

PRESS RELEASE: PRAGUE 21.1 KM – READY FOR THE RESTART

While the COVID-19 pandemic has put the entire world on hold, race organizers at RunCzech were determined to find a way of hosting at least one magnificent event before the regular racing season came to an end. And it looks like they're about to do it.

On September 5, a date when they would have been hosting their traditional Grand Prix—which includes a Women's 5K and an open 10K—RunCzech will instead host an invitation-only half marathon featuring 35 of the most celebrated distance runners in the world today.

As president of the organizing committee, Carlo Capalbo, tells us, "The pandemic has deprived these great athletes of the chance to participate in races all across the world. It has deprived us from witnessing some of the great performances that we're accustomed to seeing. We wanted to find a way of doing something spectacular for everyone."

The event will take place at Letna Park. The athletes will compete on an oval course around the park, running 21.0975 km, roughly 16.5 laps. The flat course and the intense competition are designed to be an all-out assault on current world records and best times. For the men that means shattering the 58:30 mark, which was done only two times in history. And for the women, the current world record in women's only race stands at 1:06:11.

Men and women will compete in separate races. The men's race will begin at 06:20. The women will start at 08:00. Weather permitting. Both performances will be broadcasted live on Czech Television and spread to the whole world.

This race will also be a proving ground for a breakthrough product from RunCzech partner and sponsor, adidas. They are introducing, in performing setting, their adizero adios Pro at the event, a shoe designed in close collaboration with elite athletes. More reason to believe that we will see some astonishing performances and finishes.

"While this race is coming at what would normally be the end of the season," Mr. Capalbo tells us, "we hope in a way that it will be the start, a spark that gets race organizers all over the world thinking creatively about how to keep the sport alive."

This is also a sign of hope. Organizing an event like this sends a message that the Czech Republic is well on its way to recovering from the shutdowns, and is poised to restart economically, socially and athletically. It's a way of reminding people that we are capable of defeating this pandemic once and for all. That there is hope and joy in our future.

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