

World Long Distance Mountain Running Challenge 2011 - PREVIEW

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Friday, 17 June 2011

World Long Distance Mountain Running Challenge 2011 - PREVIEW

The 8th WMRA Long Distance Mountain Running Challenge takes place in Podrdo, Slovenia on Saturday 18 June, with many of the top mountain runners assembling to compete for this prestigious title over a distance of 38km (with 2500m uphill and 2800m downhill).

So following on from the memorable World Mountain Running Championships last year in Kamnik, Slovenia is going to host other WMRA international event, and is sure to be a highlight for many of the competitors who'll run in the Slovenian mountains around Podbrdo.

The course is unusual because there is more descending than uphill running with a net drop of 300m (2500m uphill and 2800m downhill).

In total 500 runners from 18 Countries will be represented, with 12 national teams in the men's division and 7 nations represented by squads in the women's category. The USA is returning to defend their Men's and Women's titles from 2010.

The men's team favourites – in addition to the USA - will include Scotland who boast several in form athletes with 2008 winner Jethrow Lennox and Tom Owens who won the trial race ahead of the other top British runners. Just behind was 19-year-old, Robbie Simpson who is another international winner from Scotland adding youthful strength to an impressive Scottish side.

Host Country, Slovenia also boast a strong team and will pin their hopes on Mitja Kosovelj who won the junior title in 2003 and finished third in this event in 2008. Kosovelj is joined by Toni Vencelj and Peter Lamovec who have made the World podium previously. The women's race is a more open affair although Slovenia again have a team that could top the podium.

The Slovenia hosts are always welcoming and Podrdo should see some great racing. The Local Organising Committee together with AZS (Slovenian Athletic Federation) have worked very hard to organise a great event and WMRA – represented by Bruno Gozzelino, WMRA President, and Tomo Sarf, WMRA Council member – expect a great competition, and thank all were involved in the organisation.

WMRA and Bashir Hussain for the IAAF



Mitja Kosovelj (SLO) - WMRA (c)

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KOSOVELJ AND MADDAMS TAKE WORLD LONG DISTANCE MOUNTAIN RUNNING CHALLENGE TITLES

19 June 2011 - Podbrdo, Slovenia - Mitja Kosovelj defended home turf to take the WMRA World Long Distance Mountain Running Challenge in Podbrdo, Slovenia.

Kosovelj and Maddams take World Long Distance Mountain Running Challenge titles

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Sunday, 19 June 2011

Kosovelj and Maddams take World Long Distance Mountain Running Challenge titles

19 June 2011 - Podbrdo, Slovenia - Mitja Kosovelj defended home turf to take the WMRA World Long Distance Mountain Running Challenge in Podbrdo, Slovenia, on Sunday (19).

405 runners from 18 countries competed in the eighth edition of the event - 320 men and 85 women. The race was linked with the 10th Gorski Maraton štirih občin (GM4O) run on a 37.5Km course with a 5000 metre altitude differential.

Kosovelj finished his job on home soil with some aplomb, beating the competition by more than four minutes in 3:22:32, beating a trio of Scots to the finish line. Thomas Owens finished second in 3:26:59 with the bronze medal going to his younger countryman Robie Simpson (3:29:05). The podium was just a step away from another Scotsman, Jethro Lennox (3:33:21), with Ralf Birchmeier of Switzerland fifth and Czech Petr Pechek sixth.

"Sometimes you dare to dream about such an achievement, but despite all the hard work you do before the race you need sporting luck as well," a humble Kosovelj said. "Today it all went the right way for me even though I was in such pain on the last descent because blisters completely damaged the skin of my heel."

The top end of the women's competition was an Anglo-Irish affair. Englishwomen Philippa Maddams grabbed the gold in 4:08:46, with Ireland taking silver courtesy of Karen Alexander (4:16:21). Her English neighbour Helen Fines (4:19:14) took bronze.

"I really didn't expect this, but I felt very well on the course," Maddams said. "I am very tired, I have a few scratches because I fell but I am also thrilled to have won this hard race."

In the men's team ranking a dozen nations were classified with full teams. Scotland defended their title and claimed team gold with a massive margin. The top-three Scots combined for a time of 10:29:15. There was a very close battle for the runner-up position claimed by host country Slovenia in 10:57:20, one minute better than England who finished in 10:58:46. Switzerland, Poland, Wales, and the Czech Republic followed.

In the women's team race, seven nations reached the finished. The title and gold medal went to England (12:54:49), ahead of Russia (13:24:37) and Scotland (13:41:07). Poland finished fourth, Slovenia fifth, Wales sixth and Croatia seventh.

Among those who attended to the event were WMRA President Bruno Gozzelino and WMRA Council Member Tomo Sarf who also represented the Slovenian Athletic Federation.

The Local Organising Committee, led by Director Janko Humar, and Joze Dakskobler, who came up with the idea for this competition a decade ago, were praised by participants and officials alike for their organisation of the races. The most interesting aspect of the competition is that four different Slovenian municipalities - Tolmin, Zelezniki, Cerklje na Gorenjskem and Bohinj - were involved in the organisation, a beautiful example of the mountain and mountain races unite people everywhere.

WMRA for the IAAF



Mitja Kosovelj winning in Podbrdo (Pete Hartley)

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Mitja Kosovelj winning in Podbrdo
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