

## Kipketer misses 8K world record

Sammy Kipketer zipped to the first mile in 4 minutes and 18 seconds, and seemed destined to add the world 8-kilometer record to his 5K record Saturday (March 25) at the Minyard Invitational 8K, the last event of the day at the Uptown Run & Trolley Walk in Dallas. Yet, Kipketer said he slowed on the second loop (about 3K) and, despite a late surge, finished nine seconds off the record time with his 22-minute, 12-second effort.

But the Kenyan tantalized the spectators and those who had finished the earlier 5-mile and 3-mile runs. But when Kipketer began heading down Your browser does not support inline frames or is currently configured not to display inline frames. the stretch on Pearl, it became obvious he wasn't going to get the record and a \$10,000 bonus.

However, he and women's winner Alventina Ivanova of Russia set course records and received a \$1,000 bonus to go along with their \$3,000 checks for winning. Ivanova ran away from the women's field and finished in 25:16.

Race director Tom Short was expecting Kipketer to come close, if not break, the record as the temperature was almost perfect (in the high 50s) and little wind. The weather was quite a contrast to the first two Invitationals as warm weather wilted the runners the first year, and heavy rain hampered last year's competitors.

Yet, Kipketer certainly had the attention of the spectators as he buzzed down McKinney Ave., turned back on St. Paul and then headed toward Pearl, where the race started. He needed to make two loops as he headed down the Woodall Rogers Expressway access road, then over to Ross Ave., and back down Pearl. After the first loop, Kipketer still seemed on course to challenge the existing record of 22:03. And he had countryman Abraham Chebii just steps behind, so there could be no letting up.

"I saw him over my shoulder," Kipketer said as they turned on Pearl to head toward the finish line. Kipketer kicked it another gear and left Chebii, runner-up in last year's World Cross Country Championships (4K), a distant second.

"I tried to get the right pace on the first mile," Kipketer said. "I tried to push it."

Kipketer came back last year after a leg injury in 2004. He came back strong last year and said he recorded a 26:52 in a 10K and a 13:07 in a 5K. He set the 5K world record in 2000 with a 13-minute run at the Carlsbad (Calif.) 5000. He repeated the time when he defended his championship in 2001.

Ivanova blasted off and left the women far behind and won by 1:01 against countrywoman Tatiana Chulkah.

Ivanova, with Chulkah helping interpret, said she needed a "rabbit" to help her if she were going to beat the women's world record of 24:28.

The women started 3 minutes, 30 seconds ahead of the men, so Ivanova was by herself until the runners hit the second loop.

## They're getting closer

Uptown race director Tom Short believes it's only a matter of time before the 8K world record will fall at the Minyard Invitational. Yet, one of the world's fastest runners, Sammy Kipketer, was still nine seconds shy of the 22:03 world mark despite a blistering course-record effort and near perfect weather at the March 25th race.

But Short and Larry Barthlow, who brings in the fast runners, say the field will continue to draw the world's fastest as they shoot for the \$10,000 bonus for setting the record. He said each year (this is the third for the event), more of the elites are becoming aware of the race. Plus, it seems a perfect venue as the race is the first this year for many of them. Dallas is easily accessible, Barthlow said, and runners know the course is fast.

He also believes having only three or so runners who are likely to challenge for the record is better than having a huge field. He said whenever records have been broken, it's usually been when two or three are battling it out rather than a pack.

Short believes Kipketer's effort also raised the event to another level. The women also were well represented and Alvetina Ivanova of Russia easily won in a course-record 25:16. It was an outstanding effort, but far from the women's world record of 24:28.

Notes: Spectators again greeted the Special Olympians, whom this event benefits, with cow bells that were handed out before they arrived at the start line. It was a great sendoff before the elites lined up for their race...Duncan Cragg, recent winner of the Hope River Run 8K, won the Luke's Texas Cup, which challenged Texas against Texas. Women's winner was Jody Hawkins, who'll be competing as a Masters runner next year.