



## CHAPTER FIVE

### STORIES OF NINE DECADES WHAT HAPPENED 50 YEARS AGO



*The year was 1968. It became in many ways a very unusual one for both the country and the marathon.*

*The so-called Prague Spring was at its peak in Czechoslovakia, and a way out of the restless political situation was being sought, when on **21 August 1968** the armies of the Warsaw Pact countries invaded the territory of a sovereign state. Many changes took place almost immediately.*

*The Košice marathon, which after several years was again being planned for 28 October, symbolically on the **50th anniversary** of the founding of Czechoslovakia, fell into isolation. The decision was made that only domestic runners would start, without international competition. This change had very little positive about it. Perhaps only the fact that runners for whom the marathon in Košice up to that point was more or less inaccessible due to the strict qualifying time, could now come to the start. One of them was **Juraj Fotul**, who was 22 years old at the time. Today he says with a smile that he made his marathon debut in Košice*

*only thanks to the tanks coming to the city. It is certainly remarkable that, barring some extraordinary event, then he won't miss the start even 50 long years later.*

*The clear favourite on Monday **28 October 1968** was 36-year-old **Václav Chudomel** starting for the club Bohemians Praha. He had a start and an 18th place in the Tokyo Olympics behind him. He had also worn the national colours at the European Championships in 1962 and 1966 and had booked a career best of 2:15:26 in 1964 on a course from Windsor to Chiswick.*

*Judging by the results he didn't have a lot of work to do on the course with the competition. He won by nearly two and a half minutes. A rarity of the race that year was also the awarding of two 3rd places, when the judges were unable to determine the finish order in those days before there were cameras at the finish line.*

## **RESULTS**

### **Kosice Peace Marathon, October 28, 1968**

#### **Men**

1.	Václav Chudomel	TCH	2:26:28
2.	Eduard Földvári	TCH	2:28:56
3.	Karel Cviček	TCH	2:30:14
4.	Anton Javorka	TCH	2:30:14