

AMYN AND NJERI WERE TOP AT THE PVI RUNFEST
NEW MASTER RECORD SET BY SPINNLER
By George Banker

Records are made to broken but at the **4th Annual PVI Runfest 5K** in Fairfax, Va., and **(Sunday, September 21, 2003)** they fall hard. Since its inception the race has grown in the level of performance and the attraction of international athletes. A main attraction is the dedication of the organizers of the race, the friendly atmosphere and the race course which is low on the degree of difficulty. Each year the runners can expect to be pushed to new levels. The Paul VI community has rapidly established itself on the racing circuit.

The event may not be the largest in Fairfax but it's the fastest. The runners across all ages have posted better times. It's not always about the winning be that desire to do their best. The school yard at Paul VI High School was rocking. There were 10 new age group records.

The 2002 fifth place finisher (14:42), David Kipngetich (Kenya) was back in the United States for two days after three months in Kenya. He was ready to make a bid for the top spot and the \$500 bonus to the fastest runner under 14:12. Kipngetich was facing off against Joseph Mwai of Kenya who in the last two months set two records, George Sheehan Classic 5-Miler in Red Bank, NJ, in a time of 23:09 and at the CIGNA HealthCare Corporate 5K Road Race in New Hampshire where the record fell to 13:55. Mohammed Aryn of Morocco at the IAAF Golden League meets in Paris ran 13:03.80 and 13:25.34 for 5000 meters in July.

The defending women's champion and record holder (16:36) Martha Komu of Kenya did not return but teammate and runner up (17:03). Hannah Njeri was going to make a bid for the top spot. The challenger, Irina Suvorova of Russia was making her debut at PVI Runfest. The defending master's holder (19:31), Laura Freix of Team Pacers set the record last year and she was going to be challenged by Maria Spinnler of the Cumberland Valley Athletic Club (Hagerstown). A new record carried a bonus of \$200.

The two loop course had one slight hill after the one mile mark and there were several minor turns along the two loop course. The temperature was ideal with low humidity and the wind was not a factor.

Off the line it took less than a half mile for the lead pack to form, Mwai, Kipngetich, Aryn and Mohammed Ar-Ar. The four held and half mile lead over the trailing pack. The pack passed the first mile in 4:32. The lead master, in fifth place was Dave Berardi of Baltimore who was the second master last year (16:14).

Njeri had her plan in force from the start and was pushing the pace solo going through the first mile. Trailing in a close second was Suvorova followed by Spinnler and Maria Kozloski of the Washington Running Club. Freix was holding down sixth place.

The leading pack went through the second mile in 9:04 as Aryn and Kipngetich took control and broke off from the others. The pace was well under the record time and going into the second loop it was anyone's race to claim. The two crossed the three mile mark together and it was down to the kick as Aryn was the victor in 13:54 to 13:55. Pending verification the 13:54 may be the fastest 5K time in the state of Virginia. Mwai had dropped back to third and finished in 14:12 and Ar-Ar was fourth in 14:41.

"It was a good race with the Kenyans and the competition was good and I'm very happy. After two miles I felt a little tired. In the last 800 meters I have speed and I kicked. When I came to American I saw more people running and I enjoy it. I am looking to make the Olympic team for Morocco", stated new record holder. Aryn.

I train 120-140 miles per week and run twice a day. I like to race 2,000-3,000 meters. My best 1500 meter time is 3:34. The course was fast but you have to train on it. I won the race in the last 200 meters", added Aryn.

"It's easy to win from behind and I felt alright the first two miles. I thought I had a good chance to win. Last year the race had no competition and I felt this year I could run under 14 minutes. My personal best is 13:49. I want to come back next year", stated runner up Kipngetich.

Njeri fell short of her bid to set a new record and took the win in 17:04 the same time from last year. Suvorova was holding second place up until the second mile when Spinnler had chased her down and took control. There was a price for the effort, Suvorova was not finished and had something left and made a move which Spinnler could not cover and she regained second place and took second place in 18:19. Spinnler held in for third place in 18:22 to collect the \$200 bonus for the master's record. Kozloski was fourth in 18:35 followed by Freix in 19:00 and she was awarded the money for first master position.

"It was nice today. I wanted to break the course record. On the second time around the hill I was not feeling good but it feels good to win. My best time 5K time is 15:03", stated Njeri.

"I went out to fast and the second lap I slowed down. This was my first race back after an injury. My time was okay for second place", stated Suvorova.

"It was a good competition. I caught Irina at two miles and it took a little bit out of me. I like the course. My first mile was 5:52. I didn't have a choice but to run hard. It feels good and it's hard this time of year and I don't take races for granted. I'm happy to be here", said Spinnler.

"I really enjoyed the race and I felt great. I have never really focused on racing the shorter distances hard, but I tried to do that and was happy with the results. I went into the race hoping I would feel strong. And that the result would give me a psychological

boost for the Chicago Marathon. I took almost 15 seconds off my personal best so I think I got what I wanted!", stated Kozloski.

"I didn't feel "on", but it was my best time so far this year, so I definitely can't complain. It's been a tough year mentally. The past couple of races things seem to be coming together, but no major breakthrough race to keep the adrenalin pumping", stated Freix.

The top male master was Berardi in 16:26 (5th place) followed by Tim Marshall in 17:03 (7th place). Ted Poulos of McLean, Va., was third in 17:53.

"I was out there by myself for the entire way. I wish that I could have run faster but I didn't have anyone to push me. The run was like a time trial. The lead pack was so far ahead. This is not a fast course with the turns", said Berardi.

"This is always a good community event. I could not train like I wanted because I was in Iraq. This is an international race. I felt good the whole way and I should have started my sprint earlier", stated Congressman Tom Davis of Virginia.

Patrick Griffith of Alexandria, VA., maintained his three year hold on the age group 55-59 (age 56- 18:27, 57-18:44 and 58- 18:35).

The PVI Runfest 5K is sponsored by Metro Run & Walk and Nike in conjunction with sponsorship from Clarke-Hook Corporation, Pohanka Auto Group, SequoiaBank, Merrill Lynch, Franey, Parr and Muha and others.