Record Racing in Wellington

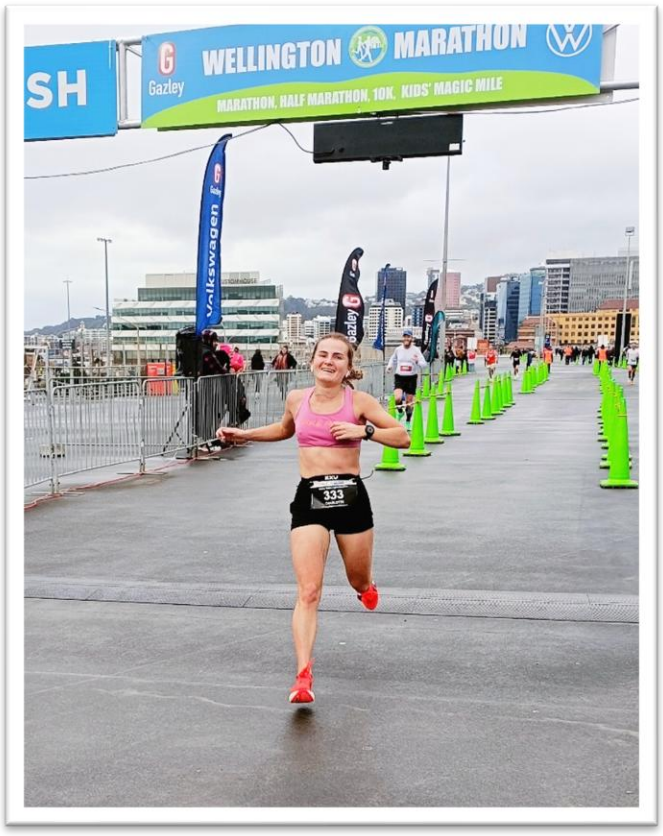
A cold southerly blast failed to hold back record racing at the Gazley Volkswagen Wellington Marathon.

With some 4000 participants from a record 27 countries, this year's 39th Gazley Volkswagen Wellington Marathon was a record-breaking year even before the gun fired. But when the first women in the feature full marathon finished, there was a new race record over the classic 42.2k distance.

The women's marathon had been billed as a battle between two young up and comers Maya Edmonson and Zali Vaivars, who had finished fourth and fifth in 2025. But Dunedin's Charlotte Burgess upset them both, improving from ninth last year with a massive 23min personal best to win in a race record 2hrs 46min 06secs.

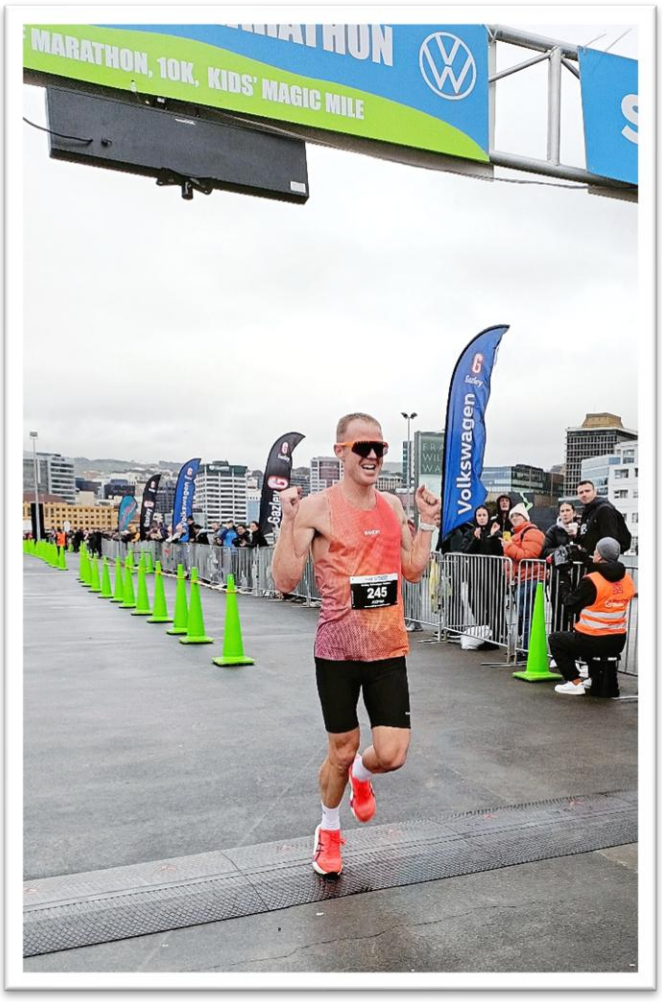
Burgess wasn't surprised, saying, "I wanted to run 4min K's and that what I managed to do, and even a bit better."

It was a simple tactic that ignored the competition in favour on concentrating on what she thought she could do. Second placed Sarah Imbush was 12min in arrears, following 6min later by third place Edmonson.



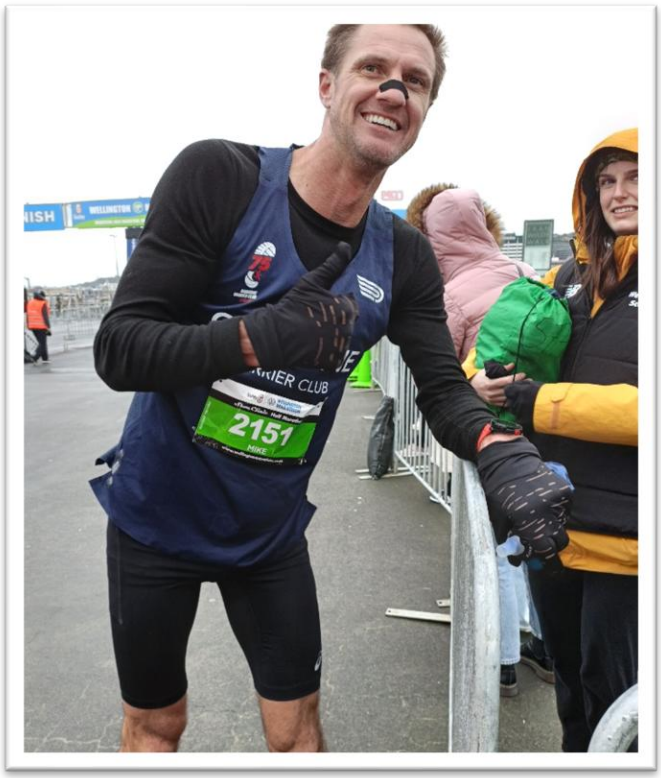
Charlotte Burges sliced 2min of the race record

The men's marathon couldn't have been more different. Hasting Josh Stewart knew that Wellington's Hiro Tanimoto was the man to beat, and the two traded blows for some 34k before Stewart moved ahead to win by 58secs in 2hts 32min 51secs. Three minutes behind, Wellington's Murendeni Netshituka claimed third, just ahead of Upper Hutt's Max Poland (2:38:13) and Wellington's Ben Twyman (2:39:46).



Josh Stewart enjoyed his first major marathon win

The half marathon races were similarly close. Among men, just 77secs separated first to fifth as Okitu super-vet, Mike Robinson, took a surprise 3sec win ahead of Wellington Max Doherty, while Blernheim's Lennox Crowe was only 10secs further back in third.



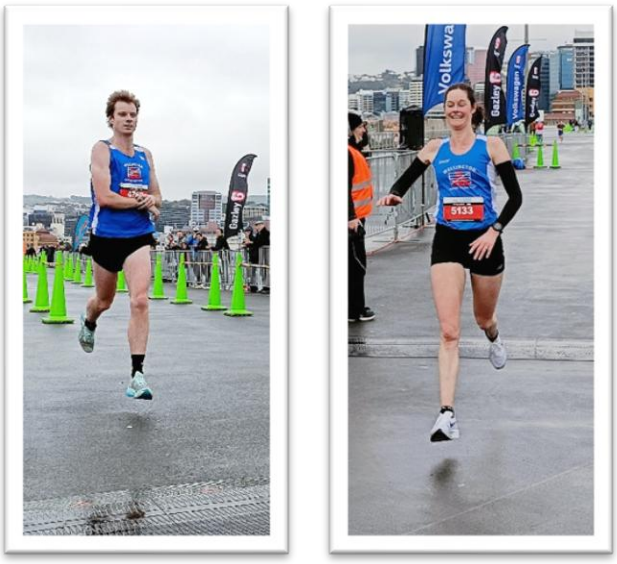
Mike Robinson took out a tight half marathon

The women's race saw co-favourite Kumiko Otani finally nab a win in her adopted home event. Otani had previously been second and third in this race and was overjoyed to finally nab the win in 1hr 18min 35secs. But it didn't come easily. Pre-race co-favourite, Lower Hutt's Esther George, was just 12secs down, then 7secs to third placed Ingrid Cree (Wgtn) and a further 7secs to Lucy Jurke (Chch) in fourth.



Kumiko Otani enjoyed a win over clubmate Esther George

In other events, former national champion Sarah Drought (Wgtn) lined up for her first race after three injury-stricken years and shaved 10secs off the women's 10k record in 35min 04secs. Among men Wellington's Callum Stewart was similarly dominant, winning by over a minute in 31min 33secs but narrowly missing the men's record by 12secs. In the Kids' Magic Mile, Lower Hutt's Eden Morris put a cat among the pigeons by winning not only the girl's race but being first overall in a girl's record of 5min 20secs. The standout result among walkers was a 10k win to Blenheim's Bary Neal in 55min 56secs for new age 50-59 record.



Callum Stewart & Sarah Drought dominated the 10k

Exactly 4011 runners and walkers from 27 countries lined up for the 39th Gazley Volkswagen Wellington Marathon. In 2027 the event will celebrate its 40th year. Full results at https://results.timingsports.com/wellingtonmarathon/2026



Our final finishers, Na'i Siava & Bronwyn Cook , were as proud as everyone in front of them.