

# The Race Continues









# Liberia Marathon 2022 August 21 Race Report





# No matter the bundle, there's only one shortcode.



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## Message from the Liberia Marathon Trust

On August 21, over 1400 runners – almost a quarter of them being women - lined up in the spirit of community and competition to participate in the Liberia Marathon 2022. The event consisted of a full marathon, a half marathon, a 10k foot race, and a 10k race for wheelchairs and crutches. Each race was coordinated to simultaneously arrive at SKD Stadium, jointly celebrating the great achievements of all runners.

The event showcased not only Liberian and expat athletes, but also international runners who travelled to Liberia to participate. This year we had the honor of hosting athletes from 15 countries outside Liberia.

Our massive congratulations to all finishers and their legendary achievements. It is the most rewarding moment when watching the joy and pride, smiles and tears of everyone as they cross the finish line.

A special shout out goes to all our winners (see overview later in the report), especially our Liberian competitors in the top rankings Precious M. Thomas, Alexander J. Autto, Saybah Kolee, Lee R. Dennis Jr, Marcox Sackie, Kemah G Wolubah, Emmanuel Nyumah, Mathew Joe, Abraham Worpoe, Patience Johnson, Moses Sackie, Thomas Mulbah and Alex Kerkula. It was a privilege to welcome you in the race.

We also want to thank all the stakeholders who made the race a success, starting with the Organizing Committee, a volunteer group of Liberians who contribute their time and expertise to make the race possible, and the hundreds of dedicated volunteers who were stationed throughout Monrovia and at the start and finish points.

Our efforts were supported by Government of Liberia partners without whom the event would not have been possible, including first and foremost the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Liberia Athletics Federation, Monrovia and Paynesville City Corporations, the Liberia National Police, the Armed Forces of Liberia and the Invincible Sports Park. Thanks also to our sponsors and partners who shared our vision and joined us to make the race a reality.

The Liberia Marathon 2022 – the largest edition so far - was driven by positive energy and commitment of runners, organisers, volunteers and spectators alike. It was a unique event with a great potential to grow in scope and numbers and we feel privileged to serve as host.

A comment on our Facebook page reads: "Good to see The Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) have been a massive supporter to the Liberia Marathon throughout the years – even before race day by accompanying and securing the course how Liberia Marathon has grown over the years! With the right support, this could grow international as big as the Boston/ London Marathon, marketing Liberia as a unique African destination for all runners."

We could not agree more and we are excited about the future. Thank you for being a part of it.

We cannot wait to see you all in 2023.

~ The Liberia Marathon Trust



# Winners of the Liberia Marathon 2022

Rank	Name	Nationality	<b>Time</b> hrs:min:sec	
Full Marathon (42.2k / 26.2 miles) Women				
1	Kargbo, Theresa Sento	Sierra Leone	03:34:54	
2	Turay, Isatu	Sierra Leone	03:35:18	
3	Thomas, Precious Mary	Liberia	04:52:52	
LIB Patriot	Thomas, Precious Mary	Liberia	04:52:52	
Full Marathon (42.2k / 26.2 miles) Men				
1	Bryant, Michael	United Kingdom	02:58:33	
2	Challey, Osman	Sierra Leone	03:01:42	
3	Autto, Alexander Joe	Liberia	03:24:28	
LIB Patriot	Autto, Alexander Joe	Liberia	03:24:28	
Half Marathon (21.1k / 13.1 miles) Women				
1	Kargbo, Jane Sento	Sierra Leone	01:22:46	
2	Sesay, Fanta	Sierra Leone	01:28:30	
3	Lomeh, Fatmata	Sierra Leone	01:28:51	
LIB Patriot	Kolee, Saybah	Liberia	01:32:47	
Half Marathon (21.1k / 13.1 miles) Men				
1	Conteh, Abu Bakar	Sierra Leone	01:12:34	
2	Momoh, Augustine Sheku	Sierra Leone	01:13:18	
3	Kparie Fofanah, Alpha	Sierra Leone	01:17:04	
LIB Patriot	Dennis, Lee Robert Jr	Liberia	01:17:43	



Rank	Name	Nationality	<b>Time</b> hrs:min:sec	
10k Race Crutches Female				
1	Wolubah, Kemah G	Liberia	02:14:20	
10k Race Crutches Male				
1	Nyumah, Emmanuel	Liberia	01:01:11	
2	Joe, Mathew	Liberia	01:07:09	
3	Worpoe, Abraham	Liberia	01:10:29	
10k Race Wheelchair Female				
1	Johnson, Patience	Liberia	inofficial finish	
10k Race Wheelchair Male				
1	Sackie, Moses	Liberia	00:45:31	
2	Mulbah, Thomas	Liberia	00:47:38	
3	Kerkula, Alex	Liberia	01:00:28	
10k Race Female				
1	Kamara, Fatmata	Sierra Leone	00:45:18	
2	Diagor, Grace	Liberia	00:48:35	
3	Pasch, Pamela	United States of America	00:52:21	
LIB Patriot	Diagor, Grace	Liberia	00:48:35	
10k Race Male				
1	Kargbo, John Yamba	Sierra Leone	00:33:04	
2	Fornah, Mohamed	Sierra Leone	00:33:17	
3	Lassie, John	Sierra Leone	00:34:26	
LIB Patriot	Sackie, Marcox	Liberia	00:37:27	



## Liberia is Running – Interview with TEKA

Saybah Kolee, commonly known as TEKA, is a 16 years old rising running star in the country. After winning several track competitions in and outside the Liberia, TEKA decided to run the half marathon in the Liberia Marathon 2022 edition as her first long race. With a time of 1:32:47 hours, she crossed the finish line as first Liberia woman and 5<sup>th</sup> female overall.

#### Congratulations TEKA to a great race and for coming in as first female Liberian! What was your experience during the Liberia Marathon?

I trained for eleven consecutive weeks with my coach Marcox Sackie from the Liberia Athletics Federation. It was challenging because it was my first long race. I did expect to go faster as I did because I wasn't nervous as compared to other races.

# What was your position as a winner and what message do you have your fellow females?

Well, I emerged as the first Liberian female in the half marathon. It was my first experience participating in a long race. This is my first ever long race. I had my coach training me for 11 weeks.



I had been nervous on other races but for this I was confident. I was prepared, my mind was already made up,

I am using this medium to call on more females to participate but one thing females always said is that they don't want to lose their shape. I have only few women doing track and field.

#### "Most females say it's a difficult sport. I would like to see more females Athletes participating the sports."

# What's your recommendation to the race organizers, the Liberia Marathon Trust (LMT)?

I am looking forward for more improvements in the sports in our country. I am asking the LMT to extend the sports to other counties or ensure those from rural communities get to understand what is Marathon and the significance of it. But I can tell you this year's marathon was great.



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# Impressions and Feedback from our Finishers

"It was never simple to cross the finish line in time. In my life today, finishing 21k in less than two hours is a record. 10k and 21k down... 42k, I await you with more energy." – Samuel, Half Marathon

"[...] There was water everywhere, even for people at the back of the race. I don't think I have seen so much water offered at a race and I have run about 170 marathons. As I ran further and it got hotter and I got slower, the water was offered a lot more frequent....every 2-3 minutes and I was walking at this point. I had to say no but I Thanked the volunteers for helping. Great job." – Karen, full marathon





"I was not physically fit for the 10k race but I managed to finished in 211 place and reached the finished line in 55min:43sec. But it's wasn't easy." – Yahyah, 10k

"It was my first national race but I wasn't ready to be a winner, but I ran the race with endurance and consistency. [...] Big thanks to you guys too for the perfect coordination, it was want one of the best I have seem so far." - Patrick, 10k



"Never underestimate the power that one good workout can have on your mind. Keeping the dream alive is half the battle. The Race Continues......" – Andrew. 10k

> "I ran 21k. It was a great feat for me, an amateur. I was very proud of myself when I completed. [...] This was my second marathon. I look forward to partaking in the next one" - Maima, Half Marathon





"This gone marathon was great because I had my twin brother as my running mate. At certain point in time, I thought of giving up due to how challenging the race was, but we had people like the army, medical practitioners and hard working volunteers alone the way motivating us. IT WAS AWESOME" – David and Daniel, 10k

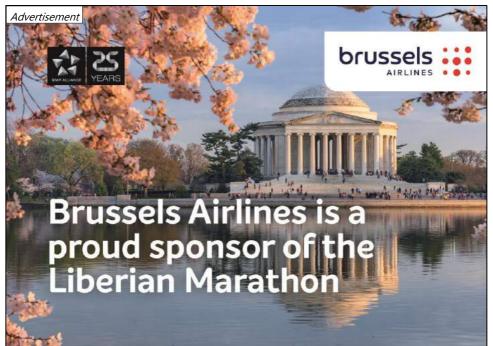
> "And so, my fellow Liberians, ask not what your country can do for you -- ask what you can do for your country." – Gabriel, Full Marathon

"God Almighty and the Liberian people made running the marathon a joyful experience." – Brent, Full Marathon



"YES! We made it to the finish line; the pain, the thirst etc but there was so much lessons to learn. At some point after juggling a mile, I felt like giving up, that this isn't where I belong, I do not have the strength to do this but consistency and never giving up got me to the finish line even sooner than I expected .This is something to reflect on in life, we all can make it to our finish lines (dreams). Thanks to the Liberia Marathon family." -Annestean, 10k









# **Fun Facts and Figures**

1	official marathon song
3	race distances – full
	marathon, half marathon and 10k
1,413	proud finishers in total
325	female finishers
500	balloons on the finishing arch
29	proud winners in ten categories
15,000	liters of water for runners and volunteers
4,000	bananas to regain energy
400	wonderful volunteers as the backbone of the race
30	partners and sponsors from public and private sector
16	different nationalities
617	kilos of plastic sachets and bottles collected to keep the race clean
73	years for the oldest runner
16,323	kilometers completed by all finishers together
countless	smiles at the finish









## My First Finish Line – Interview with Rima Lakkis

*Rima Lakkis is a 25 years old Personal Trainer, Online Fitness and Nutrition Coach (Instagram: @rimalakkis \_) who lives in Monrovia. Rima successfully participated in the Liberia Marathon 2022, completing her ever first half marathon.* 

#### Rima, congratulations on your finish and this amazing achievement! What motivated you to sign up for the Liberia Marathon? And why did you decide to do the half marathon?

I've been wanting to take part in the Liberia Marathon for a couple of years now. The minute I heard about it this year, I didn't hesitate to register. I am a fitness trainer and I love challenging myself physically almost every day in the gym, but I wasn't a runner. I had only 5 weeks to train for it. It was a new and an exciting challenge for me. That's exactly why I signed up for it.

Even though I wasn't a runner, I knew a 10k wasn't going to be challenging enough and I didn't have enough time to train for a full marathon, so that's why I signed up for the half marathon

# How did you prepare for race day? How did your training go?

I aimed for 4-5 days of running every week. I didn't have a plan. Some days I'd run fast short distances (speed work) and some days I'd run slower distances (easy runs). My goal wasn't to be the first, it was to make it to the finish line. Running that much for the first time in my life wasn't easy. It wasn't just physically challenging but even more mentally. Some days I didn't want to run at all, but I still did it anyways. I had to remind myself why I was doing it every time. After 4 weeks of training I was so confident that it would all be okay until I got sick with the flu. The last week of training was ruined just like that. I could barely get out of bed, let alone run. So I rested for the whole week before the marathon.

How did you experience race day? How did you feel at the starting line, during the run and at

#### the finish – what was easy, and what was hard?

I was still a little congested from the flu on race day but it could've been worse. I was nervous at the beginning but I calmed down a bit after seeing all the others that were taking part. The first 8 miles weren't so bad, then the sun came out, it got really hot and my congestion got worse. And as if that wasn't bad enough, I got a cramp in my right side. I'm assuming from not being about to breath properly with the nose congestion. The next 3 miles were hard but not as tough as the last 2 miles. It took everything in me to get to that finish line.

>>Every second of training, the pain, the soreness, the cramps. It was all worth it. The entire race was a rollercoaster of emotions. I can't put in words of how it feels when you get that medal at the end. <<



Any word of encouragement to all the other women out there hesitating if they shall dare to give running a shot?

Go for it. If you're thinking of running a 10k, 21k or even a full marathon. It won't be easy at first, but like everything else, it gets easier. The hardest part of any fitness journey is to start. Be consistent with your runs. I think that's what helped me the most. Being consistent. Running is also a great way to relieve stress and let's not forget running burns a lot of calories.







## Partnerships as Key to a Quality Race

When the registration for the Liberia Marathon 2022 opened in June, the organisers had a great surprise for all eager contestants: Not only the full marathon (42.2k) would return back to the streets of Monrovia for the first time since 2013, but runners could also test themselves over the half-marathon distance (21.1k) or compete in the infamous 10k races on the popular JFK-SKD course.

The Liberia Marathon Trust aims at always improving the quality of the event and the experience for the participants. In 2022, the Liberia Marathon was bigger than ever and set a new standard for the years to come. The successful and quality organisation was fuelled by and based on successful partnerships and collaborations.

Offering three distances, all starting on the same singe loop course around the city and finishing together at the same location provided extended space for fierce competition while at the same time encouraging everyone interested to give the running adventure a try.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS) is a key partner in this endeavour, support the organisers efforts throughout on all levels and allowing all participants to have a unique finishing experience inside the national stadium at SKD Sports Complex. It was great to also welcome MYS Deputy Minister Andy Quamie as successful finisher of the 10k race.

The Liberia Athletics Federation (LAF) as responsible sporting association is the key technical partner, assuring a smooth technical implementation on race day at the various starting points, all along the course and at the finish line. The partnership with LAF is of course critical long before race day. Amongst others, the LAF assured quality preparation of all runners, making sure all participants would get the best advice how to tackle their respective distance during complementary training sessions headed by experienced LAF coaches.

LAF also provided assistance and advice to our course measurement expert from South Africa, who helped to get the Liberia Marathon accredited by World Athletics (WA), the international governing body for the sport of athletics. With an electronical chip timing system in place and the successful certification of the marathon, half marathon and 10k course, the Liberia Marathon results are now officially recognised. This allows Liberian athletes to use their finishing time to enter marathon globally or to even go for record attempts on their home course. The Liberia Marathon could now also apply as qualifier race for prestigious marathon competitions worldwide



Organising a quality race requires extended logistics in many areas such as security, transportation, waste management and water provision. The Liberia Marathon is fortunate to have reliable and strong partners which provide support with that logistics prior to and on race day to allow for a race on international standard.

The Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) have been a massive supporter to the Liberia Marathon throughout the years – even before race day by accompanying and securing the course



measurement activities. On race day they not only provide logistical aid such as trucks and pick-ups for water station deployment, but also sent a team of about 100 soldiers to help with the course set-up in the very early morning hours formed part of the medical and general volunteers' team until the end of the event. Most amazingly, at the same time, AFL put together a record high number of runners participating in the race – including a lot of females as in 2022 the Army Wives felt inspired by what their husbands did in previous editions and decided to run along.



The Liberia National Police (LNP) is instrumental in assuring that the roads are free and safe to run for all our runners – no matter if they are at the front or the back of the pack. The Liberia Marathon would not look like the same without their officers' commitment and dedication to road safety.

Adding to that, the National Transit Authority (NAT) made buses available to allow us to pick up runners and volunteers in the very early morning hours to get them to the starting lines and points of assignment safe and on time.

The Monrovia City Corporation provided critical space to train the volunteers ahead of race day to allow them to show their best performance. The Paynesville City Corporation was instrumental in the successful waste pick-up and management on race day together with the non-profit Abundant Rain, leaving roads and event areas clean and spotless and contributing to a sustainable and environmentally friendly event.

Staging the Liberia Marathon does require an orchestra of partners, all playing their respective critical part. In total, more the 30 different sponsors and partners were involved to make the Liberia Marathon a success story.

The Liberia Marathon Trust is highly grateful and appreciative for all the support, partnership and collaboration.





## The Liberia Marathon – Together and for Everyone

Since the first Liberia Marathon edition back in 2011, the Liberia Marathon Trust, as host and organizer, has committed itself to the core principles of safety, quality, affordability and inclusiveness. Gender, income level or disabilities shall not be barriers preventing people to take part in any Liberia Marathon race:

## Equal Experience for Athletes with Disabilities

Competitions for disabled athletes in wheelchairs and on crutches have been an established and highly successful component of all the Liberia Marathon ever since and will continue to do so. While Liberia is already known for their strong Amputee football team, we love to see its members also showing outstanding performances in the Liberia Marathon 10k.

In 2022, the Liberia Marathon was honoured to for the first time ever host female contestants in both events, the race for athletes in crutches and on wheelchair. This will certainly motivate and encourage others so that next time, we will be able to witness a fierce fight for the top ranks.

Overall, the Liberia Marathon Trust seeks to create a conducive an accessible and enjoyable running environment for everyone and wants to open the running floor also for athletes with other disabilities.

#### **Towards Improved Gender Equity**

Globally, the female participation in road races is finally increasing. While women still seem to face barriers regarding the longer distances, there is a strong incline in sign-ups at the 10k distance. The Liberia Marathon is keen to contribute to this trend and of course even move beyond that.

In 2021, where 10k was the only distance offered, 15% of the finishers were female. We celebrated all those women who dared but



we also wanted to be better than that. And indeed, across the board and even pretty equally allocated among all distances, we could welcome 23% women behind the finish line- an increase of 8%.

While this is a great step forward, we do know about the potential of the women in Liberia. The Liberia Marathon Trust will make continues efforts to make our races interesting, attractive and accessible for female participants by working with the women themselves to understand better and to engage with the right partners. We also continue to promote equal female participation in the organisation of the race. In 2022, half of our organising team was female, massively contributing to the success of the race. With a history of both, male and female race directors, we are also keen to strengthen female leadership.





#### Affordable and Convenient Registration

The Liberia Marathon further features very low entry fees as well as various registration options and multiple race package pick-up locations. The Liberia Marathon Trust created a pretty unique and context-tailored system to allow everyone to conveniently enter the event, no matter their status, income nor location. This includes a mix of paper and online registrations (via the For-Free-Facebook Messenger), team registration on-site, registration drives in more remote communities as well as two race packages pick up locations on opposite sides in the capital to avoid high additional transportation cost.

As a result, the Liberia Marathon is proud to host an extraordinary mix of participants with highlevel government officials, students, office workers, small business owners, professional athletes, civil society activists, families, fitness club members, bureaucrats and street vendors all running side by side, unified in the joy of running. running together this year, supporting and encouraging each other.

While the race is growing bigger and stronger, efforts shall be made to attract more runners from outside the capital, to extend the event activities in the counties – constantly working towards more diversity, equality and inclusion to keep improving the Liberia Marathon experience for everyone.





It was also amazing to see so many teams



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## Dat no small thing – Medical Care at the Liberia Marathon

It is the evening before the Liberia Marathon 2022 race day. For the past couple of hours, the medical committee had gathered in a conference room inside the Ministry of Youth and Sports. They had sorted and packed all the medical supplies needed for the next day and allocated them between the 25 water and first aid stations, the seven medical tents along the course and the major medical tent at the finish line inside the SKD stadium. After a final check and a quick last-minute arrangement for some additional items, everything is ready and prepared for race day.

Satisfied, the team heads home to get a few hours of well-needed rest. The deployment of supplies and medical volunteers will start long before sunrise, and will be followed by a busy day on duty in the medical tents and elsewhere along the course.

Not even 24 hours later, race day is in full swing. Around 1pm the last finishers are reaching the finish. They are tired, exhausted but also happy, proud and relieved. The medical team at the stadium feels the same way. They take a deep breath when an empty ambulance enters the stadium as the sign that the last runner is off the course.

Despite a record number of finishers, all runners are ok and no severe medical emergency was reported from along the course or at the finish.

Of course, there were participants who needed medical attention after a fall, or they felt nauseous and sick on the course, others were so exhausted that their system gave in after crossing the finish line or had become dehydrated and needed some support to properly refuel and reenergize. They were helped by either first aid responders, the ambulance staff circling the course or in one of the medical tents. But there was no need to send anyone to the hospital. After some treatment, everyone could resume their race or join the other finishers to celebrate their great achievement.

Such a great result is to a major extent the result of really well-planned medical response and a functioning emergency medical service. We are very proud of and grateful for the qualified and hard-working medical committee and all voluntary first aid responders, nurses and medical doctors who committed their free time to care for the Liberia Marathon participants





Easily to identify in their red T-Shirts all along the course, the starting areas and the finish line, more than 150 medical personnel and ten ambulances were on duty. In addition, several hospitals along the course were on alert to receive runners in need of urgent care.

While running contributes significantly to physical and also mental health, it also does carry some risks. The medical safety of runners and volunteers is hence a core principle for the Liberia Marathon Trust and we make extensive efforts to provide sufficient resources and work with the right people and partners.

It was an amazing team which supported us during the Liberia Marathon 2022 as well in previous editions – and we cannot wait to continue working with everyone in the future.

Our sincerest thanks go to our medical partners Wellness Partners, Clinilab Medical & Diagnostics Center, Mercy International Medical Center, Liberian Red Cross, JFK Memorial Medical Center and EEA International which were also all represented in the medical committee. We also would like to thank APM Terminals and Bkay Pharmacy for their support in providing all necessary medical supplies. Last but not least, we would like to give a massive shout-out to all medical volunteers who showed strong commitment and determination and helped to create an environment where everyone could feel safe.

Our special appreciations go to Dr. Nicole Cooper (Wellness Partners) and Dr. Whyllah Blojay (SDA Cooper Hospital) for serving as Medical Focal Points and to Ms Hiba Khoury (Clinilab) for providing comprehensive training for all first aid responders and nurses.











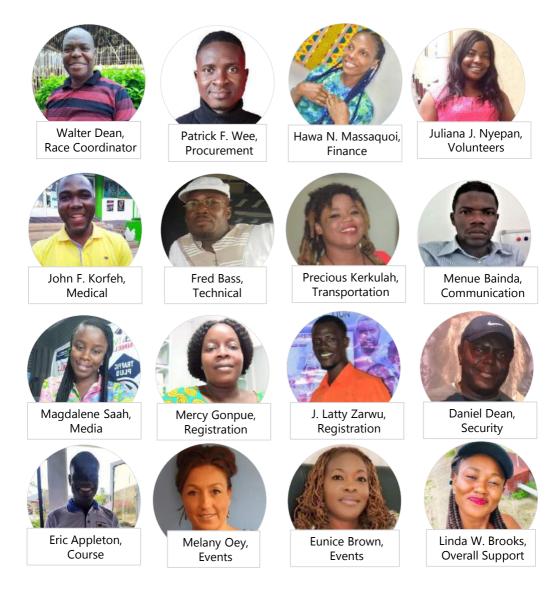




## Liberia Marathon 2022 Organising Committee

The Liberia Marathon events are arranged and coordinated by a volunteer group of (mainly) of Liberians who work committedly and determined and contribute their time, expertise and experience over many months. Coordinating their respective sector (in collaboration with the many partners and volunteers), they join hand and work together as a team to make such an amazing race day possible.

Please meet the Liberia Marathon 2022 Organising Committee:





# **About the Liberia Marathon Trust**

The Liberia Marathon Trust (LMT) is as Liberian-based Non-Profit Organisation which was established in 2011. The LMT is the host organization of the Liberia Marathon events.

## Vision

Institutionalising road-running as important part of the Liberian professional and recreational sports sphere in line with the Sports for Development Agenda.

## Mission

Providing road-running outlets and events on international standards for Liberian professional athletes and the general public, promoting Liberian long-distance talent and creating development linkages through sports.

## **Our Core Principles**

The LMT is committed to organize all Liberia Marathon event in accordance with the following core principles:

### Safety

Safe event for participants, volunteers and spectators.

### Affordability

registration fees to allow for participation for all income levels.

### Quality

Event on international standards, including electronic chip-timing and AIMS certified course.

### Inclusiveness

Participation is open for all ages, gender, including athletes with disabilities



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