

Cellcom Green Bay Marathon preview: 2007 champs won't set the pace

By Scott Venci svenci@greenbaypressgazette.com May 17, 2008

After winning the Cellcom Green Bay Marathon last year, Onesmus Nyerere said he'd be back to defend his title.

That won't happen.

Nyerere is one of a handful of winners from last year who won't be participating in Sunday's 26.2-mile race. None of last year's winners in the distance events will be back.

Nyerere is in Kenya and didn't have the visa or finances to get here. Had he been able to make it, he would have been facing a big challenge in his attempt to repeat.

"On the men's side, it could be wide open," elite runners coordinator Linda Maxwell said. "And it could be very fast."

Fast enough, Maxwell said, that a course record could be set. Wilson Komen established the record on the men's side in 2005 after finishing in 2 hours, 17 minutes and 32 seconds.

Seven runners enter this race with personal records of 2:20 or faster.

Atop the list is Evans Ogaro, who has a 2:13 personal best. Ogaro was forced to pull out of the Miami Marathon in January due to the political unrest in Kenya. Maxwell found out Thursday Ogaro would be participating in Sunday's marathon.

"It could go under the course record if we have a good day, especially considering it could actually be a race," Maxwell said. "Sometimes, they run away with it. If it's a closer race, it's going to be a faster finishing time."

On the women's side, Callen Areba of Kenya is one of the favorites. She brings with her a personal record of 2:39, 1 minute shy of Tatiana Titova's 2001 record.

Last year's winner, Erin Moeller, will not run after participating in the Olympic Marathon Trials last month in Boston. She's one of a handful of American runners who will not participate after running in the trials.

"For most of the field, it was too short of a time to recover," Maxwell said.

The men's half marathon will have David Tuwei and Raphael Kuto, both from Kenya, as two of the favorites. The race also will feature a rematch between Mukwonago's Ryan Meissen and

Matt Hooley of Columbia, Mo. Meissen \hat{o} who won the half marathon here in 2006 \hat{o} and Hooley finished within 4 seconds of each other at the Houston Marathon in January.

Five of the top 10 men's half-marathon finishers from 2007 are back.

The women's half marathon could be paced by Jenna Boren, a 2007 Olympic Marathon Trials qualifier from St. Paul, Minn.