



Making the news

By Paola Estacio

The city of Quito, the capital of the Republic of Ecuador, nestles high up in the Andean cordillera at an altitude of 2800m. With a population of two million it lies just a few kilometers south of the Equator. Low latitude and high altitude ameliorate each other's influence and gift the city a mild climate in which temperatures range from 10-25C: just the right range for running.

So thought the race founders, 48 years ago, when they launched the "Marathon de los Barrios Quitenos" (Marathon of Quito neighbourhoods). The evening paper of the city "Ultimas Noticias" was the driving force behind the race, in the shape of César Larrea, the chief news editor, Aníbal Araujo Martinod, a sports journalist, and Jorge Ribadeneira,

who was the paper's sports editor. Their efforts followed up on another "Ultimas Noticias" promotion of a few months earlier when, on 5 December 1959, the paper gave the city "La Fiesta de Quito" (Quito's Party) which has since become established as the capital's biggest annual public celebration.

That first race took place on 28 February 1960: Castro's Cuba had just been born, and the Presidency of the United States had, six weeks earlier, been passed from World War II hero Dwight D Eisenhower to the young John F Kennedy. Since those times history has moved on, but the production mounted on the streets of Quito has anticipated its march. At that time, just 220 runners participated. But that was then; even 10 years later the inaugural New York City Marathon could muster only a quarter of that number of finishers. In Quito they

only ran 6.5km, but what must have attracted them was that they could run through the streets of the historical centre of Quito. Eventually, people also did this in New York... but only 16 years later.

Quito is an ancestral city of great importance in the double-continent of the Americas. It is located at the middle of the world. Spanish Conquistadores raised the city on the ruins of the aboriginal Amerindian settlement on 6 December 1534. Apart from the history, the city is surrounded by natural beauty, great architecture, tradition and culture. The architecture is mainly colonial, but still appreciated: as early as November 1978 UNESCO declared that Quito offered the world "cultural patrimony". It was an early anticipation of listing as a "World Heritage" site. Besides which, the city is surrounded with volcanoes and snow-capped mountains that shape a majestic Andean backdrop.

in 1976 – the same year as the first five-borough New York City Marathon – foreigners were actively encouraged and welcomed. These changes were historically necessary, but still ahead of their time.

Apart from running through the biggest and best preserved historical city centre in the Americas, runners can also thread their way between the volcanoes, see the local crafts in Otavalo's city, take a tour through some of the best rose plantations in the world, stand astride the Equator at the "Middle of the World", and observe fauna and flora from such different ecological areas as mountain peaks and equatorial forest – all of this is within easy reach of Quito. The city is also the jumping-off point for tours to the Galapagos Islands, the Amazon Jungle and a coastline which boasts some of the most beautiful beaches of the continent.

The race starts off as a Sunday carnival, and water balloons are thrown about with abandon, but it



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No wonder people were keen to run on its streets. With the passage of time, each one of those pioneers has generated dozens of eager applicants. As the race grew in renown and significance it began to appeal to new kinds of runners. Women were included in 1975, and

is also holds serious status as the most well established race in the country. It attracts more runners than anywhere else and year on year spectators in the city streets number around 300,000. The event ends with a music show put on by the organisers to entertain the crowds that flock to the stadium to cheer the runners home.

Every year TV channels compete to broadcast the race, so high are the ratings reached throughout the country. In the recent years the



Teleamazonas network has made a huge impact with its live broadcasts of the race. The Ecuavisa Internacional network beams the race to Spain and the USA. With this race, Ultimas Noticias makes its own news.

It is one of the most important races in the world to be staged at such high altitude, and demands special preparation by runners, especially the many foreign athletes for whom such conditions – even for Kenyan long distance specialists – are often exceptional.

The certified 15km route starts on Avenida Maldonado, outside the printing works of the El Comercio newspaper in the south of the city, and passes through the historical downtown streets to end on the north side, finishing on the track of Atahualpa Olympic stadium.

The latest news – from this year's race – was that Peruvian runner Paulino Canchaya surprised everyone in the last kilometre. He pounced upon the longtime leader, Kenya's Lazarus Nyakeranka, to secure a clear win. Defending



MEN:			
1	Paulino CANCHANYA	PER	46:55
2	Lazarus NYAKERAKA	KEN	47:11
3	Franklin TENORIO	ECU	47:30
4	Cristobal ANRANGO		48:08
5	Vladimir BURBANO		48:18
6	Segundo OSWALDO JAMI		48:27
7	Johnny Alexander VELASCO		48:31
8	Paulo ARMENDARIZ		48:32
9	Constantino Leon LOPEZ		48:39
10	Edgar LINARES		48:50

WOMEN:			
1	Martha RONCERIA	COL	54:11
2	Julia LOPEZ		54:24
3	Genoveva JELEGAT	KEN	54:49
4	Alicia CAMACHO		55:49
5	Viviana ANDALUZ		55:54
6	Ma. Eugenia RODRIGUEZ		56:06
7	Diana ANDRADE		57:08
8	Wilma GUERRA	ECU	58:23
9	Jimena CHECA		59:51
10	Ingelena HEUCK		1:00:11

champion Franklin Tenorio could manage only third place this year, despite home advantage. Neighbouring Colombia scored victory in the women's race, as Martha Roncerla succeeded Martha

Tenorio as champion.

But news is always being made, and the race organizers are already hard at work on the 48th edition of the race, to be held on 1 June 2008.

RACE CONTACT DETAILS

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