
Marabana 2017: Road to Success, Solidarity, and Sacrifice

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Marabana is a hit. For several years now I have been following this race. This 31st edition, all runners began the race from the zero-mile start at the Havana's Capitol.

But the marathon runners were not the only ones in exhibiting courage, sacrifice, and love in the 10 km, half-marathon, and the exhausting 42+ km race. The supporting staffs, safety teams, physicians, personnel of the Popular Madrid's Marathon and their electronic devices, policemen, and transit officials were essential as well.

More than 5,000 runners of all ages, races, disabled or not, participated in a very successful event.

More than 1,300 foreign athletes were at the starting line. This time, it was held for the first time the I Half-Marathon Championship of the North, Central American and the Caribbean area, which resulted in the crowns of Cubans Dailin Belmonte (1:16:44) and Richer Perez (1:06:18).

We were saying this edition was special and it really was. Santiago de Cuba's native Henry Jaen (2:28:24) became the first man in winning five times the

Marabana. He broke the record of Jorge Luis Perez and matched legendary Emperatriz Wilson.

Behind Jaen, Granma's natives Yumier Fouman (2:29:50) and Alien Reyes (2:34:43) ended in second and third places, respectively. Among women, Yudileyvis Castillo win the race with (2:46:35) with Misleidys Vargas (2:54:47) in second place and Lizandra Gomez (3:11:29) in third.

Star Echoes

Dailin Belmonte is 100 % focused on her main goals. One of them is to being in perfect shape for Barranquilla. Marabana was the first test of her training process:

"I have been training for two months now. I am focused on two macrotrainings: the first, until the World Championship of Half-Marathon to be held on March 25th. I will look there for a real time that may show me my average speed and other parameters. Then, I will focus on Barranquilla so I can face any runner.

I will always look to the Trinitarian runner. The weather was ok. I had always the initiative. I increased my pace to check how my body was. The elevations and the Sports City were the accurate places to warn my opponents. It is good to run against serious rivals as it helps you to break records."

Henry Jaen: "It was really easy. I was ready for every detail and here is the result. I was calm the first leg of the race. I focused on the elevations and I got my distance there.

I went out to look for a great result to attend an international event and Marabana gave me possibility to attend for the second time the marathon in Paris. Being the host city of the NACAC is extremely important as it allows us to run against quality runners."

Richer Perez: "I have won the half-marathon in Trinidad and Tobago. I crossed the line exhausted. I thought to make a good record but I chose to run an average race —as I had good opponents— and control the American and Canadian runners."

The rivalry is very much necessary. It makes us to train harder. I have faith and my greatest motivation is my seven-month old daughter. I will do my best in Barranquilla and Lima 2019. My opponents know I am the man to beat.

My daughter is beautiful. I have the privilege of having both here with me. My wife is from Mexico and ended fourth in the NACAC half-marathon and I am very happy we are here together in my beautiful Cuba."

Richer's idea sums up the idea of Marabana: many things are done here in our

beautiful Cuba with heart and sacrifice.”

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