

Moroccan tracks down challengers in stretch

Wins Classic 10K in 29:02

By Josh Bakan
Times Herald-Record

Moses Kipkosgei and Eliud Ngetich left behind Mourad Marofit entering the final stretch of the Crystal Run Healthcare Classic 10K on Sunday.

With about 150 meters left on the Middletown High School track, Marofit cut in front of both runners.

The Moroccan's surge clinched the victory in 29 minutes, 2 seconds, a second ahead of Ngetich. Kipkosgei placed third in 29:10.

"I have a lot of experience in track, and I know when to push," Marofit, a 5,000-meter specialist who finished second last year, said through a translator. "My experience from knowing the course and my experience in track running helped me, and I knew when to time it."

Ngetich and Kipkosgei exchanged leads until the final stretch on the track. Marofit emerged in the original lead pack of seven, and the other four intermittently lagged and lost their shot.

The trio separated themselves during the halfway point around Frank Shorter Way. Then the three sped downhill -- Kipkosgei and Ngetich beside each other in front with Marofit behind.

They raced in a single-file line for most of the last two miles. Ngetich began to separate himself in the lead as Marofit fell off the pack.

But Marofit found his own pace toward the end, winning the \$1,000 purse. His runner-up finish a year ago came in 29:18 behind winner Degefa Yigezu.

Five minutes after the men, Kenyan Monicah Ngige emerged as the women's champion in a time of 34:05. Ngige said she felt her chances of winning were 50-50 before the race.

But the 21-year-old won handily, placing ninth among all runners. Valentine Kibet finished second in 34:23, and Aziza Alaoui Selsouli's 35:02 netted



Allison Davis finishes at the top woman finisher in the Classic 5K race in Middletown on Sunday.

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—Mourad Marofit, winner of the Classic 10K, through a translator

third.

Middletown High graduate Alex Shodai was first among local runners and eighth overall in 33:26. The 18-year-old runs for Iona and keeps his eyes on the local competition's depth in the race.

"You've got some pretty good guys older than me," he said. "You've got a lot of great potential in high school kids as well. There are some eighth-graders that are running close

to my times. There's a lot of talent coming around, a lot of potential."

But in the Rowley 5K, Minisink Valley males dominated. Kevin Vilonas, Izzy Khoufaify and the 13-year-old Behailu Bekele-Arcuri broke the finish-line tape far ahead of the rest.

The 18-year-old Vilonas won in 16:41. Khoufaify placed second in 16:43 and Bekele-Arcuri netted 16:45 in third.

"We decided we were going to



Kevin Vilonas finishes first in the at the Classic 5K race in Middletown on Sunday.

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On the Web

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run together the first 2½ miles, then from there, kind of see who goes (first)," Vilonas said.

Westtown's Allison Davis won the women's 5K in 19:28. Walden's Camryn Johnson and Sydney Johnson placed second in 20:02 and third in 20:45, respectively.

For most of the race, runners could look all around them to find a supportive organization or Middletown locals on the sidewalk.

Among the last group many found were the Middletown High School track and field teams along the final stretch before the finish line. The gathering began with head coach Wayne Beam and grew with each finishing runner on the teams.

Beam ran the first Orange Classic — the Classic's predecessor — in 1981. Thirty-four years later, he keeps it in his teams' tradition.

"Most of them are done for the season, so it's a nice way to cap the year," Beam said. "I think it's great. And for some of them that are freshmen, sophomores, juniors, it gets them ready for the summer training."