



THE HISTORY OF THE GREAT NORTH RUN

The Morrisons Great North Run is the premier event in the Great Run series and is firmly established as the world's most popular half marathon.

1981

Less than 5000 runners were expected to take part in the inaugural race – held on Sunday June 28 – therefore organisers were astounded when over 12500 applied and over 10000 of them completed the first Great North Run.

Winner of the half marathon, from Newcastle to South Shields, was local international Mike McLeod. Three years before he won the Olympic 10 000m silver medal, the Elswick Harrier crossed the line in 63 minutes 23 seconds.

The local police estimated over 200000 spectators lined the route as he beat Norway's Oyvind Dahl by the huge margin of 1 minute 11 seconds.

Former South Shields Harrier, Karen Goldhawk of the Royal Air Force, made it a great day for North East athletics by winning the Women's race in 77 minutes 36 seconds.

1982

After the brilliant success of the previous year, more than 50000 fun runners applied for 20000 available places. Producing another great run, Mike McLeod won in 62 minutes 44 seconds, the fastest time ever achieved for a half marathon in Great Britain. The first woman across the line was London Olympiad's Margaret Lockley, who clocked 77 minutes 43 seconds.

1983

A year before winning the Olympic marathon title, Carlos Lopez became the first overseas winner of the Great North Run. The Portugese athlete ran in 62 minutes 46 seconds, beating British schoolteacher Ray Smedley, who finished in 64 minutes 34 seconds. Crawley's Julie Barleycorn took the Women's title in 76 minutes 38 seconds.

1984

Oyvind Dahl improved on his 1981 performance and crossed the finish line in 64 minutes 34 seconds. Fellow Norwegian, world marathon record holder Grete Waitz, ran a superb UK All-Comers (what does this mean, Philippa?) record of 70 minutes 27 seconds, slicing over six minutes from the course record and coming 18th overall in the event.

1985

Salford's Steve Kenyon equalled Mike McLeod's 1982 course record and McLeod was second in 63 minutes 31 seconds. The Women's record was smashed for the second successive year. Rosa Mota from Portugal covered the streets of Tyneside in 69 minutes 54 seconds, the first time the 70 minute barrier had ever been broken by a woman.

1986

The stature of the event was recognised when it became the final of the Pearl Assurance Half Marathon series and hosted the AAA National Championships. On course, there was even greater cause for celebration! Olympic 10 000m bronze medallist Mike Musyokithe won, in the world record time of 60 minutes 43 seconds. This struck 12 seconds off the previous record, achieved in 1985 by Mark Curp in Philadelphia. Behind him, Steve Jones set a British record of 60 minutes 59 seconds. There was also a new Commonwealth and UK All-Comers mark for Australia's Lisa Martin who covered the 13.1 miles in 69 minutes 49 seconds. In addition, Cwmbran's Chris Hallam set a new wheelchair course record of 61 minutes 15 seconds.

1987

There was an Australian double as Rob de Castella, the World and Commonwealth champion, won by 20 seconds, ahead of Scotland's Allister Hutton, in 62 minutes 4 seconds. The Women's title was won by Lisa Martin for the second successive year. For the first time, the Junior Great North Run preceded the senior race and on the first Great North weekend, Steve O'Gara from Wallsend was the winner.

1988

With the entry limit increased to 27 000, victory went to 1984 Olympic marathon silver medallist John Treacy, who ran in 61 minutes. Languishing 58 seconds behind the Irishman was Steve Jones. Grete Waitz returned to Tyneside for the second time and set a UK All-Comers' mark for the second time, with 68 minutes 49 seconds. Moreover, there was a British Half Marathon record for Bristol schoolteacher Susan Tooby who ran in 69 minutes 56 seconds.

1989

In the most dramatic finish in its history, Mike McLeod missed out on a third win. Clocking the same time of 62 minutes 39 seconds, victory was given to Morocco's El Mostafa Nechadi. There was a third win for Lisa Martin, who beat Holland's Carla Beurskens by 5 seconds in a time of 71 minutes 3 seconds and travelling from his family home in Benidorm, John Rollins won the Junior Race.

1990

It was a world record time for Steve Moneghetti, of 60 minutes 34 seconds, who beat Douglas Wakiihuri by eight seconds. The Australian's winning time had been bettered by Matthews Temane and Zithulele Sinqebut at that time, South Africa was not being affiliated to the International Amateur Athletic Federation and their performances were not recognised. Rose Mota won the Women's race in 69 minutes 33 seconds, finishing well

clear of Carla Beurskens, in 70 minutes 24 seconds, and Grete Waitz, in 70 minutes 51 seconds.

1991

A virtually unknown ex-boxer Benson Masya won the race in 61 minutes 28 seconds, the third fastest time in the world that year. The Kenyan later became the Great North Run's most successful contestant, holding off the challenge of Cannock's Paul Davies-Hale by nine seconds. Pre-race favourite Moses Tanui, winner of the World 10 000m gold medal in August 1991, dropped out after 10 miles. There was an amazing performance from local athlete Jill Hunter who was on course for a world record for the first 10 miles, before eventually placing third in 72 minutes 24 seconds. Victory went to Norwegian runner Ingrid Kristiansen in 70 minutes 57 seconds, ahead of Torbay's Andrea Wallace who ran in 71 minutes 36 seconds.

1992

Incorporating the first ever World Half Marathon Championships, Benson Masya won the race in a world record of 60 minutes 24 seconds, on a course certified by the International Amateur Athletic Federation. "I could have gone even faster," said Masya who, along with Paul Tergat and Joseph Keino, led Kenya to a team victory ahead of Great Britain and Brazil. The Women's race provided a superb win for the host nation. Liz McColgan pulled away at the 10 mile marker, winning in 68 minutes 53 seconds and missing Grete Waitz's course record by four seconds. She also won a team silver medal, behind champions Japan, while Romania finished third.

1993

Having become the first man to break one hour, when he won the Stramilano Half Marathon in 59 minutes 47 seconds, Moses Tanui won the Great North Run. In emphatic style, the Kenyan won in a UK All-Comers' record time of 60 minutes 15 seconds, ahead of Britons Paul Evans and Richard Nerurkar, who ran season's bests in 61 minutes 45 seconds and 61 minutes 53 seconds. It was a double victory for the Kenyan nation. 'Tiny' Tegla Loroupe broke away, two miles from the finish, to win in 72 minutes 55 seconds, ahead of Russia's 1988 Olympic 10 000m gold medallist Olga Bondarenko in 73 minutes 13 seconds and South Africa's Zola Budd-Pieterse in 73 minutes 30 seconds.

1994

After his World Championship victory, Benson Masya's prediction that he could finish the Great North Run even faster came true. In a nailbiting finish, it took several minutes before he was credited with victory in the UK All-Comers record time of 60 minutes 2 seconds, which is still the fastest Half Marathon in this country.

Separating the pair of Kenyans was an almost impossible task but a video replay found Masya in favour, by the skin of his teeth. Unlike the almost dead-heat between Nechchadi and McLeod five years earlier, this one was decided by the thickness of the athletes' vests. In third place was Paul Tergat in 60 minutes 42 seconds after opening miles of 4 minutes 9 seconds and four minutes 27 seconds. Rosanna Munerotto won the Women's event in 71 minutes 29 seconds. After challenging strongly during the whole race, Andrea Wallace

finished second, only five seconds after the winner. In third place was Manuela Machado from Portugal, who clocked 71 minutes 48 seconds.

1995

Moses Tanui returned after the disappointment of 1994 to win the event in 60 minutes 39 seconds, with Benson Masya in second with 61 minutes 59 seconds. A Kenyan 'clean sweep' of the medals was claimed, with James Kariuki coming third in 62 minutes 29 seconds. But all eyes during the race were on Liz McColgan. Back in action after a two year injury, the 'Flower of Scotland' beat Ethiopian Fatuma Roba and Manuela Machado of Portugal. Britain's greatest ever distance runner's time was 71 minutes 42 seconds, 23 seconds ahead of Roba, with Machado clocking 73 minutes 22 seconds.

1996

Disappointed by his performance the previous year, Benson Masya returned to the North East to win his fourth title in 61 minutes 43 seconds. Second place went to Paul Evans with 61 minutes 55 seconds while Spain's Antonio Serrano came third in 61 minutes 58 seconds. Liz McColgan won for a second year in 70 minutes 28 seconds.

1997

Tail winds were the order of the day! Hendrikk Ramaala won in 60 minutes 25 seconds, with Wilson Cheruiyot in 60 minutes 41 seconds, only two seconds ahead of fellow Kenyan Sammy Korir. A Kenyan was also first in the Women's race, with Luciana Subano finishing in 69 minutes 24 seconds. For the first time, Marian Sutton beat Liz McColgan, her time of 69 minutes 41 seconds beating the Scot by 27 seconds. On the comeback trail after serious injury was former 10 000m Olympic champion Derartu Tulu. The Ethiopian placed fourth with 70 minutes 30 seconds.

1998

Shrugging off the North East wind, Olympic marathon champion Josiah Thugwane became the second South African athlete to win the Great North Run. The former mine worker steamed to victory in 62 minutes 32 seconds. Midland's-based Kenyan John Mutai was runner-up with 62 minutes 50 seconds and Spain's Martin Fiz came third in 63 minutes 30 seconds. On her Half Marathon debut, after a superb European 5000m/10 000m track double, Sonia O'Sullivan made the move for home with four miles remaining, winning in 71 minutes 50 seconds. An awesome space was behind her and the Portuguese runner-up Manuela Machado, who clocked 72 minutes 55 seconds.

1999

One week after winning her third successive World Half Marathon title, Tegla Loroupe was beaten by Kenyan training partner Joyce Chepchumba who finished 28 seconds clear in 69 minutes 7 seconds. Paula Radcliffe finished her first Great North Run in 69 minutes 37 seconds and defending champion Sonia O'Sullivan came fourth in 70 minutes 5 seconds. In the Men's event John Mutai achieved a lifelong ambition when he won the men's title in 60 minutes 52 seconds. South Africa's Gert Thys came second in 61 minutes 20 seconds.

2000

In the Millennium Race, Paula Radcliffe eclipsed Grete Waitz's long-standing record of 68 minutes 49 seconds, set in 1988. Indeed, the new heroine of British athletics set a European record of 67 minutes 7 seconds. Finishing three minutes clear of Tegla Loroupe, Radcliffe moved to sixth place on the World All-Time list. Running his 7th Half Marathon of the year, 18-year-old Faustin Baha from Tanzania won the Men's event in 61 minutes 57 seconds.

2001

World Half Marathon record holder Paul Tergat led a Kenyan clean sweep of the medals. On the 21st anniversary of the race, he won in 60 minutes 30 seconds, ahead of British runners Julius Kimtai and John Mutai, 61 minutes 36 seconds and 62 minutes 49 seconds respectively. Great North Run regular Paul Evans, first Briton home in 5th place, set a UK Veteran's record with 63 minutes 15 seconds.

A rousing finish saw the fastest ever woman over 13.1 miles, Susan Chepkemei score a superb victory over fellow Kenyan Joyce Chepchumba, winning by 5 seconds in 68 minutes 40 seconds. In 3rd place was Olympic and World 10 000m gold medallist Derartu Tulu.

2002

This year's Great North Run saw a new course record, with Paul Kosgei cutting 4 seconds from Benson Masya's record, to finish in 59 minutes 58 seconds. Sonia O'Sullivan won the Women's race, crossing the Finish Line in 67 minutes and 19 seconds, 36 seconds ahead of Susie Power.

2003

Paula Radcliffe stormed to a World Best and new course record of 65 minutes 40 seconds. The victory capped a fantastic year which saw her set a new world record over 26.2 miles in the London Marathon. In the Men's race, Hendrick Ramaala just missed out on the course record, finishing in 60 minutes 1 second, ahead of Kenyan Jackson Koech.

2004

Australian Benita Johnson, in her second Half Marathon, won the Women's event in 67 minutes 55 seconds and Edith Masai took second place, 5 seconds ahead of former champion Susan Chepkemei.

Dejene Berhanu became the first Ethiopian winner of the Great North Run. Dominating the race from the early stages, he finished in 59 minutes 37 seconds, the fastest performance on British Soil for 13.1 miles. Defending champion Hendrick Ramaala was runner up, with Smail Sghir in third place.

2005

Zersenay Tadesse scorched to a world record time of 59 minutes 5 seconds in the 2005 event. At the 10km mark, he pulled away from defending champion Dejene Berhanu, who had broken the course record during his 2004 Great North Run debut. The Women's race saw the popular Derartu Tulu claim victory. The Ethiopian, winner of two Olympic 10 000m titles, held off the challenge of Worknesh Kidane, with Jelena Prokopcuka being a close third.

2006

The Men's race was won by South African Ramaala, for the third time. He pulled away from Dejene Berhanu and Dathan Ritzenhein to win in 61 minutes 1 second. In the Women's Event, Ethiopian Adere beat Susan Chepkemi and Benita Johnson in the last 500m, finishing in 70 minutes 1 second.

2007

Kara Goucher beat two-time winner Paula Radcliffe to become the first American winner of the Great North Run. Goucher even shocked herself when she became the United States' fastest Half Marathoner, finishing in 66 minutes 57 seconds. She surprised Radcliffe with a blistering mid-race pace change, winning in 2007 world leading time.

Radcliffe finished in 67 minutes 53 seconds and Aniko Kalovics came third in 70 minutes 17 seconds. Martin Lel won the Men's race in a sprint finish, 8 seconds ahead of world-record holder Sammy Wanjiru, for Kenya's first victory since 2002.

Lel kicked away from Wanjiru in the final mile to finish in 60 minutes 10 seconds, while South Africa's Hendrick Ramaala, the champion in 1997, 2003 and 2006, was third with 62 minutes 37 seconds.

2008

In the last 100m Gete Wami flew ahead of Magdalene Mukunzi of Kenya, who led for nearly the entire race, finishing in 68 minutes 51 seconds.

Tsegay Kebede made it a double Ethiopian double with a clear win in the Men's race, finishing in 59 minutes 45 seconds. Gebre Gebremariam was runner-up in 61 minutes 29 seconds, holding off US Number 1 Abdi Abdirahman by 4 seconds.

2009

Martin Lel narrowly missed his lifetime best by 2 seconds when he finished the Men's Race in 59 minutes 32 seconds, beating fellow Kenyan Kiplimo Kimutai by 12 seconds, with Moroccan Jaouad Gharib in third place with 60 minutes 4 seconds. Jessica Augusto became the first Portuguese woman to win the Great North Run since Rosa Mota in 1990

Augusto had the race sewn up when 2006 winner, Berhane Adere commenced a belated challenge and finished in 69 minutes 8 seconds. Ana Dulce Rosa took third place, with 69 minutes 48 seconds.

The wheelchair races saw David Weir and American Amanda McGrory set new course record times of 41 minutes 34 seconds and 49 minutes 47 seconds respectively.

2010

The world's greatest ever distance runner Haile Gebrselassie destroyed the opposition, with a rock solid victory on the Half Marathon, finishing in 59 minutes 33 seconds. Kiplimi Kimutai and Jaouad Gharib completed the event in 61 minutes 23 seconds and 62 minutes respectively.

Berhane Adere also scored a dominant victory ahead of Ana Dulce Felix and Marisa Barros, with 68 minutes 49 seconds.

David Weir achieved his fourth Great North Run wheelchair success when he finished in 44 minutes 49 seconds ahead of Josh Cassidy and Rafael Botello, who finished in 44 minutes 55 seconds and 47 minutes 23 seconds respectively. Shelly Woods collected her third Great North Run with in 52 minutes 59 seconds. Francesca Porcellato was runner up with 57 minutes 9 seconds and Nikki Emmerson clocked 65:44 for third position.

2011

Martin Mathathi won the Men's race, ahead of Jonathan Maiyo who finished in 59 minutes 27 seconds and Emmanuel Mutai with 59 minutes 52 seconds. The 25-year-old sliced nine seconds from the course record with a time of 58 minutes 56 seconds.

His victory was very convincing but it was former Commonwealth 10 000m champion Lucy Wangui Kabuu who thrilled spectators, with one of the greatest ever front running performances in the Great North Run. She won by almost two-and-a-half minutes, clocking the third fastest time over the course of 67 minutes 6 seconds. Jessica Augusto finished in 69 minutes 27 seconds and Marissa Barros, who repeated her third position of a year ago, recorded 70 minutes 29 seconds.

Shelly Woods retained her wheelchair title and won the Great North Run title for the fourth time in 50 minutes 14 seconds, ahead of Amanda McGrory with 52 minutes 43 seconds, with Italy's Francesca Porcellato third in 55:01.

Josh Canada added to his 2008 victory with 43 minutes 57 seconds. Frenchman Denis Lemeunier was second with 44 minutes 48 seconds and Aron Anderson finished in 47:07.

2012

On another day of African domination, Wilson Kipsang and Tirunesh Dibaba scored thrilling Half Marathon victories in wet conditions at the Great North Run. Kipsang rallied in the last 20m to beat fellow Kenyan Micah Kogo by 1 second in 59 minutes 6 seconds with Imane Merga of Ethiopia in third place with 59 minutes 56 seconds.

Dibaba won in 67 minutes 35 seconds, after a close fight with Edna Kiplagat and Olympic Marathon champion Tiki Gelana.

Canada's Josh Cassidy, who scored Great North Run victories in 2008 and 2011 won the Wheelchair race by a huge margin in 43 minutes 18 seconds. World and European Paratriathlon title holder Jane Egan won the Women's Race in 75 minutes, with Liz McTernan and Kirsty Grange finishing in 88 minutes 21 seconds and 92 minutes 56 seconds respectively.

2013

In the 2013 Great North Run, Mo Farah became Great Britain's fastest ever Half Marathon runner, however in one of the greatest ever finishes, was beaten by Kenenisa Bekele, his predecessor as the world's best 5000m and 10000m athlete.

Bekele won the nail-biting contest in 60 minutes 9 seconds and Gebrselassie set a new World Veteran's record of 1:00:41.

Priscah Jeptoo was happy to follow the world's greatest distance track runners, Meseret Defar and Tirunesh Dibaba, until breaking Dibaba at 8 miles and then just over 1 mile later, Defar before crossing the line in 65 minutes 45 seconds.

David Weir achieved a 5th victory in the men's wheelchair race with 43 minutes 6 seconds and Shelly Woods won her fifth race in 54 minutes 28 seconds.

2014

Olympic, world and European champion Mo Farah became the first British winner of the Great North Run men's race for 29 years by holding off Kenya's Mike Kigen in a thrilling finish. The pair fought it out for much of the race before Farah pulled clear in the final 200m of the 13.1-mile course. The 31-year-old set a new British half marathon best of exactly one hour.

Kenya's Mary Keitany set a new course record to win the women's race ahead of Britain's Gemma Steel. Keitany, the 2012 London Marathon champion who has returned from time off to have a baby, was well clear of the rest of the field and her time of 65 minutes 39 seconds beat Paula Radcliffe's 2003 mark by one second, while Steel set a new personal best of 68:18.

Steel's compatriot Shelly Woods won her sixth title in the women's wheelchair race, while the men's race went to Spain's Jordi Madera.