

“STRAMILANO 09” The NRDC-ITA running team in the Budapest half marathon

■ by WO1 (ITA A) Giovanni Papa



the Commander. The athletes kept up a very high spirit and honoured the NRDC-ITA even abroad (half marathon in Budapest, Hungary, 2008).

Even this year the participation to the “STRAMILANO” half marathon has been great. Athletic and physically prepared personnel compose the group portrayed in the photo above. Considering their high average age, they demonstrated to be very professional and passionate.

In the early morning of last 5th April, Milan changed its aspect, thousands of people started running downtown together with the ones participating to the “STRAMILANINA”. It was a big event, and it is not usual to see 50.000 people holding balloons in their hands and, at the same moment of the start, setting them free. The sky was suddenly coloured of red, creating a flamboyant choreography.

One hour before the start of this international sporting event the atmosphere was surreal, the adrenaline rush was flowing through the athletes; they were all warming up their muscles like racehorses. The head of the race was made of running stars, some of the best marathoners in the world. It was very emotional for us no-professional athletes to run side by side with the best in the world.

Piazza Castello was crowded just with people waiting for the starting cannon shot. We could



feel the challenge to make better times. After the start at 10:45, everyone tried to get a good position going ahead as much as possible, even though the front-runners were like ghosts (the first finished the 21 km in just 1 hour and a bit).

After the first 10 km the selection began. Even our group started breaking up; the younger guys just kept on going, but even though this happened the older guys held their positions pretty well. In the last 4 / 5 km it was easy to meet someone slowing down for various reasons, without giving it up. The tiredness was starting to take its toll, but we tried to distract, thinking about the last kilometre sign. At that moment it was just a psychological challenge to go ahead and finish the run with any effort. Then the last oxygen breath and finally we started to hear the speakers in the background commenting the arrival.

There were a lot of persons cheering on you behind the barriers since the entrance of the park till the Arena Civica (arrival). We thought they were cheering on some important runner, but we suddenly realised that the clapping was for us. It was very rewarding, and for someone of us it was a big happiness to have his family waiting at the arrival. At that moment the tiredness seemed to go away, the arena was full of people clapping. There were also stands to refresh and support the athletes after the run.

And now we can say “We were there too!”.

The running team would like to thank NRDC-ITA HQ that has given us this opportunity. A special thank also to all those who organised the event and to the municipality of Milan. ■

