A helicopter for a film crew, made available by the Botswana police force, briefly circled over the start area saluting the cheering crowd before following the athletes over the A1 motorway towards the ultra modern Diamond Technology Park, into town through the Government enclave and over the main A1 highway back to Phakalane.

“At the start of the full Marathon there was a lot of excitement mixed with anxiety on most people’s faces. You could tell that every one was gearing up for the race and giving themselves a last minute pep talk,” said Pamela Guwuzela, a second time participant in the 4km fun run held alongside the Gaborone Marathon.

Over 150 route marshals, many from the Gaborone Cycling Club, guided the runners on the route. Sponsors and volunteers from the United Nations Volunteer Program manned the water stations, encouraging runners and keeping the water flowing. "The water tables were well placed with very supportive volunteers handing out the drinks," said a runner.

Minutes after the last athlete in the Marathon had crossed the starting line, the race organizers began leading the 10K runners into the fenced-off start area. By now the rain had stopped and the first ray of sunlight broke through the clouds. There was laughter and chitchat among the 10K runners, a marked difference from the apprehensiveness felt at the start of the Marathon. More and more runners gathered for the 06.45 start, while the crowd standing behind thickened.

"The Start/Finish looked very professional," said one participant. "There were masseurs, food and entertainment, creating a real buzz with everyone enjoying themselves."

At 06.45 sharp, over a thousand runners charged across the 10K starting line amid the cheers and clapping of an overjoyed crowd. Minutes later a stream of late arrivals came rushing towards the empty start area, some tripping over as they...
Steinmetz Gaborone Marathon

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hastily tied their shoelaces and pinned on their bibs while running on to the race course, all to the great amusement of the roaring crowd. Those without a race number begged to take part after experiencing the atmosphere. Hopefully their enthusiasm will be rewarded at next year’s race.

By this time the entertainment was in full swing. A group of young marimba players who had traveled for two days in the back of a pick up truck to get to the event played blissfully in the blazing sun.

Bowed over by the enthusiasm of the children, parents, aunts and uncles flocked to the gigantic yellow inflatable gantry to take part in the 4km fun run/walk. “It was absolutely amazing,” said one of them. “There is something about running in a race where there are so many people that motivate you and I just found myself saying, I have to give all I’ve got, I refuse to be anywhere near the last position. So I pushed myself steadily and exceeded my expectations.”

“It was great to see the crowd cheering people on as they drew nearer to the finish. It was such a gratifying feeling to receive the medal. I felt like I had accomplished so much!” said Pamela Gwanzura.

Meanwhile, the first elite runners in the marathon began coming through the finish line amid cheers and screams of the crowds. Felix Kipkoto from Kenya was first home, with Zimbabwe’s Samukeliso Moyo the first woman - her second win in Gaborone.

Vivian Aspin, second female veteran to finish, said: “The race was absolutely fabulous. Well run, excellent water points, friendly marshals, good toilet facilities and just a great route to run. I will be back next year with a few more of my friends to run with me. This race will grow from strength to strength once runners get to hear about it.”

Only six runners did not make it under the 6:30 limit. With more motivation they may have something to work on for next year.

Pamela Gwanzura was equally upbeat: “I would love to see as many people run as possible. I would love to invite people from other cities and villages to participate so that it would become a unifying symbol”.

Winner Felix Kipkorir said: “African culture has a big influence on the race. I thought it was great. Botswana people were very supportive through- out and the organizers looked after us very well.”

Result

MEN:
1 Felix KIPKORIR KEN 2:16:25
2 Benjamin SEREM KEN 2:16:46
3 Jobo KHATOANE LES 2:16:49
4 Tsepho RAMARENE LES 2:16:51
5 Ramolefi MOTSIELOA LES 2:18:03
6 Paul Kipngeno KORIR KEN 2:19:14
7 Raobene RAMOSEKA BOT 2:20:23
8 Mike WEDSTONTEBULO MAW 2:20:36
9 Ndabili BASHINGILI BOT 2:21:00
10 Kelebonye SEMBUWA BOT 2:21:35

WOMEN:
1 Samukeliso MOYO ZIM 2:48:29
2 Ntahleng MASAILE LES 2:54:03
3 Maleboheng MOFATA LES 2:59:43
4 Solotate ONKEMETSE BOT 3:05:48
5 Margaret MAHOMOZIM 3:08:58
6 Tina MEKGWE BOT 3:52:48
7 Alice MATIMBA BOT 3:56:05
8 Vanessa MAEĐER RSA 4:23:14
9 Martinette WIESE NAM 4:27:46
10 Emily GREENBERGER BOT 4:29:53