

Press release  
Prague, 14<sup>th</sup> of April, 2021

## **AN ENTIRELY NEW TWIST ON AN ANCIENT SPORT**

### **„BATTLE OF THE TEAMS” RE-IMAGINES THE MARATHON AS A TEAM SPORT.**

Battle of the Teams is the brainchild of RunCzech, organizers of the fabled Volkswagen Prague Marathon and other Gold Label running events around the Czech Republic and Europe.

While the world suffered through the pandemic, the team at RunCzech focused on finding ways of keeping the running community energized and engaged. They've hosted virtual runs and they've staged races in unconventional locations where safety protocols could be maintained, such as airports and breweries, to name just two. But maybe their biggest breakthrough was the Battle of the Teams concept, because it makes the marathon an even more strategic, complex and engaging spectacle.

The idea is to assemble four teams, each made up of eight marathoners chosen from among the best in the world; four men and four women, with each team supported by a different corporate partner. Runners would be assembled and „drafted” into teams based on their personal bests over the past 48 months, so that their collective abilities would be evenly—almost perfectly—matched.

What is most exciting about this is that the Battle of the Teams race isn't over when the first runner crosses the finish line. It's only over when the *last runner crosses the finish line*. The model is similar to Formula 1 Racing where every teammate earns points based on his or her performance. Crucially, this keeps fans on the edge of their seats until the very end, it keeps TV viewers glued to their screens, and it means that early finishers will be standing by cheering their teammates on.

The first event will take place May 30, 2021. And it will be staged in Prague, with runners lining up at one of the city's most cherished landmarks, The Charles Bridge.

According to race director, Carlo Capalbo, „When the world shut down because of Covid-19, people were desperate, in wanting to continue to see great team competition.” (Mr. Capalbo acknowledges that not being able to watch football may have inspired him in some way.) „This event was designed to satisfy that hunger,” he adds. „But this new twist also makes the sport vastly more interesting for people with a casual interest in the marathon, and for runners themselves.”

For the past 26 years, Carlo's main mission has been to promote health and fitness both in the Czech Republic and all over the world. He sees this as one more opportunity to make running an integral part of the Czech lifestyle.

# **ALL RUNNERS ARE BEAUTIFUL**

He is quick to add that none of this would be possible without the enthusiastic support of National and local government officials. „We recognize how important it is to stay active while staying safe,” says Councilor Vit Šimral. „And we’re delighted to have a role in encouraging men, women, children, young and old to get out, to get fit and to be safely social.”

### FACT SHEET

- Teams consist of 8 members—four women and four men.
- Two of the runners will run as backups in the event that one of the starting six fails to complete the race.
- Teams will be made up of runners from Africa, Europe and elsewhere. One runner on each team will be from the Czech Republic.
- Runners will be awarded points based on the World Athletics scoring system.
- Any runner who runs a personal best in the competition will be awarded 10% bonus points.
- Runners will be grouped in a way that makes the teams most competitive, based on each runner’s personal best over the previous 48 months.
- A title partner will support each team. And each team will run under one color scheme.
- Each runner is awarded points according to the time he or she finishes with. Six runners will have their points added together, and the team with the highest total wins.
- Prize money for the team event will be divided equally among team members.
- Individual winners will earn separate cash prizes consistent with marathons in the past.
- Team captains (non-running team members) will be chosen from among Czech Republic sports figures (tennis, hockey, football) to promote and inspire their teams.
- “Draft Day” will be broadcast on television in a ceremony similar to UEFA Champions’ League Draft. Team captains will represent their teams.
- This is not a large-scale, mass-participation event. Only the teams will participate. No other runners apart from approximately eighty of the best Czechs in what is also their National Marathon Championships.
- For other runners who are craving a marathon, RunCzech is hosting the Volkswagen Prague Virtual Marathon during the period from May 3 to May 31.
- 10% of every registration fee received for the Volkswagen Prague Virtual Marathon will be donated to one of four charities. One charity per team.
- Each team will choose the charity that it wishes to support.
- Name partners for each team have agreed to contribute a matching amount, doubling what is raised from Volkswagen Prague Virtual Marathon registrations.

# ALL RUNNERS ARE BEAUTIFUL

### Notes for editors

- RunCzech organizes running events in cities across the Czech Republic and in Italy, with Napoli Running, and in Japan and China supported by local entities.
- Prague International Marathon spol. s.r.o. („PIM“) was established in 1995 by Carlo Capalbo, President of the Organizing Committee, with the aim of staging a world-class international marathon in Prague.
- Nearly 1.2 million runners have participated in RunCzech events since its inception. In 2019, we welcomed over 120 000 finishers from 101 different countries.
- ALL RUNNERS ARE BEAUTIFUL is our way of welcoming everyone to the world of running.
- Initiatives like RunCzech Running League and SuperHalfs were created to motivate casual runners. To support elite European athletes, we created the EuroHeroes Challenge.
- RunCzech Racing is dedicated to the development of young athletes, community ties, and sporting excellence. Eight World records so far and over 150 podium finishes for our team!
- We host other events such as our Bambini Runs, Family Runs and Junior Marathon Championship to encourage youth participation.
- Our FreeRun courses form a network of running trails across the Czech Republic.
- Our Running Mall serves as the epicenter of the running world in Prague

### Contact

For more information, please get in touch with:

Michaela Šimeček  
PR & Media  
mob: +420 737 386 274  
e-mail: [pr@pim.cz](mailto:pr@pim.cz)

**ALL RUNNERS ARE BEAUTIFUL**