

# Kenyans turn on a masterclass

Africans smash two race records as they win three out of four main events

## ATHLETICS

Standard Chartered Singapore Marathon 2006

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THEY came armed with a formidable reputation. They promised to dictate the pace right from the word go. In the end, they massacred the rest of the field.

Amos Tirop Matui and Salina Kosgei won the men and women's races respectively, as Kenyan runners dominated the 2006 Standard Chartered Singapore Marathon yesterday.

In the men's event, defending champion Matui set a new record when he bettered his 2005 mark by almost a minute, breasting the tape with a time of 2:14.59s.

Ethiopia's Ashebir Demissu finished eight seconds back in second spot (2:15.07s) while another Kenyan, Jote Abel Kirui, clinched the last spot on the podium with a time of 2:16.31s.

Countrywoman Kosgei, meanwhile, dethroned last year's champion, Irina Timofeyeva, rewriting the Russian's record time of 2:34.42s set last year with a new mark of 2:31.53s. Timofeyeva took second place, while another Kenyan, Emily Kimuria, came in third.

Blind runner Henry Wanyoike and Joseph Kibunja then made it a one-two for Kenya in the men's half marathon to demonstrate the gulf between the country and the rest of the world.

Great Briton Trudy Fawcett stemmed the Kenyan tide when she won the women's



ALL SMILES: (from left) Kirui, Matui and Demissu made it a memorable day for African athletics.

OOI BOON KEONG, ERNEST CHUA

half marathon with a time of 1:29.16s.

By defending his title, Matui earned US\$25,000 (\$38,538) and his team, Marathon Centre Kericho, jumped 14 places to lead the Greatest Race On Earth (GROE) Main Team Challenge, a competition that offers a top prize of US\$400,000.

The GROE, in its third year and with over 80 teams and 300 participants, offers US\$1.5 million in total prize money over four marathons legs - Nairobi, Singapore, Mumbai and Hong Kong.

Said Matui, 32: "I really didn't expect to win. It wasn't easy, but I expect the win to lift the team's spirit for the remaining two GROE races in Mumbai and Hong Kong.

"The conditions today were more difficult than last year. The track seemed harder even though the cloudy conditions made

it a bit easier."

The women's race was tight as well, and Kosgei was surprised to beat Timofeyeva to win her third race of the year, after victories in Paris and Prague.

She said: "I was really worried in the last five kilometres because Timofeyeva was just 100 metres behind.

"I am very happy to win but just as surprised. Today's time may be about eight minutes off my personal best, but I'm not worried. To be able to clock this time and still win is incredible."

Last year's winner Timofeyeva had problems when she bruised her toes midway through the race. She finished more than eight minutes behind her personal best, and the 36-year-old said: "I had problems with my footwear and it was hard to

## STANDARD CHARTERED SINGAPORE MARATHON 2006 RESULTS

**Full Marathon - Men**  
Amos Tirop Matui (Ken) - 2:14.59s (RECORD)  
Ashebir Demissu Jote (Eth) - 2:15.07s  
Abel Kirui (Ken) - 2:16.31s

**Full Marathon - Women**  
Salina Kosgei (Ken) - 2:31.53s (RECORD)  
Irina Timofeyeva (Rus) - 2:34.33s  
Emily Kimuria (Ken) - 2:38.37s

**Half Marathon - Men**  
Henry Wanyoike (Ken) - 1:20.07s  
Joseph Kibunja (Ken) - 1:20.08s  
Mok Ying Ren (Sin) - 1:21.09s

**Half Marathon - Women**  
Trudy Fawcett (Gbr) - 1:29.16s  
Chan Kit Yee (Hkg) - 1:32.31s  
Victoria Hill (Gbr) - 1:35.06s

**Men's 10K**  
Samuel A/C John Moses (Mal) - 00:32.39s  
Nabin Kumar Rai (Nep) - 00:33.10s  
A. Saravanan (Sin) - 00:33.44s

**Women's 10K**  
Suzanne Elizabeth Walsham (Aus) - 00:37.35s  
Caitriona Jennings (Irl) - 00:40.14s  
Vally d/o Michael (Mas) - 00:41.46s

**Singapore top three - Men**  
Elangovan Ganesan - 2:50.58s  
Murugiah Rameshon - 2:52.56s  
Daniel Ling 2:53.46s

**Singapore top three - Women**  
Vivian Tan - 3:02.16s  
Anne Qi - 3:13.53s  
Yong Lai Chee - 3:34.40s

For full results, please log on to [www.singaporemarathon.com](http://www.singaporemarathon.com)



Salina Kosgei



## Lewis speaks his mind, again

TRACK and field legend Carl Lewis mingled with the kids at the \*scape skate park at Somerset yesterday. Last Friday, the nine-time Olympic gold medallist officially opened Nike's latest store at VivoCity.

On the final day of his stay in Singapore, Lewis continued on a theme he has constantly touched on since he arrived here - that track and field needs to reinvent itself. The 45-year-old said: "The sport needs a real boost. It seems to me athletics is lacking a bit of spirit and I think the big guys need to find out how to lift it to its former heights."

When someone described him as a superstar, Lewis laughed off the tagline and said: "I've never thought about it, whether I was competing before or now. I just want to be an ambassador of the sport and contribute to athletics, and the world at large." — CUBBY LEONG

LESLIE TAN

## Daddy Elangovan savours hat-trick

FOR the third year running, G Elangovan (picture) emerged as the top Singapore male in the Standard Chartered Singapore Marathon.

But yesterday's milestone is the 31-year-old's best yet.

Inspired by his six-month-old baby girl, Elaveni, Elangovan had even more reason to celebrate, after he saw off Murugiah Rameshon (2:52.56s) and Daniel Ling (2:53.46s), who finished in second and third place, respectively.

Elangovan, the national record holder in the 1,500m, 3,000m and 5,000m, posted a time of 2:50.58s to pocket \$3,000 for his effort.

"This may be my third win, but it is probably the most special one," he said.

"To be able to win three in a row is great. But, this year's victory is a little bit more special with my baby girl here to witness the victory.

"I planned to bring her up to the podium if I won



PHOTO COURTESY OF SSC

and it was a great feeling to stand up there with her."

Currently grooming Singapore's next generation of middle-distance runners at the Singapore Sports School, the winner of the 2004 Coach Recognition and 2006 Development Coaching Award ran almost unchallenged from start to finish.

"I didn't go into the race with any strategy," said Elangovan. "I am more of a middle-distance runner and the

marathon is just something that I enjoy and look forward to at the end of every year.

"I know the first 15km or so is crucial and once I got past that stage still leading, I knew I would be able to carry home the comfortable lead.

In the women's race, 35-year-old Vivian Tang finished with a time of 3:02.16s. The stockbroker emerged as the top Singaporean, beating Anne Qi (3:13.53s) by almost 12 minutes.

Yong Lai Chee finished third with a time of 3:34.40s. — CUBBY LEONG