

### — NYC Marathon A Tale Of Two Gebs —

by Rich Sands

An Ethiopian stole the headlines at the ING New York City Marathon, and it wasn't race winner Gebre Gebremariam.

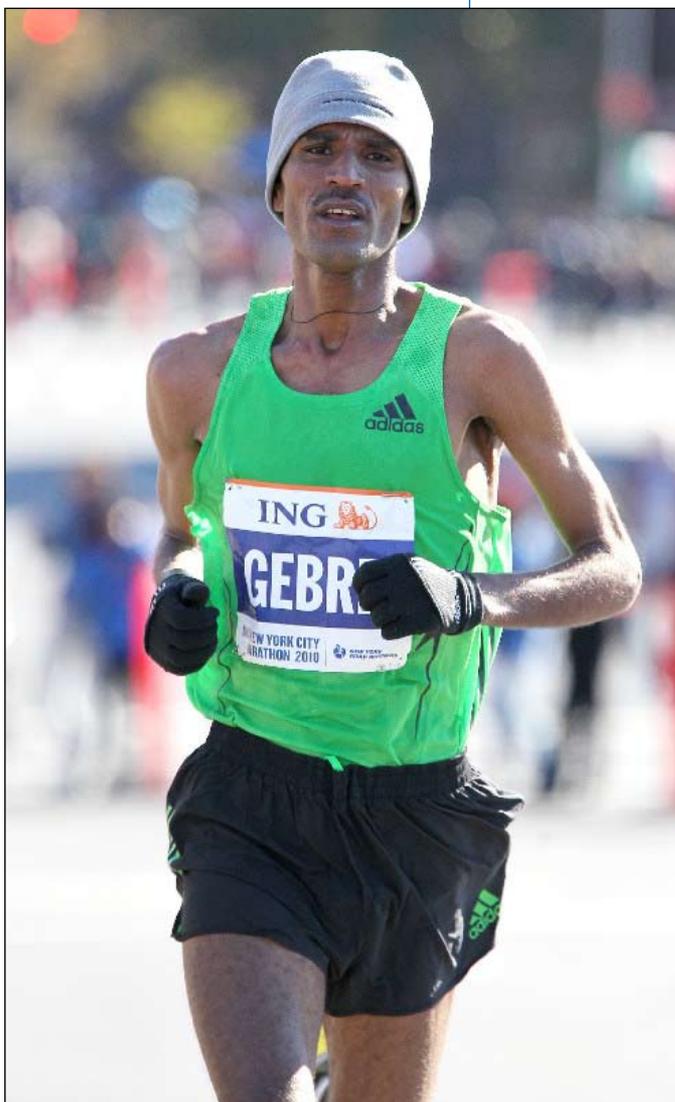
Though the 26-year-old Gebremariam came

from Haile Gebrselassie that rocked the running world.

After dropping out at the 16-mile mark, the two-time Olympic 10K gold medalist and marathon WR holder solemnly told the press that he

tweeting, "I have some inflammation in my right knee, because of the long travel to NY City. No big problem, just some fluids. Hopefully the knee holds!"

Suffering from tendinitis, he had an MRI the



VICTOR SALER/PHOTO RUN PHOTOS

**Gebremariam's marathon career started on a high note, Gebrselassie's ended on a low one.**

out on top of a thrilling duel to make a triumphant debut over 26.2 miles, and Kenyan Edna Kiplagat was equally impressive in winning the women's title, it was the stunning retirement announcement

was calling it a career. "I don't want to complain anymore after this, which means it's better to stop here," he said. "Before this competition I had very hard training, so it's better to stop here."

Shortly before the race, he revealed an injury,

day before the race and had fluid drained from the joint, a frustrating situation given how much he'd focused on running well in his Big Apple debut.

The early pace was comfortable enough that Gebrselassie seemed poised for a good run. He was at the head of a crowded pack through the half-

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way point, which was reached in an unremarkable 1:05:19.

But coming over the Queensboro Bridge, just past the 25K (15.5M) mark, the Ethiopian star winced, grabbed his knee and came to a stop—perhaps for the last time.

“I never think about retiring, but for the first

## Flanagan's debut produced a national title



VICTOR SALER/PHOTO RUN

time, this is the day,” the charismatic Ethiopian said, choking up during a press conference. “Let me stop and do other work after this. Let me give a chance for the youngsters.”

This may have just been a response to the emotion of the moment, but Geb seemed clear that after all the hard work he'd put into preparing for New York, he could no longer face this kind of disappointment.

Once Geb was out of the race it was no coincidence that the pack finally exploded moments later. “At the beginning the pace was too slow,” said

Kenyan Moses Kipkosgei. “I don't know if we were all afraid of Haile.”

Moroccan Abderrahim Goumri struck first, ripping mile 17 in 4:29. Kenya's Emmanuel Mutai, the silver medalist at the '09 World Championships, immediately pulled even, then took control, splitting a searing 14:05 for the segment between 25 and 30K.

Only four—Gebremariam, Mutai, Morocco's Abderrahim Bouramdane and Kenya's James Kwambai—could hang onto this pace, but by 21 miles Gebremariam and Mutai were the last two standing.

They ran stride for stride into Central Park, where the rolling roadways gave the Ethiopian his advantage. “The hills were not a problem for me,” he said. “I train in my country in up-and-down so hills are good for me.” It also didn't hurt that he had won a 10K in Central Park in May, which familiarized him with the tricky terrain.

Just before 40K Gebremariam made his break, and the '09 World Cross champ looked remarkably fresh as he cruised home in 2:08:14, the sixth-fastest time in race history.

Mutai, who had worked so hard to cover every move earlier in the race, had nothing left and came home more than a minute behind, in 2:09:14. Kipkosgei (2:10:39) came on strong late in the race to move up for 3<sup>rd</sup>.

American men had a solid showing, with defending champ Meb Keflezighi (2:11:38) 4<sup>th</sup> and Dathan Ritzenhein (2:12:33) 8<sup>th</sup>.

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The women's race, which went off 30 minutes ahead of the men (and the masses), followed a similar pattern. A leisurely early pace took the field past 5K in 18:40 and left a dozen runners in contention at the halfway mark (1:15:47). Mara Yamauchi was up front to this point, but the Brit couldn't match the eventual pace drop, and struggled home 13<sup>th</sup> in 2:31:38.

Coming up First Avenue past 18 miles, it was clear that marathon debutante Shalane Flanagan was anxious to press on the accelerator. But the new American hope remained patient until mile 22, when she and fellow newbie Mary Keitany made the race's

first decisive surge. Only Keitany's fellow Kenyan Edna Kiplagat stayed with them and as they entered Central Park, setting up a three-way fight for the podium positions.

On a series of hills approaching 24 miles (almost the exact same point where Gebremariam would later make his move), Kiplagat gapped her two rivals, and coasted home in 2:28:20.

Said Flanagan, “As soon as I started to push I started to hurt a little bit. I was just trying to keep it close and to not give up at any point because things can happen.” Sure enough, the North Caro-

lina grad had one final push left, enough to overtake Keitany for 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2:28:40–2:29:01.

Flanagan, who admitted that “my expectations were to just feel awful,” enjoyed her first experience at 26.2 miles, and was grateful for the slow early pace. “I loved the warm-up into it,” she said. “Every mile that clicked away that felt good in delaying the inevitable pain and fatigue, I gained more and more confidence from it.”

With the race doubling as the USATF women's championship, she added \$40,000 in prize money to her \$65,000 runner-up check (plus a \$5000 bonus for breaking 2:29).

## NEW YORK CITY MARATHON

New York, New York, November 7 (point-to-point; USATF Women's Championships)—

1. Gebremariam (Eth) 2:08:14 (debut) (1:05:16/1:02:54);
2. Mutai (Ken) 2:09:18;
3. M. Kipkosgei (Ken) 2:10:39;
4. Goumri (Mor) 2:10:51;
5. Kwambai (Ken) 2:11:31;
6. Keflezighi (US) 2:11:38;
7. M. Dos Santos (Bra) 2:11:51;
8. Ritzenhein (US) 2:12:33;
9. A. Kirui (Ken) 2:13:01;
10. Bouramdane (Mor) 2:14:07;
11. J. Torres (US) 2:14:57;
12. Kamais (Ken) 2:14:58;
13. T. Nelson (US) 2:15:06;
14. Saji (Mor) 2:16:35;
15. Hailegiorgis (Eth) 2:19:10;
16. Tefera (Eth) 2:19:23;
17. M. Downin (US) 2:20:41;
18. Lemma (Eth) 2:20:47;
19. Worku (Eth) 2:22:17;
20. Lo Piccolo (Ita) 2:23:10;
21. Rojas (Mex) 2:24:03;
22. Cassidy (US) 2:24:05;
23. Lerdahl (Swe) 2:24:53;
24. Spooner (US) 2:25:21; ... dnf—Gebrselassie (Eth) (stopped in mile 16 with knee injury).

## NEW YORK CITY WOMEN

1. Kiplagat (Ken) 2:28:20;
2. Flanagan (US) 2:28:40 (16, x A) (debut);
3. Keitany (Ken) 2:29:01;
4. Abitova (Rus) 2:29:17;
5. Smith (NZ) 2:29:28;
6. Daunay (Fra) 2:29:29;
7. Petrova (Rus) 2:29:41;
8. Rotich (Ken) 2:29:46;
9. Perez (Mex) 2:29:53;
10. Deba (Eth) 2:29:55;
11. McGregor (US) 2:31:01;
12. Erkeso (Eth) 2:31:06;
13. Yamauchi (GB) 2:31:38;
14. Tulu (Eth) 2:32:46;
15. Pushkareva (Rus) 2:34:05;
16. Kosgei (Ken) 2:34:14;
17. Newberry (US) 2:35:23;
18. Hallissey (GB) 2:36:13;
19. Burla (US) 2:37:06;
20. McKaig (US) 2:37:29;
21. Demissie (Eth) 2:37:39;
22. Ray (US) 2:39:15;
23. Faber (US) 2:39:41;
24. Piers (US) 2:40:35;
25. Somers Smith (US) 2:40:46;
26. Aliyu (Eth) 2:40:50;
27. Meyerhoff (US) 2:41:00;
28. Barry (US) 2:42:01;
29. Dixon (GB) 2:42:50;
30. Booth (US) 2:43:36;
31. Westover (US) 2:43:44;
32. Alyanak (US) 2:43:58;
33. Christian (US) 2:44:23.

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