



# URBAN SWARAS RUNNING CLUB

USRC Newsletter | December 2018 | Issue No. 003

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Hello Swaras,

Putting together this publication in the last days of the year has been an ultra task with minds in holiday mode. We will figure out how to handle December 2019.

But here we are.

2018 has been a great year to some but not so much to others for various reasons led by injury. We hope the contents of this Newsletter will help keep you motivated and fired up for 2019.

Headlining this issue is the incredible story of Ken Waichigo, a one of a kind story of life transformation through running.

Many other Swaras have broken boundaries in 2018 and we have been able to snapshot a few. Daisy Ajima and Martin Mungai have gone the extra mile to share their achievements.

We continue to improve the newsletter and applaud all feedback received. One Swara, on seeing the glaring design and layout flaws, offered her design expertise. That's why you are now reading a professional looking publication.

Ahsante our new designer and sub-editor Jerusha Nzembu, and congratulations on landing a job with no pay!

Happy holidays, happy reading and all the best on your 2019 road and trail plans.

Cheruiyot,

USRC Newsletter.

## Battling weight & lifestyle diseases

by Ken Waichigo

My name is Kenneth Kamau Waichigo, but I prefer being known as Ken Waichigo, because my middle name is commonly associated with crooked fellows, while Kenneth is a long name depicting a well suited guy working in a serious big office, which I am not. This story takes you through my life's journey over the last 3 years, one that has brought immense pride so far.

I grew up a normal boy playing childhood games and soccer just like others did. As I was a born a big child, these games helped keep my weight in check. They tamed a beast. All this changed when a sedentary and 'one for the road' lifestyle took centre stage. About 5 years into this lifestyle, in 2006 and at 32, I had moved from a slender 68 kg to a 90 kg young man. No worries, society expected this as I had now gained a life partner who made sure getting ready food was the least of my worries. This new stature also commanded respect in my social circles. The boy had now come of age to take on the title 'Buda' (respected fellow).

### The trigger

On 11th February 2015, as I headed home from work, I walked into a hospital to have what I believed was a small issue checked out. I had been feeling a bit under the weather for two-weeks and

2015 hypertensive  
overweight  
pre-diabetic  
on medication

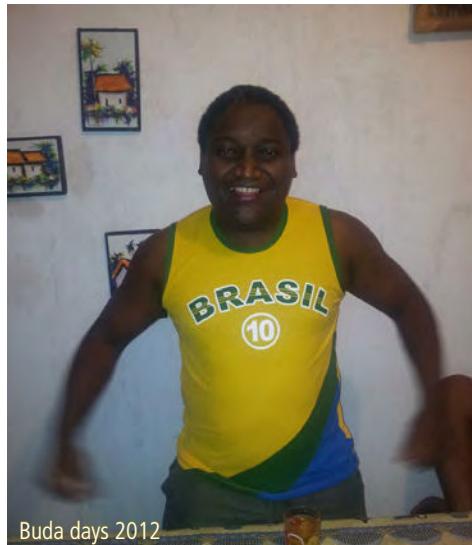
2018 lighter  
faster  
medication free

according to my self-diagnosis this was a chest infection that a few tablets would do the magic.

The nurse at the triage was not convinced about my responses to his questions. He thought I was not being sincere. After some back and forth without him getting desired answers, he sent me to a doctor who ordered tests done. The results indicated that Blood Pressure was way over the roof at 180/110 (normal readings are 120/80 mm Hg) and my pulse was at approximately 100 bpm.

They prodded me to confess that I had chest pains, I thought for a second and it dawned that was pointing to a heart attack. I didn't confess but the sweating that followed got them thinking the scare would sure land me into one at that point. What I confessed to, was an unwarranted weight loss of approximately 2 kg in 4 days. At that point they requested for a urine sample and found it laced with glucose. Finger pricking followed to confirm the glucose levels. The sugar level read "Hi", meaning high, I panicked. What followed was an intravenous saline drip, after I had taken in 8 sachets (hope that is what they are called). They ran another glucose test and the levels were still not satisfactory. They then injected me with insulin, at that point readings were available from the device at 14 mmol/L (normal levels: up to 7.8 mmol/L).

It was now quite evident what was ailing me but when they mentioned hospitalization I protested doing a Miguna Miguna "not boarding" stand regarding the hospital wards. I stood my ground until 3 am, at which point they were kind enough to release me. But not before they read my sentence "you are diabetic and hypertensive".



I was handed medication as my bail and ordered to appear at the diabetic clinic in 2 weeks. Feeling sorry for myself I left with a bag full of medication to sustain me for the 2 weeks as I came to terms with the just handed sentence.

After two weeks, more tests were done at the clinic. I got a reprieve when I was found to be a pre-diabetic, not a diabetic. The major concern was my cholesterol level, which was at 6.49 mmol/l against a normal range of 3.2mmol/l-5.2mmol/l. I got more medicine to take care of me for a month. I researched on my condition, dedicating 30 minutes daily. I learned fast that weight loss or physical activity would mitigate the issue, it was a chance I was willing to take.

#### I start running

A fortnight later, on a Saturday, I took my family to Karura - my daughter on a bicycle, my wife walking as I attempted to jog the 10km trail. I remember it took 1 hr. 40 min, almost costing my life! After I was done, I took a nap on the lawn next to my car for 20 minutes, trying to catch the much elusive breath. That 10 km run took 2 hours of my day. It felt like an impossible lifestyle. I would end up seeking comfort on the treadmill first before road running. Because the little hills at Karura forest had almost shattered my chest, I assumed my lungs would never achieve a capacity of such tasks.

The treadmill offered good controls, stopping when the stop button was pressed. Imagine running on the road only for the fatigue to kick in at 6 km. That would mean walking back another 6 km. I would further learn from the internet again about reducing belly fat by reaching my lactate threshold; running at a high exertion phase, slowing down to recover and repeating the process a few times.

Soon results were showing and in roughly 3 months into this, my weight had come down from 95 kg to around 84 kg. I was still attending the clinic and taking my meds. My diet now had lettuce introduced daily while sugar was eliminated.

I went back to Karura and this time it felt nice. I did not keep the stats but it was a slow paced and comfortable jog, no breath catching from start to finish. I was also lighter in weight this time. As I did this I thought to myself why not enter marathons to sustain my new found lifestyle. I registered for the 2015 Ndakaini Half Marathon with a target of completing it in under 2 hours based on my training and how good I felt. I soon learnt how you feel and actualizing a sub 2hr half marathon are two very different things. I had never said so many short prayers on a run like that in my entire life! I finished in 2:23:17 exhausted and wishing I had stuck to running on the treadmill.

## Ken in brief: 44 years old

**110 kg (top weight)**

**76 kg (current weight)**

**2015 started running**

**3,714 km (2018)**

**56 km - longest run**

After roughly 8 months at the diabetic clinic I took a glucose tolerance test (GTT) which showed my readings were normal as far as blood sugar control was concerned. That good news propelled me into running more. Ndakaini half marathon did not deter my sub 2 hrs quest. The breakthrough would come at Peter Mulley's Machakos half marathon in October 2015 in which I crossed the finishing line in 1:54 hrs. Coincidentally, the same time (1:54:32) was officially confirmed at the Standard Chartered Nairobi Marathon later the same month. The half marathon was tamed. A barbecue celebration followed at my place with family. I chest-thumped myself till I fell asleep that night. In June, 2016 I clocked 1:38:21 at the Sotokoto half marathon while chasing a sub 1:45hr. At the finishing line I turned my focus to running a full marathon.

#### The big one

I did my long runs on weekends to prepare for the 2016 StanChart Nairobi marathon. By the time I was training for this maiden marathon, I was in great shape health wise. My cholesterol level had reduced to satisfactory levels, my BP was manageable by my new found lifestyle and I was no longer on medication. I had peace of mind to concentrate on my running. I came home in a time of 3:44:16, from a modest target of just getting a finisher's medal. The feeling was fulfilling. This was certainly beyond my wildest dreams!

Running this first full marathon was an eye opener to the actual road running. Running for me at this point was not about health anymore, but on pushing my limits to what had now become an obsession. I did not know what to do after this race.

Through my running I had met recreational runners who were running major marathons in the world. I thought 'why not me', though I still felt juvenile having only one full marathon under my belt. Running one with the big boys and girls would

## 2018 running stats



be a game changer. I checked for races and my eyes were fixated on one dubbed "the world most beautiful marathon" – the Old Mutual Two Oceans Ultra-marathon (OMTOM). However, there was a catch - this was a 56 km ultra! It meant going beyond my mind barrier, but my mind was made up. This was it! I informed my family of my wish to bring this medal home. Their support was overwhelming.



### The bigger one

When my application for the Old Mutual Two Oceans Ultra-marathon (OMTOM) was approved I got myself a big travelling party that included my mum and siblings. I was more supported than athletes who were going for the prize money.

Talking about running would take ages. Let me jump to the race that commemorated the 3 years of my running, which put me ahead of my health issues too. I picked up a shin splint injury in September 2017 just as I was to run the StanChart Nairobi marathon in a month's time as it served as my OMTOM qualifier. Luckily, despite the injury, I scrapped through, finishing in 3 hr. 40 min against a generous qualifying time of 5 hrs.

My travelling party started packing on this day, more enthusiastic than myself. Heading to this race I did not manage a long run due to injury. I was limping from time to time, but the base in training established before the injury set in was satisfactory and I banked on this even on race day.

I joined the Urban Swaras running club in November 2017 soon after enlisting to run the OMTOM. This proved to be a good move as two runs with the Swaras - a 31 km in Ngong' and a 26 km run with 1046 m elevation gain and punishing heat in Magadi - two weeks to the marathon put me in the driving seat of running in difficult terrain. I was ready.

On D-day I woke up at 3.30 am after an anxious night of insomnia, went for my pre-ordered pasta meal and to my surprise they had prepared noodles instead of the specified pasta. I had never tried them before a race and so I panicked!

At the start line, engulfed in a sea of runners, I bumped into Michael Nawari – a fellow Swara, who I had never met before. Unified by our Swara running gear, we chatted as if we had known each other for years and wished each other well in the race which was an ultra-debut for him as well.

The canon fire boomed, spilling the over 11,000 runners on to the streets of Cape Town. I had no solid strategy to employ on this one. I would run up to 45 km, then walk to the end. I had not come all this way and with the big support group waiting for me at the university of Cape Town grounds finish line to miss out on a medal. At the 10th km I checked my shin splint injury and there was no pain. I cranked up my speed as I prepared to make up a good time.

I finished in a Garmin time of 5:18:49 and provisional results from the OMTOM website of 05:21:21. I chose to go with the Garmin time. While at it, I also achieved a marathon personal best time of 3:29:59 - the perfect real sub 3:30 figure. After the finish we had a picnic on the same grounds and did not return to the hotel till 11:30 pm. All this time I was proudly displaying my medal for all to see, nothing would dampen my spirit not even the tired legs.

This is my story. ■



# Urban Swaras 8th Annual General Meeting

The club held its 8th AGM on the 1st of December 2018 at Karen Oasis, comprehensive details of which have been shared to club members in form of minutes by the more than able club MC Susan Okoma. The highlights of the AGM can be summed up as follows:

## Part 1: The Sweaty part

Started at 7 am, involved a run in the larger Karen Area. Part one also spilled over into breakfast courtesy of the club coffers. But except for a few runners who left soon after breakfast, most stayed back for the main AGM.

## Part 2: Business end of the AGM

It was held in a cold hall warmed by well spread out charcoal jikos, which Swaras coalesced around like moths to a light bulb. The day's agenda was dispensed starting with the Chairman's report which touched on the 2018 runs and what was expected in 2019.

The Treasurer presented the financial report covering the state of funds and utilization during the year for runs and club CSR activity.

The IT and branding working group led by Victor Kamau gave a report on their initiatives in increasing the club visibility and interactiveness through revamping the club website, Facebook, Instagram, Strava, Garmin connect platforms. The team also introduced a club newsletter with plans to have a yearbook in 2019.

Raoul Kamadjeu was co-opted into the CRE for diversity and his valuable contribution to the club since its inception. The club has a strong West African history and connection which Raoul is the face of.

The elections of the Club Patron took place and members elected Mr. James Wahome as the new club patron, taking over from Mr. Surinder Dhadialla a.k.a Mzee Kijana (MK).

Wahome is a seasoned runner whose most recent exploits are back-to-back Comrades marathon finishes in 2017 and 2018.

## Part 3: Involving Food, Cake, Nyama Choma and assorted drinks from water and beyond

Some Swaras who were tied-up elsewhere all morning were lucky to show up just in time for lunch.

The club feted Swara achievers in several categories: Mt. Kenya Ultra finishers, maiden marathoners, first time half marathoners and Abbot World Marathon Majors finishers. There were several cakes to honour these achievers.

And Swaras were not in a hurry to leave, having the best of club sponsored Nyama Choma washed down with preferred liquids.

There was a lot of running and allied stories to share as the last 6 Swaras exited the venue at 2 am. Some who had consumed 'breathalyzable' liquids, responsibly leaving their vehicles behind. ■

AGM



New club patron , James (left) with outgoing patron Surinder (right)



## Running Escapades

## Marathons and Medals in 2018 by Daisy Ajima

This is the first time I am writing about my running experience, motivated by those who have written before making it look like an awesome idea. 2018 has been an amazing running year, with lots of highs and lows, summarized in many words as below ...

### The beginning and injury

2018 started on an upbeat mode, I had grand running plans.

In November 2017 I had gotten into the Chicago Marathon through the ballot on the first attempt. Shortly after, I also got into New York marathon, through ballot again, lady luck had struck twice. The stars had aligned for me. In February, despite some slight knee pain, I participated in a 25km run up Menengai crater. On getting back to Nairobi, I could hardly go down stairs. An Orthopaedic visit and MRI later confirmed I had advanced **Patella Tendinitis**.

I barely ran 10 km in March and April, staying away from running groups as seeing guys run induced sob feelings. Several appointments later and weeks and weeks of physio I could walk normally again. By May I was better but reluctant to resume running, until I had to deal with losing a friend at the beginning of June. I would wake up and run in the morning, minimum 20kms in zombie mode. For two weeks, running was my go to and the two daily hours of running made everything feel great. Well, running being therapy, I was back again with a few months to the Chicago Marathon.

### Chicago Marathon

This is the most seamless marathon I have done. I felt in good form and was part of a great team of 25 recreational Kenyan signed up for Chicago.

Training started with around 10 weeks to go. I trained with an amazing group of runners who regularly train in Ngong' hills. Ngong' provided very good high-altitude training and hill work. By the time Chicago was a few days away, my pace had improved by 1 minute a kilometre.



Patriotic moment during the Chicago 5K

On the eve of Chicago marathon a number of us participated in a 5 km country run, this was one of the best fun runs of the year. I can now tell people I got to run the streets of Chicago in a sisal skirt! We clad in all regalia including Maasai gear and other variations. Exhibit 1 above, this was the best of #teamkenya.

The day of the run was even more flawless. My two lovely room mates and I said a small prayer before catching the train to the start line.

I would go mile by mile of this run but being well trained and focused, the miles just passed by. I did not even notice torrential rain that hit for almost 20 km, for me it was a nice cool down. The run was miles and miles of cheers. I especially remember a Mexican neighbourhood where the music was awesome. The banners kept you going and there was no option of stopping.

Being a nice, flat course, I was sure of getting a PB. And sure enough I smashed 45 minutes from my previous marathon time. Reaching the finishing line was one out of the world experience. While the run was hazy, I was wowed at the finish and getting that beautiful medal. I had conquered my first World Marathon Major. Despite the freezing temperatures, I enjoyed all the finisher's goodies including the best Finishers beer.



Bagged it!

## New York City Marathon

TCS NYC Marathon has the slogan "it will move you". However, it does not specify move how, so maybe a mixture of all emotions, move to pain, tears, joy, annoyance... the list goes on...

New York marathon was just three weeks after Chicago. I had pondered on the wisdom or lack thereof of running two marathons in a month, I made the decision to go for both. A genius called Ngatia heard of my two marathons in less than a month plan and had two words for me: "foolish courage". His famous statement has been used severally this year in running circles and I think he needs to patent it.

There was an argument to treat Chicago as a long run.

Stars aligned for the second time as a week after my acceptance, our National carrier launched their direct flight to New York at a ridiculously discounted price.

Having run Chicago, at 4:35:59, I logged in around only 100 km before NY as I had already done 700 km for NY-Chicago training. The target for this run was to finish strong and have fun.

Getting to the start line of NY was not interesting. From where I stayed to the start line should be a 10 minutes drive or even walk. However, because the race starts from the bridge connecting Brooklyn and Staten Island, the 10 minutes trip became almost 2 hours.

The night before there was daylight savings, meaning at midnight all the clocks moved an hour behind, meaning you get an extra hour of sleep (like it was possible). My coral I was to start at 10.30 am but was awake by 5 am.

The 'worst part of the race': I was dropped at a Ferry, waited for an hour in 2 °C

temperature (my African body freezes at 14 °C), took the 45 minutes ferry ride, got off the ferry queued for one hour waiting for the bus to the start line, the bus took 45 minutes, 30 minutes through security to the start line and finally there!

There had been online advice to carry food and warm clothing. In the three hours I ate all my packed food, of rice, coffee, Gatorade, cereal bar, chapati, more out of boredom than anything else. For warmth I had 7 layers of clothing and a blanket. On the up side, the ferry ride was lots of fun.



The fun before the run, it does move

### The run

Finally. 10 minutes before the cannon (yes, real cannon) went off, all the extra clothing had been shed and donated to charity in some large bins. "New York" by Alicia Keys was played. The cannon went off and we went onto Verrazano Bridge. This bridge was my favorite part of the run... the adrenaline still high, lots of energy. 4 km of pure bliss. No one is allowed to walk on this bridge as there is no foot path, so you have to run the marathon to walk on it 😊.

## 42.2 km

### 5 boroughs

### silent bridges

**Staten Island** – Lots of energy, start line, 'freshly doped' and the run on the bridge was just beautiful. I would do NY again just for this part.

**Brooklyn** – This has been described as one of the biggest open-air parties you can possibly imagine. Real life DJs on the streets, a whole Church Choir, guys dancing, in the whole Brooklyn stretch there was no silent spot. Despite being advised not to get sucked in by the crowd, it takes a lot of self-control not to, so I went high-fiving, dancing to awesome music, clapping, cheering... my pace was off the chart as a result of this adrenaline, and the marathon prediction was a sub 4:10, another PB of a sub 4:10.

**Queens and Bronx** – With the silence on this bridge I realized I should not have allowed the

adrenaline and crowds to consume me. I made up my mind to take it easy. Well, I only stopped for one awesome Rock Band, and ooh, Cher, who can resist a Cher impersonator... danced a bit. Remember the 'doping' I did before the start line? I had to take two or maybe three detours in small rooms as digestion was reaching its peak. My pace went down from 5:35 slower by more than 2 minutes per kilometre. I decided I needed to have fun during this run.

**Manhattan** – Homestretch finally. With mileage and Chicago-tiredness still on my legs, I ran slowly and enjoyed Manhattan. One thing I remember was the number of snipers on the rooftops. You notice everything on slow runs, every time I wanted to walk I got scared of being spotted, the crowd would also not give you a chance. The crowd in Manhattan had another level of energy.

Entering Central park, felt great and the final energy to get the medal was all worth it. It was almost 4 pm and already a bit dark, but the energy and cheering was great. Finishing in 4:47:22, I felt the winner had nothing on me as I had enjoyed the course more.

### Exiting Central park

This was super painful. After medal collection, there is a slow walk of almost 5 km to get out of Central Park. All of us had very beautiful ponchos, and ironically looked like a penguin migration. That was the longest 5 km, stopping severally to catch my breath. However, the people were very kind and with each stop you have a million people all concerned trying to help out. I think this is what was called the wall, as that was a very painful walk.

## Conclusion

New York Marathon was almost 5 hours of one party after another on the streets over 42 km on foot. I know there are better ways of partying, but I chose this with a tinge of pain. The noise each time I entered a borough was just as described. My pace was random from the adrenaline I got the first half to practically crawling. Without the crowd, I would probably have hit the "marathon wall" at some point.

A lot of people may not get this lifestyle, but the endorphins from finishing such a run is like no other.

## 2 World Marathon Majors 14 medals



Penguin walk after the run



## Other running escapades (in order of favourites)

Philadelphia marathon (Half)

Two weeks after the NYC Marathon. After celebration around various states with no run / preparation done, I decided another fun run. This was one amazing run, very flat. I managed a half marathon PB of 2:03.

Vic falls Marathon (half)

I was encouraged to participate last minute. To run in the midst of elephants you do not have to be the fastest or brightest runner, you just have to be faster than someone. The scenery, especially of the waterfalls, was amazing.

Mwea Marathon (Half)

This is a great run with lots of potential.

Menengai Trail Run (25k)

It is a well organized run that will test your limits.

HAVOC run (30k)

Extremely beautiful in Happy Valley in Naivasha. In and out of the various valleys in the Rift Valley.

Tigoni Tea Trail Run

This is another well organized High Altitude run that was perfect to end the year.

Chicago 5k

This is a great fun run for those who have extra energy the day before the Chicago marathon.

Nairobi Marathon

Poor organization but that's potential for improvement. A fun half run.

All in all, 2018 was a lovely running year. Running has had more fun and thrills than can ever be imagined. Running gave me a high, made me happy when I was sad, handed me a reality check when I was too complacent. To more running in 2019. ■

## Achievements



### Jack Ndegwa

- The 3rd Kenyan World Marathon Majors Six Star Finisher
- Set the fastest Swara marathon time of 02:42
- Topped several runs: Old Moses Half Marathon, Stride against Violence 5K (Chicago), Tigon Trail run



### Davis Munene

- A runner with immense drive. He ran Chicago Marathon in 2:50, the 4th fastest swara time and on an injury no less!

## Some 2018 Swara feats

### Claire Baker

- Podium finisher at Old Moses Half Marathon
- First Swara female finisher at Nairobi Standard Chartered Marathon



### James Wahome

- Comrades Ultra-marathon second year back-to-back finisher
- Also the New Club Patron



### Maina Ngatia 'the villager'

- 3,064 km mileage (2nd highest mileage in Swara Garmin leader board)
- De facto club entertainer

## Some 2018 Swara feats

## Achievements



**Ken Waichigo**

- 3,700 km mileage (highest mileage in Swara Garmin leader board)
- 56 km OMTOM finisher



**Eva Kabutha**

- For committing to do her first marathon in 2019. The pressure is real. That look is her picturing how she'll totally make minced meat of that 2019 marathon.

**Maryline Chebet**

- 72 km, the top distance by a Swara lady at Mt. Kenya Ultra



**Rosemary Mwangi**

- Highest female Swara mileage of 2,311 km (mileage in Swara Garmin leader board)



**Millicent Maina**

- Never say never. Millicent has always said she was comfortable with the shorter distances of 15 to 20 km at Swara runs and she wasn't interested in running a marathon distance... until she surprised everyone by running 45 km at the Mt. Kenya Ultra

## Achievements

# 2018 100 km finishers



**Victor Kamau**

- Three 100 km runs in 2018. The all bypasses twice and Mt. Kenya ultra-marathon
- Set the fastest strava Old Moses- Point Lenana ascent
- 2nd in the Old Moses half marathon



**Sarah Wawa**

- Completed the all bypasses 100 km run twice
- 60 km in Fluorspar
- Speed climbed Mt. Kenya in one day, in her first attempt to climb the Mountain
- She is probably the first Kenyan female to run 100 km. Because we know no other.



**Peter Muia**

- 100 km Mt. Kenya Ultra
- 100 km all bypasses
- He also cycles 100 km plus countless times



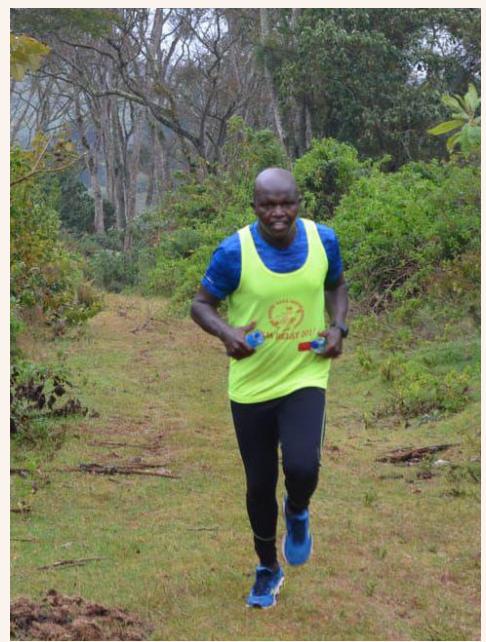
**Joseph Masika**

- Completed the 100 km Mt. Kenya Ultra



**Sam Nyingi**

- Completed the 100 km Mt. Kenya Ultra



**Timothy Macharia**

- Comrades ultra, second year back to back
- 100 km all bypasses

# 2018 100 km finishers

## Achievements



**Anthony Mwasaru**

- Completed the all bypasses 100 km run

**Michael Nawari**

- Completed the all bypasses 100 km run
- 56 km OMTOM finisher

**Thomas Bond**

- 100 km Mt. Kenya Ultra



**Elvis Obonyo**

- 100 km Mt. Kenya Ultra

## Chicago and NY double team



## Achievements

## Some 2018 Swara feats

Club membership

**260** runners

**52** new members in 2018



Swaras savouring their medals after the Standard Chartered 2018 Nairobi Marathon

## Into Club 42 by Martin Mungai

Disclaimer: I am not a very good writer, so please excuse my writing.

This story begins at the Mt. Kenya Ultra run, which was the ultimate mind test as our very able and active Swara chairperson had declared that there would not be any medals for any runner who did not run 45 km. I not only finished 45 km out of a possible 100 km, but also, I got a medal! (This is a story for another day). The day following the run, I drove back to Nairobi from Karatina in the company of my very good friend, Elvis. Feeling very well pleased with myself, I told him how I planned to take a break from running and catch up with my sleep and cold beer for the next few weeks. He wondered why I had not registered for the Stanchart Marathon. To which I bid him with a 'I will think about it' comment as we parted.

The following week, after my recovery run, I went to Kariakim for a physio and I informed him that I had decided to run the Standard Chartered Marathon – all 42.2 km of it. The look on his face was priceless! Did I know how much time I needed to rest after running 45 km? He took out a pen and drew a program which I was to follow to the letter for the next 4 weeks for me to be ready for the marathon. So, for the next few weeks, besides my weekly and weekend runs, Kariakim's became my second home.

Then came 28th October 2018, race day! I was up at 4 am, prepared myself for my official maiden marathon. We were flagged off at exactly 7 am and off we went. My mind was so preoccupied with the Mombasa road loop (2nd half) that people had talked about so much that I did not even think about the first half of the race. I had planned to maintain a pace of between 5.30 and 6 min/km in order to finish in my target time of 4 hr. 30 min. The first 15 – 18 km were great until I reached Upper Hill where I realized I had slowed down to a pace of 6.45 min/km. Even then, I was still ok and well within my time. I could already project that I would break last year's 21 K PB. I was very pleased when I crossed the halfway mark at 2 hr. 5 min, a 3 minute improvement from last year's time of 2 hr. 8 min.

The first person I met as I approached the 21/42k split was David Thuo who offered me a piece of watermelon that was very refreshing! And there it was, the dreaded Mombasa road stretch and what a sight it was! Not a single car in sight, just yellow, red and blue t-shirts at a distance. This is where the race starts, I thought to myself. I remembered Eliud Kipchoge's words 'With the human mind anything is possible' that gave me the courage to soldier on.

The first loop was not so bad, and all was well. At Eka Hotel, I met Ndegwa who gave me something which, all I can say for now, gave me some good energy to move on. Looking at my watch, I realized I was approaching the 30 km mark. I kept moving until I got back to Nyayo Stadium roundabout for my 2nd loop. This is the point where things took a turn for the worse. I could not imagine, doing the loop, again! My legs were ready for a break, but I compromised with a run-walk strategy until I met Loise at Total Petrol station. By then my calves needed that Deep Heat spray so badly. After a quick fix, I was back on the road. The focus now was to get to Ndegwa again for another dose of the energizer. As I approached, he could see from my face that I needed it more than ever.

That stretch from Eka Hotel to the turn off was the longest and loneliest part of the whole race and I can tell you that I contemplated calling it a day. After the turn off, I met Davis who I assured that I was determined to finish the race. I continued with my run-walk strategy until I met Ngatia at Capital Center. He had paced me during one of my runs during training, so he knew that I needed company. He paced me till I got to the finish line. It felt like I had been given a new lease of energy! We ran all the way to the finish line where I pleasantly realized I had done 43 km in a sub 5.

Stanchart was a wonderful experience with a lot of lessons learnt but the most important of them all was to believe in yourself and never give up. I would like to thank all the people who were involved in my long journey to club 42.

Would I run the Nairobi Stanchart marathon again? "**NO!**" .

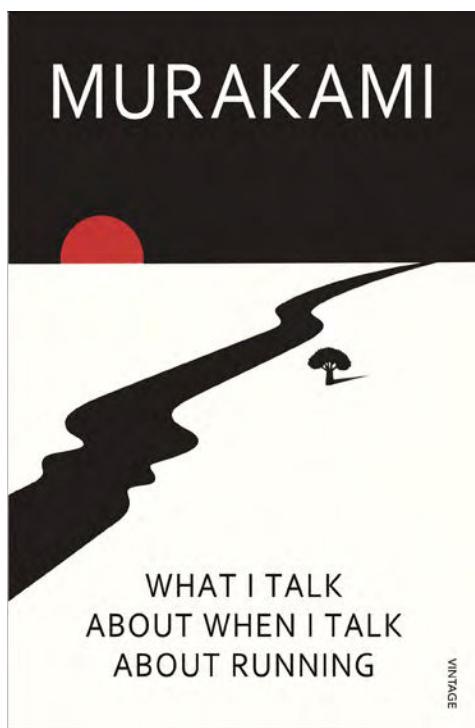
Next stop, I want to see the world, Berlin, Chicago here I come ...■

## Stanchart Marathon



## Runner's Library

### A review by Jerusha Nzemb



In his memoir, *What I Talk About When I Talk About Running*, Murakami, a former smoker and jazz club owner, looks at his passion for long-distance running, its connection to writing and the link between running and life. He not only talks about his training for the 2005 New York City Marathon but also how we can change the way we think in a broader way by committing to a physical act.

Apart from his journey as a writer, he reflects about what most runners would identify with - his successes and failures, effects of aging, injuries and reasons he runs and keeps on running.

This 180-page book is packed with lots of wisdom applicable to both runners and non-runners. The best part is that you don't have to have run a marathon to enjoy it. Happy reading! ■

“

Pain is inevitable. Suffering is optional. Say you're running and you think, 'Man, this hurts, I can't take it anymore'. The 'hurt' part is an unavoidable reality, but whether or not you can stand anymore is up to the runner himself. This pretty much sums up the most important of marathon running -

**Haruki Murakami.**

## Tidbits and photo of the issue

### ODD RUNNING WORLD

Running sometimes borders on crazy.

**World's Longest run:** Self-Transcendence 3100-mile race run around a half mile city block in Queens, New York.

**Cutoff time:** 52 days. Running starts at 6 AM and ends at midnight.

2018 had 6 finishers:

- Vasu Duzhiy 52, a Russian, won in 44 days 16 hrs. 3 min. He has finished the race seven times. Vasu works as a foreman in a lumber company.
- Surasa Mairer, 59, an Austrian, was the first female in 51 days+12:47:37. She works as a secretary in Vienna.

### CREATIVE RUNNING HACK

#### Vodka as anti-freeze

In cold climates, sometimes water freezes during a run.

There are conventional solutions...then there are, well, unconventional hacks, some runners swear adding vodka, which is odourless, to water works (some with separate alcoholic preferences).

**Help** identify this Swara: Who is he? Where did he vanish to?



Picture taken in 2016

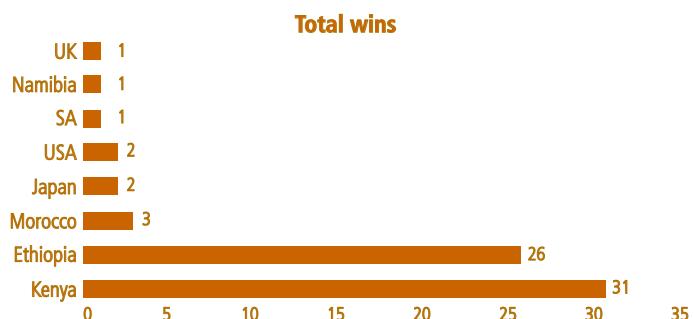
# 2018 Gold Label Marathons Results

## World Marathons

Kenyan marathoners dominated the 2018 World Marathon Majors (WMM) winning 7 out of the 12 top positions.

We looked further at all the Gold Label Marathons to see the distribution of winners in 2018. Again, no surprises as Kenya took the lead.

IAAF awards road races Gold, Silver or Bronze label status based on several criteria. Ideally the pecking order in terms or race profile follows the same categorization ■



	ROAD RACE	DISTANCE	LOCATION	COUNTRY	MONTH	MALE WINNER	COUNTRY	FEMALE WINNER	COUNTRY
1	Tokyo Marathon*	Marathon	Tokyo	Japan	March	Dickson Chumba	Kenya	Birhane Dibaba	Ethiopia
2	Boston Marathon*	Marathon	Boston	United States	April	Yuki Kawauchi	Japan	Desiree Linden	USA
3	London Marathon*	Marathon	London	United Kingdom	April	Eliud Kipchoge	Kenya	Vivian Cheruiyot	Kenya
4	Berlin Marathon*	Marathon	Berlin	Germany	September	Eliud Kipchoge	Kenya	Gladys Cherono	Kenya
5	Chicago Marathon*	Marathon	Chicago	United States	October	Mo Farah	UK	Brigid Kosgei	Kenya
6	New York City Marathon*	Marathon	New York City	United States	November	Lelisa Desisa	Ethiopia	Mary Keitany	Kenya
7	Dubai Marathon	Marathon	Dubai	United Arab Emirates	January	Mosinet Geremew	Ethiopia	Roza Dereje	Ethiopia
8	Mumbai Marathon	Marathon	Mumbai	India	January	Solomon Deksisa	Ethiopia	Amane Gobena	Ethiopia
9	Xiamen International Marathon	Marathon	Xiamen	China	January	Dejene Gonfa	Ethiopia	Fatuma Sado	Ethiopia
10	Hong Kong	Marathon	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	February	Kenneth Mungara	Kenya	Gulume Tollesa	Ethiopia
11	Seville Marathon	Marathon	Seville	Spain	February	Dickson Tuwei	Kenya	Kaoutar Boulaid	Morocco
12	Lake Biwa Marathon	Marathon	Itsu	Japan	March	Joseph Ndirangu	Kenya	<b>Male only event</b>	
13	Nagoya Women's Marathon	Marathon	Nagoya	Japan	March	<b>Female only event</b>		Assefa Meskerem	Ethiopia
14	Seoul International Marathon	Marathon	Seoul	South Korea	March	Wilson Erupe	Kenya	Dante Hiru	Ethiopia
15	Madrid Marathon	Marathon	Madrid	Spain	April	Eliud Barngetuny	Kenya	Valentine Jepkorir	Kenya
16	Paris Marathon	Marathon	Paris	France	April	Paul Lonyangata	Kenya	Betsy Saina	Kenya
17	Rotterdam Marathon	Marathon	Rotterdam	Netherlands	April	Kenneth Kipkemoi	Kenya	Visiline Jepkesho	Kenya
18	Vienna City Marathon	Marathon	Vienna	Austria	April	Salaheddine Bounasser	Morocco	Nancy Kiprop	Kenya
19	Ottawa Marathon	Marathon	Ottawa	Canada	May	Yemane Tsegay	Ethiopia	Gelete Burka	Ethiopia
20	Prague Marathon	Marathon	Prague	Czech Republic	May	Galen Rupp	USA	Bornes Kitur	Kenya
21	Riga Marathon	Marathon	Riga	Latvia	May	Tsedat Ayana	Ethiopia	Georgina Rono	Kenya
22	Gold Coast Marathon	Marathon	Gold Coast	Australia	July	Kenneth Mungara	Kenya	Ruth Chebitok	Kenya
23	Beijing Marathon	Marathon	Beijing	China	September	Dejene Gonfa	Ethiopia	Valary Aiabhei	Kenya
24	Cape Town Marathon	Marathon	Cape Town	South Africa	September	Stephen Mokoka	South Africa	Helalia Johannes	Namibia
25	Sydney Marathon	Marathon	Sydney	Australia	September	Elijah Kemboi	Kenya	Mercy Kibarus	Kenya
26	Amsterdam Marathon	Marathon	Amsterdam	Netherlands	October	Lawrence Cherono	Kenya	Tadelech Bekele	Ethiopia
27	Frankfurt Marathon	Marathon	Frankfurt	Germany	October	Kelkile Gezahagn	Ethiopia	Meskerem Assefa	Ethiopia
28	Lisbon Marathon	Marathon	Lisbon	Portugal	October	Limenih Getachew	Ethiopia	Kuftu Dadiso	Ethiopia
29	Toronto Waterfront Marathon	Marathon	Toronto	Canada	October	Benson Kipruto	Kenya	Mimi Belete	Ethiopia
30	Istanbul Marathon	Marathon	Istanbul	Turkey	November	Felix Kimutai	Kenya	Ruth Chepnetich	Kenya
31	Shanghai Marathon	Marathon	Shanghai	China	November	Seifu Abdiwak	Ethiopia	Yebngual Arage	Ethiopia
32	Valencia Marathon	Marathon	Valencia	Spain	November	Leul Gebrselassie	Ethiopia	Ashete Dido	Ethiopia
33	Fukuoka Marathon	Marathon	Fukuoka	Japan	December	Yuma Hatori	Japan	<b>Male only event</b>	
34	Guangzhou Marathon	Marathon	Guangzhou	China	December	Mohammed Ziani	Morocco	Tigis Getachew	Ethiopia
35	Singapore Marathon	Marathon	Singapore	Singapore	December	Joshua Kipkorir	Kenya	Prisca Cherono	Kenya

\* World Marathon Majors (WMM)