



## CHAPTER THREE

### STORIES OF NINE DECADES WHAT HAPPENED 70 YEARS AGO



***Košice witnessed the world's largest marathon.***

*Organizers knew that their last year champion Finnish athlete Mikko Hietanen who won in Stockholm on September 7 in 1947 (with new world season best 2:30:58) is not going to defend his victory. Their hard work and busy communication were about to ensure the best athletes to compete in Košice. But everything got complicated. American John Semple lost all his documents in Prague, Charles Heirendt from Luxemburg did not obtain entry visa and Italian Dante missed his train from Vienna...*

*After all everything was fixed and runners could start their race in a good weather on October 28, 1947. The hot favorite was for sure British champion Jack Holden, holder of second best world performance of the year and later European champion. At the 25th kilometer Jack still led the race but step by step Charles Heirendt took over and turned his marathon debut in*

*Košice into victory. By this triumph he interrupted the period so called Scandinavian era during which all the winners (except Charles) in between 1946 – 1950 were from Scandinavia.*

*The 1947 was the unique year for Košice also in other way. In that year there were 54 marathons organized worldwide and none of them had more athletes crossing the finish line than Košice. To be specific, in Košice it was 75 runners while in Boston it was only 41. Košice marathon can be considered to become the largest marathon of 1947 in the world.*

## **RESULTS**

### **Košice Marathon, October 28, 1947**

#### **Men**

1.	Charles Heirendt	LUX	2:36:06
2.	Jack Holden	GBR	2:37:10
3.	John Systad	NOR	2:39:55