

# Breaking through the wall

real,-Berlin Marathon, Germany. 28 September 2003



## Result

### MEN

1	Paul TERGAT	KEN	2:04:55
			<b>WORLD RECORD</b>
2	Sammy KORIR	KEN	2:04:56
3	Titus MUNJI	KEN	2:06:15
4	Andres ESPINOSA	MEX	2:08:46

### M40 RECORD

5	Raymond KIPKOECH	KEN	2:09:22
6	Kazuhira MATSUDA	JPN	2:09:50
7	Kurao UMEKI	JPN	2:09:52
8	Andre RAMOS	BRA	2:09:59
9	Makhosonke FIKA	RSA	2:10:16
10	Javier CABALLERO	ESP	2:10:44

### WOMEN

1	Yasuko HASHIMOTO	JPN	2:26:32
2	Emily KIMURIA	KEN	2:28:18
3	Ornella FERRARA	ITA	2:28:28
4	Ana DIAS	POR	2:29:49
5	Alina IVANOVA	RUS	2:29:00
6	Monika DRYBULSKA	POL	2:29:58
7	Fumi MURATA	JPN	2:30:15
8	Liz YELLUNG	GBR	2:30:58
9	Adelia ELIAS	POR	2:34:07
10	Dagmar RABENSTEINER	AUT	2:34:35

Paul Tergat burst through the Brandenburg Gate, but that wasn't the barrier he was aiming to break. Fourteen years later, history had moved on down the road. The first sub-2:05 marathon ever run lay 400m ahead of him, if he could only keep going ... and stay ahead of his friend and training partner Sammy Korir.

He did it, and Korir came in, hard on his heels over the last 200m, only a second later. Third across the line was Titus Munji, who had kept pace with his two compatriots until 36km. It had all been in the plan, which was for Tergat to be paced as far as possible into this deliberate world record attempt. The main unknown was how far that may have been.

It was a bold gambit. Although Tergat had all possible credentials - as five-time World Cross champion, former 10,000m world record holder and fastest ever over the half marathon - he had not won a marathon in five attempts. But he had run the third fastest marathon ever, over a course in London that was very clearly less swift than that Berlin could offer.

And Berlin had fine-tuned their offering. The course had been changed primarily to allow the iconic Brandenburg Gate to be the backdrop to both start and finish. This incidentally changed the profile from an overall 1m drop to an overall 1m climb along the 42,195m of well-surfaced streets that separate the start from the finish (although they are also separated by only 850m of straight road).

The changes had also shifted the course's single modest climb to 8km earlier in the course, culminating at 27km. Being earlier, the climb would be less of a break point, and the denouement could be deferred until much closer to the finish line.

Only 6km into the course the group had been reduced to eight, of whom four were pacemakers. It stayed the same through to 15km, the four contenders being last year's winner Raymond Kipkoech, Tergat, and two Japanese. But there were other undeclared contenders among the accompanying pacemakers. The second group was already a minute adrift.

Nothing much had changed by 25km, except that the Japanese had tailed off and Kipkoech



RECORD BREAKERS... Paul Tergat and Andres Espinosa

seemed to be hanging on. It was still half a minute shy of world record pace. Passing over the course's single significant rise, Tergat was away with his pacers, and at 30km was on pace for a personal best 2:05:45

Between them, they raised their game. Only 2km later they were on record pace by a few seconds, as they sped up along the Kufurstendamm, which was the finish straight for the old course. But there remained one more loop to run - out towards the Alexanderplatz, and then back along Unter den Linden. The pacemakers had long ceased to be anonymous helpers and were now identified contenders - but at 36km along Potsdamerstrasse Titus Munji dropped back to leave only Korir accompanying Tergat towards a new world record - but whose would it be?

It was only decided - and then not conclusively - with a kilometre to run. Somehow Tergat imperceptibly edged into a 10m

lead. Nothing seemed to change in terms of effort, but it was now up to Korir to claw back that space as they raced towards what was clearly going to be a sub-2:05 clocking. He couldn't quite manage it.

Beyond the three-piece band of Paul and his pacers, it was a great surprise to see veteran Andres Espinosa, a former winner in New York, come through to claim fourth place in a time which improved the world over-40 best by nearly two minutes, to a highly impressive 2:08:46

The women's race was submerged by the men's performances, but longtime leader Alina Ivanova finally yielded to Yasuko Hashimoto after 35km - and then faded badly. Hashimoto cracked her personal best by three minutes, and many ordinary Berliners seemed to do something similar, judging from the expressions of pleasure as they checked their watches while crossing the finish line.

PODIUM PACERS... Sammy Korir, Paul Tergat and Titus Munji





## Another age, another time...

...but on the same day. Half a world away from Berlin, in the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon, two more world records were set.

Two older runners outshone the field. Fauja Singh, 92 years old, resident of Ilford, on the outskirts of London, travelled to visit family in Toronto and shattered his previous mark to set a new world record for 90+: 5:40:04.

Not to be outdone, Canadian phenomenon, 72-year-old Ed Whitlock of Milton, Ontario, became the first over-70 runner to go under 3 hours - with an agonisingly close 2:59:10.

Several thousand spectators lined the last kilometre of the course. The roar was huge as the nonagenarian Singh crossed the line to be mobbed by ecstatic members of the city's South Asian community and the media.

"I feel great; I'm really happy," exclaimed Singh after his record finish.



### Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon. 28 September 2003

"It was very nice and I felt comfortable. I enjoyed the course and all the support. I received a lot of respect from the South Asian community of Toronto, and I'm grateful for that. My ambition was to knock a minute or two off my record, or get under 6 hours - I never expected a time like this."

Singh attributes his success to a healthy diet, including his favourite ginger curry, daily meditation for relaxation at his local Sikh Temple, warm baths, and 10 miles a day in training - running or walking.

Indeed, Singh looked decidedly more comfortable at the finish than the Canadian record-breaker Whitlock.

With his face cut and scraped from a fall he took in training earlier in the week, Whitlock showed every sign of the enormous physical effort to establish his remarkable record,

his face grimacing with pain as he leaned to the left and dragged himself down the final straightaway.

The crowd were on their feet as the seconds ticked by, and he made it home with just 50 seconds to spare after failing by only 24 seconds in his previous attempt on the "sub-3, over 70" barrier in May 2001. "I was dead on my feet," said Whitlock.

"I couldn't have gone much further. I had a real tough time doing the last 200 metres." Much appreciation was also shown to local club runners Mike Bedley and Gary Kapitan who ran, respectively, alongside Whitlock and Singh.

It was a remarkable day for running in Toronto as well as Berlin, and consensus was widespread that the Waterfront event signalled the return of top-quality, marathon excitement to the city.