



The Month That Was

By Alex Wolf-Root

Welcome back for another exciting edition of “*The Month That Was*” in running!

Where do we start? We got a world championship to cover, a USA National Road Championship, local preps, and some Ryan Hall news. But the highlight has got to be the **Bank of America Chicago Marathon**.

Looking at the field, everyone knew it was going to be a good one. 9 men in the field had broken the 2:10 barrier in their careers, with an astonishing 5 of them holding 2:05 bests. The biggest name had to be Olympic Champion **Sammy Wanjiru** of Kenya, who was also the reigning BofA Chicago Marathon Champion. But it was in no way going to be easy for him.



Sammy Wanjiru

http://in.reuters.com/resources/r/?m=02&d=20100824&t=2&i=188082962&w=460&fh=&fw=&ll=&pl=&r=img-2010-08-24T205301Z_01_NOOTR_RTRMDNC_0_India-510349-1

Tsegaye Kebede

http://www.ethiopianreview.com/album/albums/userpics/10001/Tsegaye_Kebede_en_route_to_his_course_record_in_Fukuoka_%28Kazutaka_Eguchi%29_2008.jpg



There was the reigning London Champion in **Tsegaye Kebede**, and the reigning Boston Champion in Robert “part 2” **Kiprono Cheruiyot**. You also had the 2009 Boston Champion famous for his do-or-die races in **Deriba Merga**. O, plus **Vincent Kipruto** and **Feyisa Lilesa** both claimed sub 2:06 PRs going into the race.

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Yea, it was gonna be good.

After the final pacemakers fell off at 18 miles, it was down to about 7. But Kebede would have none of that. He dropped the hammer for the next two miles, clocking 4:40 and 4:43. Everyone but Wanjiru and Lilesa dropped like flies. Merga went so far as to completely stop and walk off the course! With only about five kilometers to go, Kebede looked to have it won, as he had gapped his two chasers. But Wanjiru and Lilesa didn't give up, and managed to close the gap by mile 25. Lilesa couldn't handle Kebede's desperate surges and fell into a comfortable third, but Wanjiru did his best to respond to surge after surge.

Then, with just one kilometer to go, Wanjiru made one final push, and it was over. Kebede, completely drained, lost nearly 20 seconds in that final K as Wanjiru took home the gold, 2:06:24-2:06:43.

Exciting, yea? Well my words aren't good enough. Check out the video of the end of the race for yourself: <http://www.flotrack.org/videos/speaker/8874-sammy-wanjiru>

The women's race was won, predictably, by Russia's **Liliya Shobukhova** in 2:20:25. She won by more than three minutes, with fourth placer (and top American) **Desiree Davila** over 5 minutes back. Not much else to say. Domination.



Zersany Tadese

http://www.iaaf.org/mm/photo/competitions/iaafworldcross/38088_w400xh600.jpg

Don't worry, Chicago didn't have the only jaw-dropping road duel of the month. The World Half-Marathon Championships were sure to be an exciting one, with one of my personal favorites in **Zersany Tadese** of Eritrea, gunning for his fifth (that's right, *fifth!*) consecutive title. On that note, we cut to the first installment of my "*Spotlight on the Stars!*"

Zersany Tadese was born and raised... nah, who am I kidding, that doesn't matter! Tadese is a beast. Why? Well I just told you; he won the last 4 World Half-Marathon Championships (well some of them were World Road Running Champs, but that's what they had instead...). Okay, so 4 World titles. What else? How about beating Bekele? Wait what?! O yea, Kenenisa Bekele, World 5,000m and 10,000m record-holder, was on a streak of 10+ World Titles in Cross Country. Then came Tadese at the 2007 World XC Championships. And it's not like Tadese just beat Bekele, he made him DROP OUT!

That's right, these two were duking it out so hard that Bekele just had



to step off. That's it. Couldn't do it. One thing to beat the guy, another entirely to make him drop out. What else? He has an Olympic Bronze medal at 10,000m, World Championships Silver medal (behind Bekele...) at 10,000m, and has competed in 9 World or Olympic 5,000m or 10,000m finals, with six of those being top-10 finishes. Yea, he's a beast.

Okay, so back to the race. Heading the charge against Tadese was Kenyan **Wilson Kiprop**, the reigning Kenyan and African 10,000m Champion. He also had a sub-60 half-marathon under his belt this season, and a 2:09 marathon in his only loss of the year. I'd say more, but the final ten minutes it was all Kiprop and Tadese. Just like Wanjiru and Kebede, these two duked it out to the line, with Kiprop taking Tadese down 1:00:07 to 1:00:11. Well, Tadese had to lose eventually.



http://www.iaaf.org/mm/photo/competitions/competition/05/85/39/58539_full-Ind.jpg

Back to the home front. Some big races in the month, but the one most important to us here in Sonoma County: USATF Women's 10km Championships. Why that you may ask? Well, a certain **Kim Conley** of Montgomery HS fame showed up, that's why.

After a solid career as a **UC Davis Aggie**, Conley stayed on to make the jump to professional running, as well as help coach the Ags. Well, it paid off. Competing unattached, Conley placed a very respectable sixth in the race, taking home a nice payday while competing against some of the best women in the country. Up front, American 5,000m record-holder **Molly Huddle** took the win over 7-time road Champ **Katie McGregor** and 3-time Olympian **Jen Rhines**. Now that's some solid company for Kimmy!

For some cool video's and pictures of Kimmy and the rest of the race, check out Runnerspace's awesome coverage: http://www.runnerspace.com/gprofile.php?do=view_athlete&bio_id=273329

Alright, let's come back to Sonoma County for a little highlight on the prep scene. Three biggest stories as far as I'm concerned: **Luis Luna** and the **Piner XC boys**, **Maria Carrillo XC girls**, and the continued dominance of **Petaluma HS Trojans**.

Luna was expected to be the dominant player in the Empire this year, and he's been just that. This month alone he won the Yoshaany Rahm Invite, the Rough Rider Invite, the Crystal Springs Invite, and the Scott Bauhs

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Invite, where he set a course record 14:50 for three miles! Yea, this kid is good. Here's a little interview from a Northern California XC site:

<http://www.crosscountryexpress.com/2010/10/catching-up-with-piner-hs-runner-luis.html>

And look what he's done for his team. Piner, a team that just a few years ago couldn't field a scoring team, is on their way to their first ever NBL title. They went 1-2-3 against defending champions Maria Carrillo, and show no sign of stopping. NBL, NCS, and State should be very, very interesting for the Prospectors.

The Maria Carrillo girls made some history of their own, as they won, by my count, 100 straight NBL victories. (I count a dual-meet as 1 victory [1 defeated team], a tri-meet as 2 victories [two defeated teams], and the NBL championships as 7 victories [7 defeated teams]. Their last loss came all the way back in 2002, when the **Montgomery Vikings** took the North Bay League crown. Some info on their streak:

<http://www.northbay.com/running/MCstreak.html>

And then there's Petaluma. They're well on their way to some impressive streaks of their own. Both the boys and the girls are undefeated in the Sonoma County League, with the boys currently ranked 9th in the state for their division. The last few years the Trojan boys have been the unquestionable best team in the Redwood Empire, and this year is no exception. Key frontrunner is **Forrest Shaffer**, who won the Clovis Invite DIII race this month by over 10 seconds. Earlier in the season he did the same thing at Stanford, and won the season-opening Rancho Invite.

Finally, some **Ryan Hall** news. The 2008 Olympic Marathon 10th-placer and Half-Marathon American Record-holder just announced that he will be leaving his current training group in Mammoth and will be training solo for a while. Very interesting choice. While I'm not positive, I assume this means that his wife, **Sara "Bei" Hall** of Montgomery HS fame (didn't I type that already?!) will also be leaving the training group.

So what does this mean for American distance running? I don't know. But I have a thought: Many of us have seen Ryan and Sara on the trails of Annadel on occasion, but just rarely. Now, that they are under their own schedule and not that of a coach, perhaps we'll see them jump in a local race or two for a workout, or come to the park more often? Who knows? I sure don't. But I hope. And maybe, just maybe, we'll see Ryan take another crack at a sub-4, something he's yet to do, at the 2011 Heart and Sole Elite Mile at Santa Rosa HS on May 6th. Maybe.

Cya next time!

-Your friendly neighborhood Wolfman