



**RUNCZECH**

## Czech stars to battle on airport runway

**The Czech Athletic Federation and RunCzech joined their forces in the Elite Run project, which will take place as part of a running weekend at Prague's Václav Havel Airport on July 18 and 19. The mixed relay race with leading Czech national team members, which, in addition to captains Kristiina Mäki and Diana Mezuliáníková, will be supported by 400m runners Vondrová and Maslák, will be the culmination within the Runway Run Prague.**

"Running is an integral part of athletics and the Czech Athletic Federation not only supports and operates track athletics, but we also run off-track. Unfortunately, in the current already relaxed post-coronavirus situation, it is still true that mass runs cannot be run in such a large number of competitors, and so some organizers are severely handicapped," says Libor Varhaník, president of the Czech Athletic Association.

"We want to support this segment. We are looking for ways to run races and opportunities for runners, despite the current situation. The postponed domestic half marathon championships, together with the race for the public, will take place this weekend, not directly in Pardubice, but not far from them. At the same time, we want to support other organizers, including RunCzech," adds Varhaník.

"March and April were a nightmare for us, but I don't want to talk about it anymore, I'm thinking about the future," said Carlo Capalbo, president of the RunCzech organizing committee, praising his cooperation with the national federation. "We are glad that we have found a way to once again allow thousands of runners to experience racing adrenaline and enjoy events in special places. Whether it's a summer challenge [The Czech Republic keeps on running](#) (Česko běží dál), where it is running on routes certified by the Czech federation (here it benefits from the work of RunCzech in past years – note), or the Runway Run Prague, where we can organize a race for elite athletes," introduced Capalbo to a novelty that was prepared in times of crisis.

"We are looking forward to a lot of participants, live TV viewers and visitors to Runway Park at Prague Airport. The whole event will start with Saturday's Sunset Run for 5 kilometres (July 18) and will continue on Sunday (July 19). Early birds may start at the 8:30 Breakfast Run and others follow later with two dm family runs. One at 10:30 and the other at 17:00, so participants will be able to watch the elite race on the spot from the spectator sector," said Capalbo.

## Mäki and Mezuliáníková, friends and rivals

The highlight of Sunday's Runway Run program will be the elite relay race with Czech representatives after 4 pm on Sunday. Led by two captains Czech elite milers Kristiina Mäki and Diana Mezuliáníková, spectators can look forward to a relay race with 1000 - 500 - 500 - 1000 meters on the runway of Prague's Václav Havel Airport. The non-traditional "road" mix of the relay consisting of two men and two women will take place live on Czech Television.

"I'm looking forward to a non-traditional race, where also the order of legs will be part of the tactics," says Kristiina Mäki. "I have chosen the names for my team so that the relay will be strong, but at the same time we varied in the age categories of younger participants such as Bára Malíková or the fresh youth record holder for 1000 meters Pavla Štoudková. I believe that we will succeed in assembling the relay so that we will make mincemeat out of the Blue team," she smiled.

The red relay will have Filip Sasínek, Pavel Maslák and the aforementioned Malíková in the team, in addition to Štoudková, Hakim Saleh will also be a substitute, the half-miler ready to run fast both distances if necessary. "I didn't even ask Filip (Kristiina's partner), and he agreed, it was more difficult for Pavel with regard to the team competition a day earlier, but I managed it because I'm the godmother of his daughter," she smiled at the presentation of her team composition.

Mäki herself counts on her active participation, although her preparation is no longer at its maximum with regard to the fourth month of pregnancy. (See her Instagram)

"I am happy for every opportunity to raise the profile of athletics and I believe that such a duel of relays will be interesting for spectators, also given that resounding names will appear at the start," says Diana Mezuliáníková, leader of the Blue team. "With the other captain Kristiina, we selected the members so that the race would be balanced, but I still have no doubt about the victory of my team," she said confidently towards the relay built by her great friend, but also her opponent.

No wonder, everyone allegedly nodded at the Mezulianiáková's invitation to join the team, and together with a pair of elite middle-distance runners Jan Friš and Filip Šnejdr, there is in shape Lada Vondrová – 51.35 at 400m last weekend. If necessary, the Diana's young training partners Anna Šimková and Jakub Hofta will be ready to substitute.

The captains will draw lots to see who will run in the first leg, the next tactic is then up to each of the individual teams. The condition is that the kilometre sections must be run by both men and women, which results in gender balance even at half distance (500m).

#### Star relay nominations:

Red relay: Kristiina Mäki, Filip Sasínek, Barbora Malíková, Pavel Maslák  
Substitutes: Pavla Štoudková, Hakim Saleh

Blue relay: Diana Mezuliáníková, Jan Friš, Lada Vondrová, Filip Šnejdr  
Substitutes: Anna Šimková, Jakub Hofta