



## CHAPTER THREE

### STORIES OF NINE DECADES WHAT HAPPENED AT THE MARATHON IN KOŠICE 70 YEARS AGO



#### *Zabala's record finally broken.*

*At a time known as the **Northern or Scandinavian era**, when runners from this corner of Europe won all but three of the eleven first post-war marathons in Košice, the organizers tried to draw the highest quality competition available to the starting line. Many of them began to sweat immediately upon being asked about whether anyone would ever break Zabala's course record from 1931.*

*But a smile finally appeared on the face of the Swede **Gösta Leandersson**, who in 1950 came to Košice for his second victory and an historically fast time of 2:31:20.2 on the course to Seňa and back.*

*He had no shortage of fans even before the start, as he had come to Slovakia following a victory in Boston from 1949, which made him the clear favourite. After the start, he hid for a while from the wind, but at the turnaround point in Seňa only his countryman Jansson was still in step with him, and in the second half of the race Leandersson, who had triumphed here in 1948, too, clearly dominated.*

Košice resident **Anton Holzbár** also took his place at the starting line that year. Like all amateur athletes of this time, he had to make a living somehow and based on club membership we can assume that he worked in some capacity on the railways. So, the fact that his colleagues from work covered for him the hours he needed to train more intensively for the autumn marathon still looks like a gesture of goodwill today. In the end, he didn't do too badly: from among the 91 runners who officially completed the race, he finished in 53rd place in a time of 3:11:09.6.

## **RESULTS**

### **Medzinárodný maratón slobody, October 9, 1950**

#### **Muži**

|    |                   |     |           |
|----|-------------------|-----|-----------|
| 1. | Gösta Leandersson | SWE | 2:31:20,2 |
| 2. | Gustaf Jansson    | SWE | 2:35:12,4 |
| 3. | Veikko Timonen    | FIN | 2:37:21,0 |