

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



Erkki Puolakka – 1952 Košice Marathon Champion.
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A forced course change

The year 1952 in the world of running belonged especially to Emil Zátopek and his three gold medals from the Helsinki Olympics. The last of these to be put around his neck was the one for winning the marathon.

*The organisers in Košice stuck to their traditional race date, which in that year meant Sunday, 5 October. On the same day, a race was also held in the Finnish city of Abo, where the holder of the then Košice course record, the Swede Gösta Leandersson, chose to take part. Perhaps he shouldn't have, because another northerner, the Finn **Erkki Puolakka**, deprived him position as the Košice record holder while also becoming the first runner in race history to go under the 2:30 mark in Košice. He thus maintained the fine form he had shown throughout the year, as evidenced by all three of his marathon starts. Aside from Košice, he had also won in Helsinki in May, and in the same city had finished in an excellent 8th place at the July Olympics.*

*One fundamental organisational change was the need to create a new course, which led, but only this one time, **from Prešov to Košice**. The reasons were rather prosaic. The road to Seňa, on which the marathon had been run since 1926, was undergoing a major overhaul. The final kilometres on this one-time course thus became a real test for the runners, when just before entering Košice they had to climb the relatively demanding Zelený dvor hill rising from this direction above the Košice basin.*

RESULTS

**Košice Peace Marathon,
5. október 1952**

Men

1.	Erkki Puolakka	FIN	2:29:10
2.	József Dobronyi	HUN	2:32:42
3.	Jaroslav Šourek	TCH	2:33:53