

10K race 'therapeutic' for Crystal Run doctor

By Ken McMillan
Times Herald-Record

MIDDLETOWN – Dr. Michelle Koury had so many reasons to smile as nearly 900 runners gathered at the conclusion of the Crystal Run Healthcare Classic 10K on Sunday.

Koury is the chief operating officer for Crystal Run.

"We are very proud to sponsor this event," she said. "We think it's great for the community and it promotes health and wellness. It makes a lot of people feel good about themselves, which is important."

Koury was feeling especially good after finishing the 10-kilometer race in 54 minutes, 51 seconds, a personal record for the 48-year-old from Goshen. "It's not a fast time amongst runners but for me it's a personal accomplishment," she said.

That's because two years ago Koury fractured her left foot in five places when she took a fall in her kitchen. Two surgical pins, a plate and a bone graft were required for repair and she couldn't walk on it for eight weeks. Having run intermittently in the year preceding and sidelined for six months after surgery, Koury went almost two years without serious running, which was very hard for someone who felt accomplishment after running the Chicago Marathon in 2012.

It would have been easy to retire from running but that's not what she wanted.

"I worked really hard to come back," Koury said. "For me and a lot of people, running is very therapeutic. There is a sense of accomplishment, a sense of relaxation ... it's just a great stress reducer for me."

Koury returned to serious training last fall. This year she has already broken two hours in the half-marathon (13.1 miles) and now has a new 10K personal record.

"Wanting to get a bib number and be part of this again," that's what I wanted, Koury said.

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No competition for Diriba

Dominates Classic 10K
that lacks elite runners

By Ken McMillan
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MIDDLETOWN – Abu Kebede Diriba made his way from Manhattan early Sunday morning, expecting to get in a good training run for a marathon in Utah next weekend.

Diriba was not the only person expecting to have a couple elite runners in the Crystal Run Healthcare Classic 10-kilometer field – so too was race director Frank Giannino. Only none of the elites showed up, leaving the 28-year-old Diriba – an Ethiopian who has made Manhattan his new home within the past year – with no competition to push him.

The race hadn't even gotten off its starting trek of Gardner Avenue and Diriba led a breakout 3-man group, which included Pine Bush graduate Derek Lake. By the two-mile mark, the lead was about 100 yards. After four miles, it was 55 seconds. Diriba arrived on the track at Fuller Field to polite applause from the small fan base and finished in 31 minutes, 32 seconds.

"Easy win. Nobody here," Diriba said. "When I look for elite, nobody here. I ran easy."

Diriba said he wasn't disappointed with the light competition because he could save his legs for his Utah race. In the past month, Diriba ran 2 hours, 22 minutes at the Pittsburgh Marathon, placed second in 64 minutes in the Brooklyn Half-Marathon and 66 minutes in the Buffalo Half-Marathon. He won a March marathon in China in 2:16.

Diriba crossed the line before any other runner entered the stadium complex. Djouma Zalcari, of Utica, was 83 seconds back. Female winner Nancy Nzisa, of Kenya via Lansing, Mich., was next in 33:20, two seconds off her career best set in 2014. Lake, a Rider graduate who has moved to Middletown, was fourth in 33:41. Jon Lindenauer of New Paltz was fifth in 33:52. Women's runner-up Gladys Kipsoi, also of Kenya and Lansing, was seventh in 34:44. The women's race quickly



Left: Women's winner Nancy Nzisa of Kenya via Lansing, Mich., finished in 33:20, two seconds off her career best set in 2014. Right: Abu Kebede Diriba, an Ethiopian who has made Manhattan his new home within the past year, won the Crystal Run Healthcare Classic 10K in 31 minutes, 32 seconds. PHOTOS BY DAWN J. BENKO/FOR THE TIMES HERALD-RECORD



became a two-person affair. Nzisa and Kipsoi held top spots in the pack, and Nzisa made her move to the front after two miles and said she wanted to finish strong.

"The race was very good, everything was good," Nzisa said. "The climate was perfect."

Nzisa, 20, barely missed a spot on the Kenyan Olympic team, despite having placed second in the national cross country championships. A month ago, she won the 5,000 meters at the Prisons Games, a prestigious Kenyan event.

Kipsoi, 30, ran one second slower than she did last weekend in Boulder, Colo. She has run 19 road races since the start of 2015,

winning 10 and placing runner-up in five.

As usual, the 5-kilometer races were dominated by high school runners, many of whom just completed their scholastic seasons. Jamie Granata of Minisink Valley won the men's race in 16 minutes, 33 seconds, ahead of Pine Bush runner Tim Lorenzen (16:37) and Minisink teammate Behailu Bekele-Arcuri (16:46). Mount Academy rolled in the next bunch with Daryl Blough, Martin Kurtz, Baxter Wareham, Brendan Baird and Kent Kurtz.

Granata, who just missed earning a spot to this week's state track and field championships, headed into the stadium neck-and-neck

with Lorenzen.

"He was moving quick," Granata said of Lorenzen. "He was a tall guy so I thought he was going to take off. I decided with 400 (meters) left to give it my all. I picked it up there. Closing in, I had to keep going. I heard footsteps so I think that's what got me there. It was very satisfying ... I've never broken the tape before so that was cool."

Middletown's Lizbet Navarro won the women's 5K, and placed 23rd overall, in 19:28.

In all, 515 runners completed the 10K and 361 finished the 5K.

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