



Urban Swaras Running Club *Kenya*

Editor's Note

Hello Swaras,

Behold the first issue of the club's newsletter. Some members thought it would be a good idea to have such a publication whose aim is to provide a wider platform for sharing of running info and club members experiences.

There was no call for content as this issue is also a *'dry run edition'* as we try to get a footing. This is the work of know-nothing-at-alls in matters publishing, design and other skills required to come up with a publication.

Future editions will draw contributions from the club membership. Running exploits; the good the bad and the unspeakables, members running bios, running events and generally all matters running are welcome.

A newsletter by definition would suggest circulation within a closed group, in this case the club ranks. In the process of developing this publication, the line between *'newsletter'* and *'e-zine'* (*electronic magazine*) has gotten thinner and thinner and eventually disappeared.

This is therefore a publication which shall be named 'newsletter' but is likely to contain info that would be consumable to the general running and outdoorsy community. But that's a thought...

The frequency of this newsletter will be bimonthly, meaning the next publication will be out in October. However, the frequency is not fixed and could change should circumstances dictate.

We acknowledge the following persons for fronting the Newsletter agenda; Victor Kamau, Victor Wesonga and Thomas Bond. We are also grateful to the following for graciously submitting content; Club Chairman, Claire S. Baker, Monica Gichuhi, Davis Munene and Jack Ndegwa.

Your feedback is welcome at usrc.editor@gmail.com

The Interim Editor
USRC Newsletter



Greetings Swaras,

Here is a history of how the club came to be;

Prior to 2005, I used to jog occasionally, about four to five times a month, doing no more than forty minutes per session.

After failing to complete the StanChart marathon three times in a row due to what I later learnt was woefully inadequate training, I decided to increase the frequency and distances of my runs.

In this quest I joined the Nairobi Hash House Harriers (The Hashers) and ran with them every Monday evening. Through the Hashers' runs, coupled with my individual ones, my pace improved. On my fourth attempt, I completed the StanChart marathon in about six and half hours.

In Hash, I met and made friends with Benedict Munyao, who later became the Club's webmaster and Google group mail administrator. He was and still is a seasoned and better runner than I am. Together, we started running on Saturdays.

Then I introduced Nancy Gakii and Ivy Mutiso Rasmussen to running. The two and myself ran once or twice in the week and Munyao would join us on Saturdays. The two ladies and I ended up running a few marathons together before duty called them away from the USRC.

Word of our Saturday runs steadily spread and a few leisure runners and learners joined us. Back then all the runs started and ended in my house. As the pace and distances were uniform, we started and more

From the Chairman

or less completed the runs at the same time. Routes were thus never marked or explained.

In the year 2005, the two ladies and I participated in the second edition of the Catherine Ndereba half marathon in Nyeri town. There, we met a 52 year old energetic lady called Joyce Nduku. I invited her for a run from my house the following Saturday and she in turn invited me to run with her mates during the week in Arboretum. After running with the group I extended an invite to them to that Saturday's run from my house. A majority attended, loved it and "moved in" with us.

As a senior citizen, my children could not call Nduku by name, referring to her as "Tata" which in Ateso language means Grandma.

Among those who joined our group were James Wahome and Mutua Ndunda, who runs the Ambo Gardens Restaurant in Lavinton from which we occasionally run. The numbers grew exponentially and it became a heavy task for me to cater for the water, breakfast and showers.

The two (Wahome and Mutua) magnanimously provided relief by offering their homes for alternate runs. Communication about the runs was by mobile telephony. The routes were described in the pre-run briefing and never marked.

The host always made sure that the last runner had arrived, stragglers were looked for and brought back to base as sometimes exhaustion took its toll or route descriptions were forgotten resulting in lost runners. The biggest challenge was not knowing where to search for the lost runners since the routes were not marked. At times, we ended up going out to look for the searchers and rescuers who themselves got lost.

To solve this, we started marking routes and introduced various distances in order to accommodate runners of all abilities. I had permanent leave from office every Friday for this task.

Cont'd on page 2

Inevitably, the telephone mode of planning and communicating runs became impractical. It was decided that a group email should be created, a task that was handled by Munyao. That led to the logical question, the name by which the group would be known.

Everyone was invited to suggest for possible names, an online ballot was taken, *Urban Swaras Running Club*, floated by Wanjohi Macharia who on leaving Nairobi founded the Nyeri Trail Blazers, garnered most votes and the name was adopted.

The next growth problem was that it became impossible to host such huge numbers in the three homes. Parking and amenities became tight. Runs were thus moved to public places, primarily restaurants.

A huge group of persons needs management and structures. Thus the offices of Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer were created in 2007 and their respective inaugural holders were yours truly, Jael Amara and Lucy Thuo.

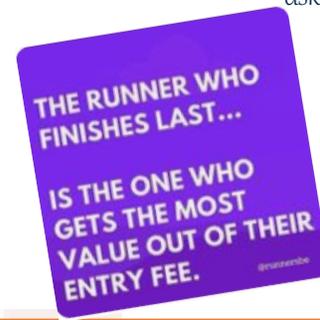
The need for a constitution naturally arose and I was mandated by the members to prepare a draft and send it to them for enrichment. After input from interested members, the zero draft was approved by all and on 27/11/2011, it was promulgated in Tigoni, Kiambu County.

Otoro the current Trail Fox joined the Club on this day. After a few runs I approached and trained him to scout and mark routes for three months after which the officials duly certified him qualified to mark routes to the standards of the Club.

The Calendar, Routes and Events (CRE) Committee is the highest organ of the USRC and its primary objectives are:-

- Trail running
- popularization of recreational running
- sports tourism
- Giving back to society through charity

AJAA OLUBAYI
Founding Chairman



Club Officials

Club Patron : Surinder Dhaddiala a.k.a MK (Mzee Kijana)

Calendar, Routes and Events (CRE) Committee

1)	Ajaa Olubayi	Chairman	olubayiajaa@gmail.com
2)	Susan Okoma	Coordinator	susanokomaz@gmail.com
3)	Loise Mbarire	Treasurer	lmnyamu@gmail.com
4)	Ferrah Etyang	Trail Queen	akwedeetyang18@gmail.com
5)	Avani Patel	Member	avanipatel52@hotmail.com
6)	Nyokabo Kamotho	Member	nyoxiii@gmail.com
7)	James Wahome	Member	wahomejameswj@gmail.com
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9)	Peter Macharia	Member	peter@kingvaleinsurance.com
10)	Raoul Kamadjeu	Member	raoul.kamadjeu@gmail.com
11)	Thomas Bond	Member	thomasbondo@gmail.com
12)	Victor Kamau	Member	victor.kamau@gmail.com
13)	Victor Wesonga	Member	vwesonga@gmail.com



The Club Patron Flaunts His Medal at the 2016 Standard Chartered Marathon...photo By Abdi

On 30th June 2018, the Old Moses Classic Half Marathon took place, it has become an annual event hosted by the Nyeri Trail Blazers and generally coincides with the Lewa Marathon.

This year a good number of Swaras participated after a rallying call spearheaded by the Trail Blazers chairman Bwana Wanjohi and his Swara ambassador Wachira Nderitu.

Wachira declared the prize of a **15 year old Johnny Walker Gold Label reserve** for the first sub two hour finisher. (*a Gold Medal award winning Whisky*).

2 hours for a half marathon? looks luxurious. But not when running partly up Mt. Kenya, beginning at an altitude of 1225m ASL and

ending at 3330m ASL meaning that apart from the quad-busting climb there lies another hurdle in form of thin high altitude air.

But Swaras and Blazers are hardy types and their idea of a perfect Saturday morning is signing up for such a challenge. Ndegwa and Victor Kamau led the assault on the male front, Claire leading the charge on the Fairer side.

The top finishers ended up being battle hardened Jack Ndegwa in 2.09 and Claire Baker in 2.39 meaning they both missed out on the prize.

A delegation of thirsty runners tried to convince Wachira to 'just' award the winners but he didn't move a muscle and therefore went home none the poorer.

The run was clearly not easy, and it was obviously satisfying to see the pained looks of

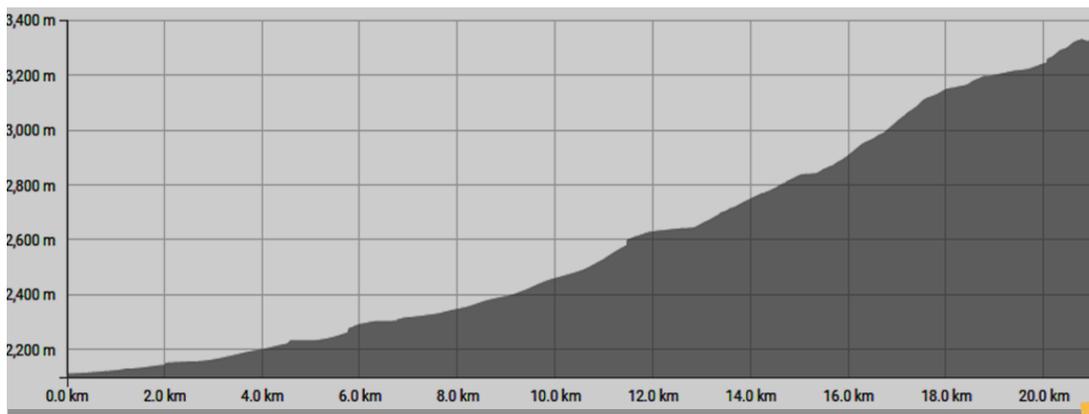
Old Moses Classic Half Marathon

hard labour on the faces of the runners, especially the leaders of the pack chasing after the elusive prize.

Judging from the numbers at the run, the event is turning to be a huge attraction maybe because of the allure of Mt. Kenya, opportunity to have a chill evening in Nanyuki, and of course the temptation of an impossible run.

Some runners are plotting to make Wachira poorer come 2019, some looking for revenge and of course there will be curious new blood ready for slaughter.

Thumbs up to the Blazers for this Classic run.



The stats

⇒ Distance	21.1 km
⇒ Elevation gain:	1225 m
⇒ Start elevation	2114 m ASL
⇒ End Elevation	3331 m ASL
⇒ Average grade	5.8 %
⇒ Highest grade	20.7% (at 16 km)

Data courtesy of Victor Kamau

From the Old Moses Classic winners...

Jack Ndegwa

I am a recreational runner (of course). I have been running for most of my life. While it might have felt like a punishment in high school, I would enjoy the weekly 5km cross country mostly because it was a chance to get out of the compound and sneak in some contrabands like mandazis.

I continued active running into my college years and even after that. However, these were the times Garmin watches were a rarity. So I would run maybe a 5km and feel like I ran 20km and even brag about it.

'Serious' running began when I turned 40, that was five years ago, coincidentally the same time I joined Swaras. It has been quite a Journey. Hard training, Chasing time during Marathons and here I am.

I heard of Mt. Kenya classic last year and the stories of a horridly tough run. 'What do you mean that no one has broken 2 hours over the 21km distance'? I wondered. I made a date. This year's run was even sweetened by Mr. Wachira's promise of a Johnny Walker Gold Label to the first person running under 2hrs.

Together with Victor Miringu we tried, hitting midway at the turn of the hour but the rest of the climb, oh my! took me 1:09. I therefore won in 2:09 but fail to clinch the Walker.

The second part of this run was extremely tough. Not the hill, but the altitude. I am not sure I would manage to kill the 9min but I'm sure someone will, maybe next year. Personally I did my part.

However the whole experience is awesome with the Nyeri blazers doing the donkey work to ensure the run is a success. I could be back next year, yes ,no, maybe.

Claire Baker

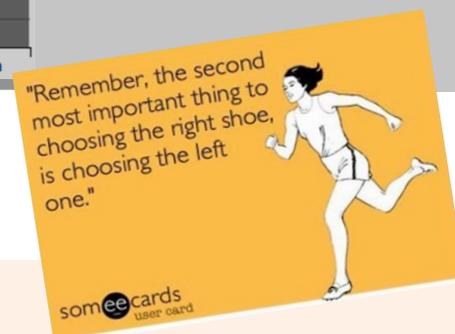
Claire holds dual nationality.

She can speak three languages but Swahili isn't one of them.

Claire is a French-English modern languages graduate who moved to Kenya in the hope that she could learn to 'run like a Kenyan' but spends most of her time as Director of Development for a social enterprise called 'LivelyHoods' working to create jobs and promote clean energy in slums across Kenya.

She was once nicknamed 'the smiler' because she used to smile as she ran; and she once ran a prestigious Parisian race dressed as Barack Obama, from the back.

Claire mostly learned to run to get away from her mean older brother, who would always end up catching her anyway, and once told her, after she came second in a regional cross-country race '2nd place is the first loser'. This 'character-building' is what keeps her going to this day, always trying to do better, but also not take things too seriously because, at the end of the day, there's always someone bigger, better and stronger than you, but you're the only one living your life so you might as well make the most of every second of it.



Old Moses Half Marathon *by Claire Baker*

Hello again 'old' friend.

Typically, we refer to something as 'old' as a term of endearment; something non-threatening. This something is not Old Moses. Say those two words to any self-respecting Swara and they will stop dead in their tracks, stare at you dead in the eyes and warn you 'don't.mess.with.Old.Moses'.

Hell hath no fury like a run up Mt. Kenya.

Telling friends the preceding week what my plans were for the coming weekend they laughed it off as another of my failed jokes. None quite believed that anyone would go out of their way to run up Mt. Kenya.

But alas, June 30, 2018, 30 or so Swaras did just that, along with around 20 Nyeri Trail Blazers, our rivals – sorry, friends – from up north who had the advantage of having the mountain on their doorstep. Us city folk arrived with clogged lungs and oodles of ego, but no mountain goat credentials to turbo charge our way up the 21km slog that awaited us on warm/cold Saturday morning.

Wanjohi of the Nyeri Blazers (a former Urban Swaras), and his able crew had lined up lovely accommodation for us, and despite arriving the Friday past midnight there was still someone waiting to send us on our way to a short night of R&R ahead of the next day's adventures. We made as much noise as possible, the car and I, to try and destabilize my fellow Swaras who were sleeping off the worries of the week, but they were long gone to a land of sub-3 marathon times and cramp-free sprints (dreamland).

The problem with us running 'clubs' is that sometimes we get so carried away by the 'clubness' of it all; the social breakfasts, the competitive banter and lewd innuendos (ok, maybe that's just me), that we forget that we're supposed to be gearing up for a run. That, I'm ashamed to say, is what I was guilty of this fine Saturday as we drove to the start point, a rather inglorious white line in the middle of the tarmac by a bar. I was too busy posing, laughing, jostling and 'clubbing' to fathom that when the whistle went I was supposed to run. Like, properly run.

Whoops.

So let's just gloss over those first 6km where I ran as far away as possible from any other human being so that they wouldn't see the look of sheer discomfort and shame on my face as I jogged, not ran, through pain and heavy-leggedness. Thankfully I didn't seem to be the only one who hadn't quite briefed their subconscious on what lay ahead, but the likes of Masika, Danny and Wanjira embraced it and had fun, keeping a steady pace just a few metres behind me, far enough for them to be spared my grimaces. I lost my running mate from the previous year, Joe, as a by-product of my unsociable start,

but I came across a motley crew of determined folk who did their very best to keep running up the hill, until they realized the hill never ended (this is a recurring theme in my Swara write-ups).

Kudos to the people who provided great support on the trail. Minus points for one of them teasing me with a ride uphill at one of the deadliest near-vertical deathtraps. Vengeance shall be sweet. And probably involve a hill.

Once we reached the gate to the National Park we had the pleasant surprise of a closed road and a detour through a bog-clogged grass stretch which at least spiced things up a bit and gave some much-needed flatness. I must say, I had a glorious advantage of having done the run the year before. When you think things can't get tougher, they go ahead and do just that. I knew that at kilometer 17 there would be a stretch to steep that you'd swear you were doubling back on yourself upside down and will just fall back down to the bottom of the mountain. I'm not ashamed to say I walked that part, and shared my wisdom with some manly men (shan't name names, so that all the male Swaras can claim I'm talking about them) who didn't want to admit that the going was just a bit too tough to even try and do anything more than a knee-clutching slow walk.

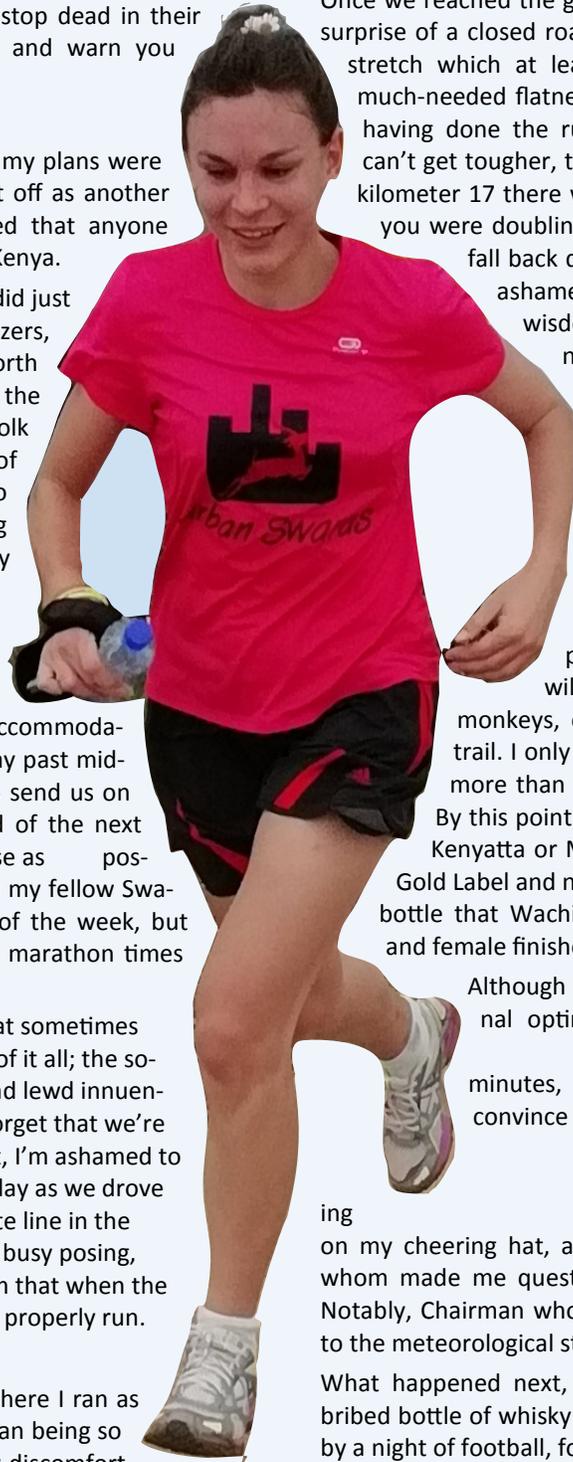
At one point I gave up on headphones and decided I needed some beats to get me up the hill, so was playing French pop music and English electro at full blast from my phone which is probably why I didn't see any wildlife, but there's usually a small smattering of monkeys, exotic birds and other cute fauna along the trail. I only saw very out of breath sweaty men, which is more than enough wildlife for a day in a National Park. By this point I realized I was the first lady, but unlike Mrs. Kenyatta or Mrs. Trump, I had the lure of Johnnie Walker Gold Label and not political and social glory egging me on. The bottle that Wachira had promised to the sub-two-hour male and female finishers pushed me through the pain barrier.

Although I knew I was far from a sub-two, I'm an eternal optimist, so I made it to the top in 2 hours and 39 glorious, pain-filled and toe-squishing minutes, just behind Jack and Victor, who tried to convince me to do an extra few hundred metres to get a full 21km. I figured I'd make up for those miss-

ing metres on the dance floor later on. So I put on my cheering hat, and welcomed the arriving runners, some of whom made me question the human ability to always 'do more'. Notably, Chairman who decided to keep the pace going and run up to the meteorological station and back again.

What happened next, involved copious amounts of tea, music, a bribed bottle of whisky that was as good as I'd dreamed of, followed by a night of football, food and refueling on liquid carbs.

My heartfelt thanks to Wachira for rallying the Swara contingency; to Wanjohi and the Nyeri blazers for pulling off a fantastic running weekend for a demanding bunch of runners; to my old friend Moses for putting me through my paces once again (though I like to think I showed him what I'm made of with a good pounding) and most of all, to the Urban Swaras, for 'old friends', new friends and dreams coming true.



Victor Kamau runs 100 km for his 40th Birthday



When I first heard Victor Intended to run 100km to commemorate his 40th birthday my first reaction was, look, a classic case of ‘math gone bad’, the universally acceptable rule is that you run your age in the manner of **40 at 40**. But he’s the guy who tells you what pace you need for a specific time targets on the fly, where the standard human would need to sit down with scientific calculators and furrowed brows... plus he is an engineer and those kinds of people tend to know some math. So that was it, **100 at 40**.

The universal rule he adopted was letting out word of his plan so that those inclined to run in solidarity could join in “you don’t have to run the full distance”, was his standard pick up line “you could pick a leg of the route and run whatever distance”.

Swaras are supportive souls, interest was shown by a healthy number, each suggesting where they’d wish to join in etc. That’s before they went back home and slept on it, and probably has nightmares with the number 100 featuring prominently.

At 6.30 am on 7th July, three runners showed up at the rendezvous; Junction of Kiambu road and Northern bypass.

The three were; Victor (who was dropped at the start by Missus, a story about taking the whole day off to run 100k is hardly believable), Katara Wawa, who offered to run on condition that a Big Cake await at the end (she secretly looked pleased at the few contenders for the cake), Joseph Masika the famous no gadget runner, an ancient art known as ‘naked running’.

A fourth Swara showed up to offer support. He was to be the ambulance, kitchen, shrink (one of the three runners is a real-life shrink, but shrinks can’t shrink themselves). The support Swara’s instructions were “drive for 5 km, wait”. It ultimately varied to “go buy these fruits, get Strepsils, buy a knife”. Runner’s tend to feel entitled and needy to support crew.

Victor and Wawa were focused on completing the full century, Masika’s plan was he’d stop somewhere.

The run was an anticlockwise loop run covering the Nairobi Bypasses;

Start at Kiambu Rd- Northern Bypass Junction >> Limuru Road >> Gitaru Road >> Southern Bypass >> Mombasa Road >> Airport North Road >> Eastern Bypass >> Northern Bypass >> Back to start point.

The three misfits’ plan was to generally average a pace of 6 min/km.

By 50km there was no drama, then Masika chose to give up the ghost at 55kms, much to the chagrin of the support guy who had been busy enjoying own company.

The other two were not showing any signs of strain or suffering, which was disturbing as this was a 100 km run, neither of them had done more than 65 km before.

The Eastern bypass sun tried its best to break them though, only succeeding to slightly

lower their pace.

Wawa, noticing that they were not showing the expected obvious signs of distress, started complaining at each stop, ‘**why am I doing this?**’ and other feeble attempts, but no one was convinced, she was running just fine.

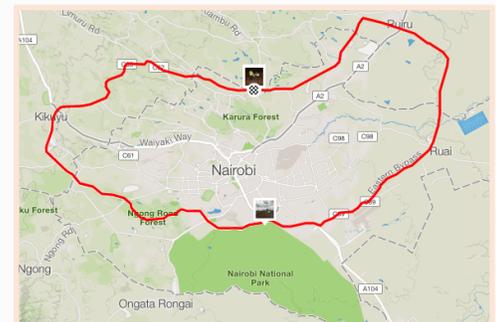
Victor, on the other hand, stuck to the thoroughbred traditional African Man act, not once did he betray any verbal or non-verbal hints that anything was out of place.

Masika, after having Nyama Choma somewhere along Eastern Bypass, felt good enough to join the two in the last 10kms.

And so after 12hrs 38 min on the road, the run ended. Cake was cut in a hurry in the dark insides of the support car; Wawa had a party to catch, Victor home bound.

Tiny bits of cake for Birthday Man, Masika and support guy, 97% of the cake for K. Wawa.

Happy Birthday to Victor.



100.12km	10:51:48	6:31/km	1212
Distance	Moving Time	Pace	Historic Relative Effort
Elevation	719m	Calories	6,943
Elapsed Time	12:38:26		



Adios by Monica Gichuhi

Finally a little escape from the demanding club runs!
This is how I got myself hooked into Swaras...

I got to know of the club through a friend, Elias Masika. I had once seen him run near my hood as I headed to work, with the unmistakable green t-shirt and 'following' the chalk marks. I remember smiling to myself, first because as a solo runner there's a certain feeling of joy you get when you see other runners sweating it out on the road, and especially when you see the contortions on their faces and you can't help but empathise, because you know exactly what they are going through in that moment. I got curious and asked him who he was running with, Urban Swaras.

Being the dedicated procrastinator that I am, I did not join immediately but was keen on running with the Swaras 'someday' after which I would then decide whether to join or not. At the time, my biggest concern was having to be up at 6am or earlier on a Saturday morning! I had also heard of how strict Swaras were with time, how there even was a committee to run the club! I thought that was an overkill, I just wanted to run and have fun, not to join another "Chama-like" group.

Then in March 2017 the Extreme Wilderness Challenge (EWC) Mt. Kenya edition run happened. Up until then, I had done the Nairobi Stanchart 2016 full Marathon, which I completed in 5hrs 15min which was more of a walk after 27km. The first half of it I ran with some 3 Swara guys who kept me on my toes. But once we got to Mombasa road, even after being a beneficiary of the Swara Bananas and Coke, I gave in at around 27km.

However, from the Marathon experience, I was confident that the EWC 25km was going to be manageable, even though it was at a higher altitude than Nairobi. While registering for the run, I noticed a couple of British Army guys registering for the 10k run. That raised some alarms. I also noticed that it was mostly the amateur runners that were gunning for the 25k. However, I consoled myself and those I had come with that the Army guys must

be coming for a recovery run here, since they probably do crazy mileages as part of training during the week. And Boy, was I wrong!

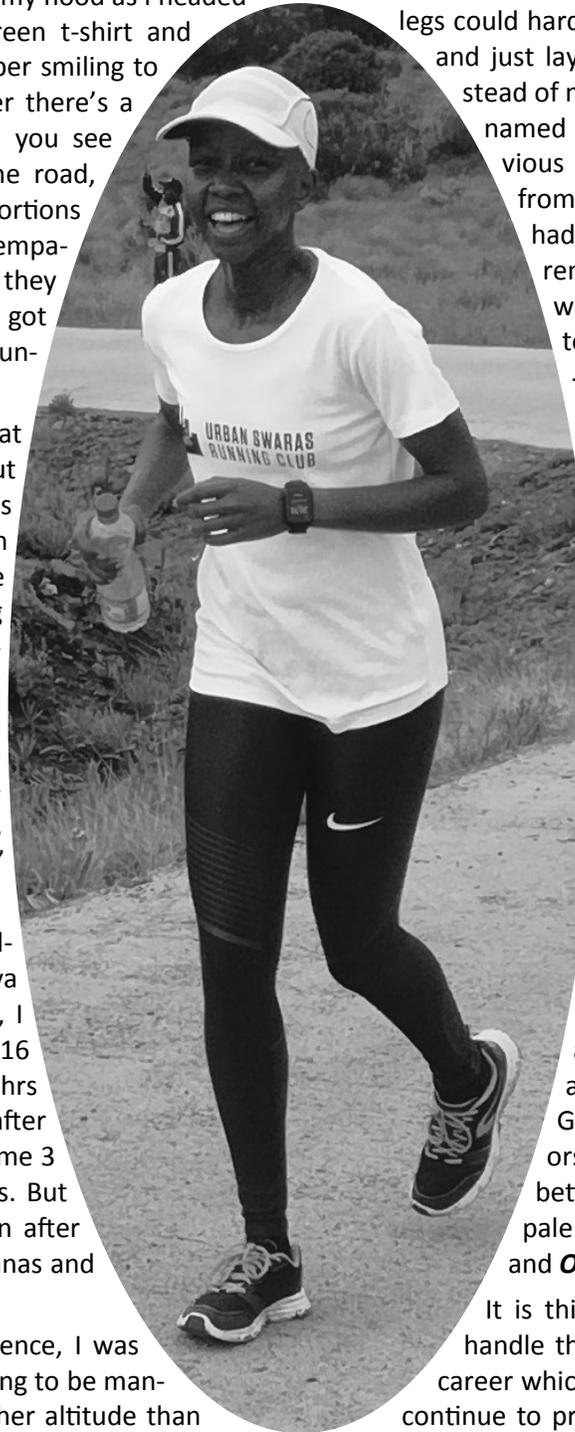
EWC was pure and utter torture! Towards the finish, my legs could hardly hold me upright. I made it to my tent and just lay there for a while. I had taken 3hrs instead of my target 2hrs 30min. Then I met a Swara named Katara Wawa, she tells me that the previous day she had done a 21km not too far from where we were (Kimunye Run), and she had finished this one in 2hrs 25min (can't remember the exact timing). She said it was just FINE! That was the turning point to joining Swaras.

The following Tuesday I was paid up, on Saturday I was at the Elbulbul run. I started with a 15k, went on to the usual 20k's which used to end up being 25 (thanks to Otor) then in 2017 I upgraded up to the 30ks.

I can now say I've definitely grown as a runner. Hills no longer feel as tortuous as they once were, I have appreciated that getting lost is part of the fun of it; I first famously got lost in the Makueni Run with Erastus Ngatia et al. I have since gotten lost more times, partly by choice while on solo runs when opting to use unplanned routes, asking people along the way for directions and finding out they are more than happy to help.

Running, as is well known, is not just about being a better runner. It is also about mental and emotional growth. Getting better at handling other life stressors at work or home environments. Getting better at tackling challenges which generally pale in comparison to such runs as **Fluorspar** and **Old Moses** classic.

It is this belief that no challenge is too big to handle that has pushed me to make steps in my career which now leads me to Germany where I will continue to proudly wear my Urban Swara t-shirt and Enda shoes. And when I come back, in a year's time, I shall look forward to run with y'all again!



Premier Swara run:**5TH Mt Kenya Ultra Marathon** 22nd September, 2018

First 100km run in the Swara calendar and first 100km ultra in Kenya!

DISTANCES: 45Km, 65Km, 100Km. **Finisher Medals will be issued****START TIME:** 5.00am for the 100Km and 8.00 am for 45km and 65km**VENUE:** Karatina Town, Nyeri (Start point to be confirmed)**Swara Calendar; August to October**

Date-2018	August	Location
Sat 18 th	Karen, Ooloolua primate research center	Kajiado
Sat 25 th	Aberdares	Murang'a
<i>September</i>		
Sat 1 st	Westlands, Bavaria Restaurant	Nairobi
Sat 8 th	Oсотua, Mai Mahiu Escarpment	Nakuru
Sat 22 nd	Mt Kenya Ultra Marathon	Nyeri
Sat 29 th	Lower Kabete Classic Resort	Kiambu
<i>October</i>		
Sat 6 th	Naivasha Relay	Nakuru
Sat 13 th	Kereita Forest , Lari	Kiambu
20 th Public Holiday	Karura	Nairobi
Sat 27 th	Arboretum	Nairobi

Running Events Round-up

The Local Scene; Races in September and October 2018

Date	Race	Location
15th Sept	UAP Ndakaini Half Marathon	Murang'a
15th Sept	Chemususu Dam Half Marathon	Eldama Ravine
23rd Sept	Mombasa International Marathon	Mombasa
30th Sept	Mully's Welfare Family Marathon	Yatta-Machakos
30th Sept	Kajiado Half Marathon	Kajiado
30th Sept	Laikipia University Half Marathon	Laikipia
30th Sept	Meru Central Half Marathon	Meru
7th October	Peter Mulei Half Marathon	Machakos
7th October	Family Bank Half Marathon	Eldoret
20th October	Madoka Half Marathon	Taita Taveta
28th October	Standard Chartered Nairobi Marathon	Nairobi

Source: Athletics Kenya Calendar of events

<http://www.athleticskenya.or.ke>

Running trivia-the longest distances run in 24hrs
Men: 303.506 km by Yiannis Kouros
Women: 252.205 km by Mami Kudo

Internationally;

The World Marathon Majors are the royalty of marathons; Tokyo, London and Boston are run in the Spring and the last three in Autumn (all Majors are in the northern hemisphere). In 2017 Kenyans got 9 out of the 12 possible wins (5 men, 4 women). 2018 is already a little subdued with 2 wins in London, one in Tokyo and none in the horrors of Boston. The last three...

Race	2017 Winners	2018 Highlights
BMW Berlin Marathon <i>Date:16th September</i>	Men: Eliud Kipchoge Women: Gladys Cherono	There is widespread expectation for Kipchoge to break the marathon record, the only substantial missing feather in his highly decorated cap. He will be joined by Wilson Kipsang. On the women's side Tirunesh Dibaba, the third fastest Female marathoner, faces off with Gladys Cherono, the 2017 winner and Edna Kiplagat.
BOA Chicago Marathon <i>Date:7th October</i>	M: Galen Rupp W: Tirunesh Dibaba	Mo Farah and Rupp are tipped as top contenders. But no one can write off the slew of Kenyan elites in the race. The only Kenyan elite woman is Brigid Kosgei, second at London Marathon in April. Pacers are back after being done away with in 2015.
TCS New York Marathon <i>Date: 4th November</i>	Men: Geoffrey Kamworor W: Shalane Flanagan	Kamworor, 3 time world half-marathon champion, 2 time cross country champ and Kipchoge's training mate will be out to defend his title. 37 year old S. Flanagan seeks to defend her title. Not yet confirmed but it would be great to see 3 time winner, Mary Keitany, at the start line.

NEED A RUNNING TRAINING PROGRAM?

Many of us have had challenges finding that one training program that will work best. We'll start with a google search, find one, try it, dump it. Your friend advises you to download that Running App with a training program. You hope it will work because they ask for all relevant details; age, sex, how many times you run in a week etc. It works for others, but not for you. Maybe it does not push you hard enough or maybe it's too demanding for your level of fitness.

So where can you get a program that fits your needs? Search no further, there is none!

But why? We're all different in terms of fitness levels, goals etc. After studying several training programs, including several for elites, I realised all programs are different. However, they use similar logic. Using this logic I will explain how you can design your training program.

However, before I proceed, the following must be clear;

I will attempt to explain the logic in three Steps; Divide the prepara-

- 1) **The race date;** to train for a full Marathon (42.2Km) you need roughly 16-20 weeks and 8-10 weeks for half marathon. Again this depends on your fitness level.
- 2) **Your goals;** Goals can be based on; Distance, time or you could just be running for fun.
- 3) **Time;** That you'll have time to stick to the training plan with at least 85% achievement rate.

tion period into three; the first 4 weeks and the last 4 weeks, the balance (if any) will be the third part.

STEP 1

The first 4 weeks of training will be the Endurance Phase.

Based on your target race e.g. Full or Half Marathon, the focus will be to systematically build endurance. This is achieved by increasing mileage in a comfortable manner but by targeting at least 71% of your Marathon distance in the 4th week as your longest run (**30Km for Full marathon or 15km for half marathon**). Your typical long run in each of the four weeks shall be 15km, 20Km, 25Km, and 30Km for a full marathon and 6Km, 9Km, 12km 15Km for a Half Marathon.

To achieve this, incorporate weekday runs that will match your fitness level. For a beginner, the weekday runs should start at low mileage with a gradual increase during subsequent weeks. Speed does not matter, focus on the target mileage with occasional breaks to allow the body to rest. Non-beginners may pick the mileage quickly and faster. However, as a rule of thumb, always start small and build up slowly to avoid injury due to sudden muscle strain.

Always remember "The mind may be willing, but the body could be weak" so don't force it. During this phase you may feel pain on the knees, calf, ankle, foot etc as the muscles get used to the change in your routine. However, prolonged discomfort should be checked out by a physiotherapist. It is at this stage that most people give up running and it's the most difficult part. We will mostly associate pain at this stage to either age or "running is not my thing".

Davis Munene ran his first marathon in 4.02 (2015), he is now a 2.52 Marathoner (2017 NYC) the third fastest marathon time in Swara ranks. (the two best times are owned by James Waliuola). You may not catch Davis on a run but can catch him on davis.gitari@gmail.com

Creating your own Training Program

By Davis Munene

Step 2

Skip the weeks that follow phase 1 and focus on designing a program for the last 4 Weeks of training. The last three weeks of training is known as the Taper Phase.

Your last long run should be done on the last weekend of week four prior to marathon date so that you can have three weeks of tapering. Tapering is reduction of mileage. If you have noticed, from the first illustration we have been working backwards. This enables us to visualize our goals and start filling in the missing gaps to ensure we are ready for the set goal. Your last long run is your confidence booster before the main race and on this day, you need to run at least 5-7km shy of your race distance.

During the next three weeks, reduce your total weekly mileage by 80%, 60% and 40% respectively. Runs during the week can continue to incorporate Hill work and speed work for those whose goals is to improve on their PBs. However, those running for fun or trying to achieve their furthest distance, only the mileage should count.

Step 3:

During weeks in between the Endurance and the Taper Phase, a runner should engage in more intense workouts. Hence this is the Intense Phase. For those working on their PBs, this is where you need to incorporate hill reps, speed work and tempo runs at least once a week. For those whose objective is to run for fun, a consistent weekly mileage depending on your fitness level should be adopted on this phase.

A typical weekday training will look like this for Fun runners and mileage seekers;

Day	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
Week 1	5k	5k	10k	5k	5k	20k
Week 2	7k	7k	10k	6k	Rest	20k

For PB seekers, this is how your interval phase will look like;

Day	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
Week 1	5k (Hill Work)	5k (speed work)	10k (Easy)	5k (Tempo)	5k (Easy)	20k (Marathon Pace)
Week 2	7k (Hill Work)	7k (Speed work)	10k (Easy)	6k (Tempo)	Rest	20k (Marathon Pace)

Enclosed is a sample of a program designed using above logic which you could use for the upcoming Standard Chartered Nairobi Marathon 2018 for both a 21.1km and 42.2km. The program is for illustration purposes to use with the above notes when developing your own program.

Note: You can alternate the days depending when you want to have your rest days etc. The program should not be cast in stone and should allow for flexibility to either up the game (if you feel you can do more without risk injury) or slow down due to fatigue.

STAN CHART MARATHON TRAINING 2018– Developed by Davis Munene**Half marathon Training plan**

		Hill/Non PB Runners	Speed	Non PB Runners	Easy Run	Tempo run/ Non P.B Runners	Easy Run	Easy Run			
Weeks		Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Totals	PHASE	
12	6th Aug to 12th Aug	2.00	N/A	2.00	Rest	3.00	2.00	6.00	Rest	15.00	Endurance
11	13th Aug to 19th Aug	3.00	N/A	3.00	5.00	Rest	3.00	9.00	Rest	23.00	Endurance
10	20th Aug to 26th Aug	5.00	N/A	3.00	8.00	Rest	5.00	12.00	Rest	33.00	Endurance
9	27th Aug to 2nd Sept	7.00	N/A	4.00	10.00	Rest	5.00	15.00	Rest	41.00	Endurance
8	3rd Sept to 9th Sept	3.00	3 x 200m	4.00	6.00	3.00	5.00	9.00	Rest	30.00	Intense
7	10th Sept to 16th Sept	4.00	4 x 400m	5.00	7.00	3.00	6.00	10.00	Rest	35.00	Intense
6	17th Sept to 23rd Sept	5.00	4 x 800m	6.00	7.00	4.00	5.00	12.00	Rest	39.00	Intense
5	24th Sept to 30th Oct	6.00	5 x 1000m	5.00	7.00	5.00	5.00	15.00	Rest	43.00	Intense
4	1st Oct to 7th Oct	7.00	5 x 800m	5.00	7.00	5.00	5.00	18.00	Rest	47.00	Intense
3	8th Oct to 14th Oct	5.00	3 x 200m	4.00	6.00	4.00	5.00	12.00	Rest	36.00	Taper
2	15th Oct to 23rd Oct	4.00	Rest		5.00	3.00	4.00	10.00	Rest	26.00	Taper
1	22nd Oct to 28th Oct	Stretch		8.00	3.00	Stretch	Stretch	3km	21.00	32.00	Taper

400.00**Full Marathon Training Plan**

		Hill/Non PB Runners	Speed	Non PB Runners	Easy Run	Tempo run/ Non P.B runners	Easy Run	Easy Run			
Running		Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Totals	Phase	
20	11th June to 17th June	3.00		5.00	8.00	3.00	5.00	15.00	Rest	39.00	Endurance
19	18th June to 24th June	8.00		5.00	10.00	5.00	8.00	20.00	Rest	56.00	Endurance
18	25th June to 1st July	10.00		8.00	15.00	8.00	5.00	25.00	Rest	71.00	Endurance
17	2nd July to 8th July	10.00		20.00	10.00	8.00	10.00	30.00	Rest	88.00	Endurance
16	9th July to 15th July	6.00	5 x 200m	6.00	20.00	8.00	10.00	20.00	Rest	70.00	Intense
15	16th July to 22nd July	8.00	5 x 400m	10.0	20.00	10.00	15.00	25.00	Rest	88.00	Intense
14	23rd July to 29th July	10.00	10 x 400m	10.0	25.00	12.00	10.00	30.00	Rest	97.00	Intense
13	30th July to 5th Aug	12.00	8 x 600m	10.0	25.00	15.00	10.00	30.00	Rest	102.00	Intense
12	6th Aug to 12th Aug	15.00	10 x 800m	12.0	20.00	10.00	12.00	35.00	Rest	104.00	Intense
11	13th Aug to 19th Aug	17.00	10 x 1000m	8.0	25.00	15.00	15.00	25.00	Rest	105.00	Intense
10	20th Aug to 26th Aug	10.00	8 x 1200m	6.0	20.00	15.00	10.00	30.00	Rest	91.00	Intense
9	27th Aug to 2nd Sept	15.00	10 x 1200m	10.0	25.00	10.00	10.00	30.00	Rest	100.00	Intense
8	3rd Sept to 9th Sept	17.00	8 x 1400m	12.0	20.00	10.00	15.00	35.00	Rest	109.00	Intense
7	10th Sept to 16th Sept	10.00	10 x 1400m	8.0	25.00	15.00	15.00	25.00	Rest	98.00	Intense
6	17th Sept to 23rd Sept	15.00	8 x 1600m	12.0	28.00	15.00	10.00	30.00	Rest	110.00	Intense
5	24th Sept to 30th Oct	17.00	10 x 1600m	10.0	25.00	15.00	10.00	35.00	Rest	112.00	Intense
4	1st Oct to 7th Oct	15.00	8 x 1200m	8.0	20.00	15.00	Rest	40.00	Rest	98.00	Taper
3	8th Oct to 14th Oct	10.00	5 x 1200m	6.0	15.00	10.00	8.00	30.00	Rest	79.00	Taper
2	15th Oct to 23rd Oct	8.00	5 x 800m	4.0	20.00	Rest	9.00	15.00	Rest	56.00	Taper
1	22nd Oct to 28th Oct	10.00	Rest		8.00	Rest	3.00	5.00	42.00	68.00	Taper

1,741.00**Notes**

1 Stretch well before and after your runs.

Incorporate strength training in the above program e.g. Mon -Legs, Tue -Back & Shoulders, Wed -Break, Thur -Chest & 2 Shoulders

3 Work on your core everyday.

We regret the table is a little late...we still hope it is insightful.