

STORIES OF MARATHON CENTENARY

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE MARATHON IN KOŠICE 70 YEARS AGO



*In 1953, the victory belonged to Walter Bednář.
/ Photo: © 1953 Košice Marathon Club – archive.*

Battle with the weather.

Leafing through the chronicles of the Košice marathon, we note that, indeed, only a few of its races were held with no international participation. Aside from premiere race, this also happened during the Second World War and then again in 1968, when the country's borders were closed to foreigners after the invasion of Warsaw Pact troops. Foreign runners were also absent twice more for other, rather technical reasons. One of them was in **1953**, when extensive road repairs were being made on the route to Seňa. There was such uncertainty over the completion of these works that the organisers chose not to invite any foreign competition to Košice.

The somewhat average times of the marathon winners in 1953 could perhaps be attributed to this fact, though there were certainly other reasons. According to period sources, the warm weather could also be blamed. Without a doubt it played a part in up to a third of the runners being unable to finish the race. In the end, **Walter Bednář** handled all these obstacles the best, but even he did not have it easy, and the influence of the weather is clear in his case, too. This is also evidenced by the fact that in one of his later starts he ran the same course more than 20 minutes faster than in his winning year. This can be seen even more strikingly with Jozef Klarus. In 1953, they had to wait for more than 4 and a quarter hour for his arrival at the finish line; three years later, under much better conditions and perhaps better prepared, he appeared at the finish line after only 2 hours and 57 minutes.

RESULTS

Košice Marathon, October 18, 1953

Men

1.	Walter Bednář	TCH/CZE	2:53:32,8
2.	Jaroslav Fiala	TCH/CZE	3:00:24,6
3.	Otto Puteany	TCH/CZE	3:01:22,6