tchouprakov 2:21:12, 2 A. Ben Radouarie 2:21:14, 3 J. Romacho 2:21:54

Winners women category: 1 Nuria Pastor 2:44:19, 2 Marina Ivanova 2:46:17, 3 Loredana Ricci 2:53:09

Last Participant: Antonio Frauca 7.15.00

Time Limit: 5 hours

Circuit: Mataró - Barcelona. Departure at Parc Central de Mataró and at Estadi de Montjuic

Year 1996

Date: March 19th

Participants: 2727. Arrived participants: 2419

Winners man category: 1 Benito Ojeda 2:16:57, 2 Eduardo Muñoz 2.24.04, 3. Diego Garcia Perez 2:26:44

Winners women category: 1 Giselle Camilleri 2:48:04; 2. Marina Prat 2:55:02; 3. Montse Bergada 2:56:35

Last participant: Veronique Couaran 6:00:00

Time Limit: 5 hours

Circuit: Mataró - Barcelona. Departure at Parc Central de Mataró and arrival at Estadi Montjuic.

Year 1997

Date: March 16th

Participants: 3448. Arrived participants: 2949

Winners man category: 1 Abdselam Serrock 2:12:53, 2. Diego Garcia Corrales 2:13:42, 3. M Hussein 2.15.26

Winners women category: 1. Ana Isabel Alonso 2.30.04; 2. Josefa Cruz 2:37:49, 3 Natalia Requena 2.39.18

Last participant: Miquel Castillo 6:03:32

Time Limit: 5 hours

Circuit: Mataró - Barcelona. Departure at Parc de Mataró and arrival at Les Fonts de Montjuic.

Year 1998

Date: March 15th,

Participants: 2818. Arrived participants: 2520

Winners man category: 1 Abdselam Serrock 2:09:48, 2 Andrea Nade 2:15:38, 3. Benito Ojeda 2:15:47

Winners women category: 1. Ana Isabel Alonso 2.30.05; 2. Elfenesh Alemu 2:32:06, 3. Nati Requena

Last participant: Juana Cardela 5:33:58

Time Limit: 5 hours

Circuit: Mataró - Barcelona. Departure Parc de Mataró and arrival at Avinguda Maria Cristina

Year 1999

Date: March 14th

Participants: 2775. Arrived participants: 2.195

Winners man category: 1. Daniel Komen 2.16.24, 2 Benito Ojeda 2:20:34; 3. Hassan Jaoudi 2:22:58

Winners women category: 1 Eva Sanz 2:37:56, 2 Fatima Paz 2.55.41, 3.Rosa Maria Mas 3:00:14

Last participant: Joanna Cardela 5:20:33

Time Limit: 5 hours

Circuit: Mataró - Barcelona. Departure at Parc de Mataró and arrival at Avinguda Maria Cristina

Year 2000

Date: March 12th,

Participants: 3,100. Arrived participants: 2532

Winners man category: 1 William Mustoki 2h12'18, 2. Benjamin Matola 2:12:19; 3. Wiily Cheruivot 2:12:25

Winners women category: 1 Griselda Gonzalez 2:31:12, 2 Mar Fortunato 2.33.35; 3. G Zhuleyeba 2.34.54

Last participant: Julian Plaza 7:28:39

Time Limit: 5 hours

Circuit: Mataró - Barcelona. Departure at Parc de Mataró and arrival at Avinguda Maria Cristina

Year 2001

Date: March 18th,

Participants: 3,482. Arrived participants: 2958

Winners man category: 1 Benedict Ako 2:13:53, 2. Benjamin Rotich 2:14:10, 3. Daniel Komen 2:18:13

Winners women category: 1 Leone da Silva 2:40:32, 2 R Kalunda 2:45:04, 3. Ma Jesus Zorraquín 2:51:22

Last participant:

Time Limit: 5 hours

Circuit: Barcelona - L'Hospitalet - Barcelona - Sant Adrià - Badalona - Barcelona. Departure and arrival at Avinguda Maria Cristina

Year 2002

Date: March 17th,

Participants: 3550 Arrived participants. 3062

Winners man category: 1 Benjamin Rotich 2:12:07, 2 Benedict Ako 2:15:26, 3. Sammy Kosgei 2.15.28

Winners women category: 1 Galina Zhulyayeva 2:40:33, 2 Tiziana Di Sesto 2:41:14, 3 L. Smirnova 2:44:43.

Last participant:

Time Limit: 5 hours

Circuit: Barcelona - Sant Adrià - Badalona - Barcelona. Departure and arrival at Avinguda Maria Cristina

Year 2003

Date: March 16th,

Participants: 3300 Arrived participants: 2783

Winners man category: 1 Alberto Juzdado 2:10:53, 2 Benjamin Rotich 2:12:30, 3 Toni Bernadó 2.14.25

Winners women category: 1 Wahba Kenza 2.38.36, 2. Osaka Koutzmitxeva 2:40:47 ; 3. Olena Rozhko 2:48:17

Last participant: Olivier Bieber 5:57:52

Time Limit: 5 hours

Circuit: Barcelona - Sant Adrià - Badalona - Barcelona. Departure and arrival Avinguda Maria Cristina

Year 2004

Date: March 14th,
Participants: 4150. Arrived participants: 3361
Winners man category: 1. Driss Lakhouaja 2:15:59, 2 Toni Bernadó 2:17:45, 3 Peter Kipserem 2.17.50
Winners women category: 1 Karin Schon 2h42'54, 2 Alexandra Panayotou 2:48:35; 3. Esther Solera 2:51:59
Last participant Richard Jonnson 5:46:22
Time Limit: 5 hours
Circuit: Barcelona - Sant Adrià - Badalona - Barcelona. Departure and arrival at Avinguda Maria Cristina

In 2005 it wasn't held

Year 2006

Date: March 26th
Participants: 4636. Arrived participants: 4183
Winners man category: 1 Joseph Nguram 2:12:36, 2 Benjamin Pseret 2:13:46, 3 John Kipkorir 2.13.58.
Winners women category 1 Haile Kebelush 2.41.23; 2. Lemma Gurmu 2:42:30 and 3 Cherkos Nigatu 2:52:34
Last participant: Time Limit: 6 hours
Circuit: Fully within the city streets. Departure and arrival at Avinguda Maria Cristina

Year 2007

Date: March 4th,
Participants: 7413. Arrived participants: 6311
Winners man category: Johnstone Chebil 2.12.04, 2 James Mibei 2:14:48, 3. Toni Bernadó 2. 14:52
Winners women category: 1 Krizstina Loonen 2:42:02, 3 Maxine Mc Kinnon 2:49:52; 3. V. D `Haese 2:51:48
Last participant:
Time Limit: 6 hours
Circuit: Within the city streets. Departure and arrival at Avinguda Maria Cristin

Year 2008

Date: March 2nd,
Participants: 9121 Arrived participants: 7.609
Winners man category: 1 Hosea Kosgei 2.14.42; 2 Johnstone Chevii 2.16.32; 3 Roger Roca 2.16.53
Winners women category: 1 Mihret Tadesse 2.42.12; 2 Mihret Anamo 2.43.43; 3 Tabita Kebit 2.47.49
Last participant: Jean Philippe Jannin 6.03.00
Time limit: 6 hours
Circuit: Fully within the city streets. Departure and arrival at Avinguda Maria Cristina

Year 2009

Date: March 10th
Participants: 9752 Arrived participants: 8.133

Winners man category: 1 Johnstone Chebii 2:14:01; Hosea Kosgei 2.14.08; 3 Teshome Gelana 2.14.32

Winners women category: 1 Tadelech Biru 2.39.43; 2 Helen Lawarence 2.54.02; 3 Paola Sanna 2.55.52

Last participant: Maria Núria Ruiz 6.09.27

Time limit: 6 hours

Circuit: Fully within the city streets. Departure and arrival at Avinguda Maria Cristina

Year 2010

Date: March 7th

Participants: 12.162. Arrived participants: 10.042

Winners man category: 1 Jackson Kotut 2.07.30; 2 Félix Keny 2.07.37; 3 Samuel Woldeamanuel 2.08.45

Winners women category: 1 Debola Wudnesh 2.31.51; 2 Roman Gebre 2.32.28; 3 Serkalem Bist 2.33.52

Last participant: Chris Ferguson 6.12.50

Time limit: 6 hours

Circuit: Fully within the city streets. Departure and arrival at Avinguda Maria Cristina

Year 2011

Date: March 6

Registered participants: 15,134. Arrived: 12,531

Winners: 1 Levi Matebo Obari 2h.07.31, 2 Joseph Kimeli Langat 2h.10.05, 3 Josephat Yego 2h10.44

Winners: 1. Josephine Ambjörnsson 2h45.31, 2. Nuria Prieto 2h56.59, 3.

Martha Hall 2h.57. Last participant:

Time limit: 6 hours

Circuit: Fully urban within the city. Departure and arrival at the Avenida Maria Cristina

Year: 2012

Date: March 25th

Enrolled: 19,507. Arrived: 16,216

Winners Men category: 1 Julius Chepkowony: 2h11.14, 2 Japhet Kipchirchir 2h11.32; 3 Willy Kimutai Kangogo 2h11.35

Winners Women category: 1 Emily Chepkomy 2h26.56, 2 Biruktayit Eshetu Degefa 2h29.52; 3 Elena Espeso 2h30.52

Time limit: 6 hours

Circuit: Totally urban within the city. Departure and arrival at Avenida Maria Cristina

Year: 2013

Date: March 17th 2013

Registered: 18.389. Arrived: 14.766

Winners male category: 1 Gezahegne Abera 2h10.17; 2 Abraham Keter 2h10.48; 3 Linus Maiyo 2h11.34.

Winners female category: 1 Lemelem Berha 2h34.39; 2 Amelework Fikadu 2h35.53; 3 Irene Mogaka 2h38.46

Time limit: 6 hours

Circuit: Totally urban within the city. Departure and arrival at Avenida Maria Cristina.

Year: 2014

Data: March 16th

Registered participants: 17.926 Finishers: 14.223

Winners' men category: 1 Abayu Getachew 2h10.45; 2 Thomas Kiplagat 2h12.12; 3 Boaz Kiprono 2h12.44.

Winners' women category: 1 Frahia Nyambura 2h32.26; 2 Naomí Jepkogei 2h40.12; 3 Hasna Bahom 2h45.26

Time limit: 6 hours

Circuit: totally urban within the city. Start and finish at Avenue Maria Cristina

Year: 2015

Date: 15th of March

Participants: 19.270. Finishers: 15.387

Masculine winners: 1 Cheruiot Kangogo 2h08.16; 2 Daba Tolesa 2h09.41; 3 Abdela Godana 2h11.38.

Feminine winners: Aynalem Kassahun 2h28.17; 2 Mula Diro 2h29.17; 3 Belaynesh Shifera 2h31.08

Limit of time: 6 hours

Circuit: totally urban inside the city. Start and finish in the Avenue María Cristina

Year 2016

Date: 13th of March

Enrolled: 20.385 Finishers: 16.899

Winners (males): Dino Sefir, 2h09'31" (1st place); Albert Korir, 2h10'08" (2nd place); Jafred Chirchir Kipchumba, 2h10'23" (3rd place)

Winners (females): Valery Jemeli, 2h25'26" (1st place); Aynalem Kassahun, 2h30'51" (2nd place); Motu Megersa, 2h32'07" (3rd place)

Time limit: 6 hours

Circuit: Totally urban inside the city. Start and finish in the Avenue María Cristina

Year 2017

Date: 12th of March

Registered: 20.280 / Finishers. 16.264

Winners men category: 1st Jonah Kipkemoi Chesum (2h08'57"); 2nd Jacob Cheshari Kiriú (2h09'24"); 3rd Justus Kiprotich (2h11'38")

Winners women category: 1st Hellen Bekele (2h25'04"); 2nd Tsegaye Beyene Melesech (2h26'44"); 3rd Robi

Aberash (2h27'04)

Cut-off time: 6 hours

Race: All within the city. Start and finish line in Avinguda Maria Cristina

Year 2018

Date: 11th of March

Participants: 17.100. Finishers: 13.537

Winners: 1 Anthony Maritim 2h08'08; 2 Too Silas 2h08'26; 3 Kipsambu Hillary 2h08'52
Winners: 1 Ruth Chebitok 2h25'49; 2 Belanyesh Tsegaye 2h27'08; 3 Alemu Worknesh 2h18'19
Time limit: 6 hours

Circuit: totally urban inside the city. Start and arrival in the Avenue M^a Cristina.

Year 2019

Date: 10th of March

Start time: 8.30am

Registered: 14.451. Finishers: 13.444

Winners (men): 1 Alemu Bekele 2h06'04; 2 Abebe Negewo 2h06'49; 3 Anthony Maritim 2h06'54

Winners (women): 1 Kuftu Tahir 2h24'44; 2 Josephine Chepkoech 2h25'20; 3 Joy Kemuma 2h25'35

Limit time: 6 hours

Circuit: totally urban in the city. Start and finish in Avenida María Cristina.

Year 2020

No competition

Year 2021

Date: 10th of March

Departure time: 8.30 h

People Registered: 15,000.

Arrivals: 9,142

Winners: 1 Samuel Kosgei 2:06:03; 2 Othmane El Goumri 2:06:30; 3 Mohamed Ziani 2h06'33

Winners: 1 Tadu Teshome 2h23'53; 2 Meseret Gorge 2h24'09; 3 Meseret Belete 2h24'26

Wheelchair winner: Jordi Madera

Time limit for completing the race: 6 hours

Circuit: Completely urban, inside the city. Exit and Finish at María Cristina's Avenue