

Henry Jaen Wins Marabana Marathon



Havana, November 20 (RHC-Granma)-- Henry Jaen, a runner from Santiago de Cuba, became the first man to win the Marabana marathon five times, a massive event that sees runners from across the world fill the streets of the Cuban capital.

On Sunday, November 19, Jaen secured the fifth title of his career in the 42 kilometer, 195 meter distance, during the 31st edition of this prestigious event, crossing the finish line with a time of 2:28:42 hours, and adding this victory to those achieved in 2006, 2007, 2013 and 2016.

Thus, he equaled the highest previous number of triumphs in this Havana marathon, secured in the women's event by Emperatriz Wilson, and became the leader of the men's race, after surpassing the record of his friend and main rival, Jorge Luis Suárez from Havana (four-time Marabana winner).

"Honestly, it was a relatively comfortable race. I was prepared for the weather and the slopes. It's no secret that this is a pretty tough circuit, but I felt in condition and secured the result. During the first lap I remained steady and in the second I started accelerating when I reached the slope located on 12th Street. That allowed me to separate from the rest and maintain a considerable distance," stated the champion.

Henry earned the right to participate for the second consecutive year in the Paris Marathon, a prize courtesy of Air France for the winners in this event. "I was looking for a result that would make it easier for me to participate in an international event, since the Marabana provides that possibility. It's the second time that I'm going to race in Paris and my goal is to prepare myself as much as possible to get a significant result," Jaen concluded, who was accompanied on the podium by Yumier Gouman (2:29:50) and Alien Reyes (2:34:23) from Granma.

Among the women, Yudileyvis Castillo surprised by finishing the marathon in 2:46:36 hours, ahead of Artemisa's Misleidys Vargas (2:54:47) - winner of the previous edition - and Holguín's Lizandra Gómez (3:11:29). Castillo, bronze medalist in the 10,000 meters in the Veracruz Central American Games, once again demonstrated her potential in shorter distance races, as last year she won the 21km, 97m half marathon.

In this edition, world champion Dailin Belmonte climbed to the top of the podium in the half marathon, finishing with a time of 1:16:44 hours, slightly ahead of Trinidadian Tonya Nero (1:16:54) and Puerto Rican Paola Rivera (1:23:54). Among the men Richer Pérez (1:06:18) dominated, accompanied by Jeffrey D. Egleton (1:06:27) of the U.S., and Cuban Yuleidys la O (1:08:11).

For the first time, the North American, Central American and Caribbean Athletic Association (NACAC) awarded a prize in the half marathon, which went to Belmonte and Pérez individually, while Cuba was awarded collectively.

A total of 5,098 runners participated in Marabana 2017, of which 3,717 were nationals and 1,381 traveled from 66 countries.

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