



For immediate release:

JACK ROWE TAKES THE HONOURS AS SIR MO FARAH SAYS FAREWELL TO LONDON AT THE BIG HALF

- British distance running great completes final race in the capital before retiring next week
- Calli Thackery wins elite women's race while David Weir and Samantha Kinghorn triumph in wheelchair races
- Rowe, Mahamed, Butchart, Thackery, Harvey and Donnelly earn right to race at World Athletics Road Running Championships Half Marathon

Sir Mo Farah couldn't get the victory he longed for in his final race in London today with Jack Rowe spoiling the party to win The Big Half.

The greatest British distance runner in history was hoping to sign off his career racing in his hometown with his fourth victory at The Big Half, London's community festival of running.

But it was not to be as a group of four broke clear as they crossed Tower Bridge, with Rowe, Mahamed Mahamed, Jonny Mellor and Andy Butchart pulling away from Sir Mo as the race entered Rotherhithe. Rowe, runner-up in 2021 and 2022, pushed the pace in the final mile to open a decisive gap over Mahamed, crossing the Finish Line in 61:08.

Rowe said: "I am pumped, it was a great day and after two second places, this was overdue. I wanted to be competitive and knew I was in great shape. I wanted to have my nose in it, so being able to run for GB for the first time on the road is great. I can't wait and am looking forward to Riga now."

Sir Mo said: "I wasn't feeling too well yesterday, and I wasn't even sure if I would run, but I had so much support, so I needed to do it."

"I felt OK and the race was not bad for me, but I struggled when the pace was pushed. It is a pleasure to see Jack win – he joined us at a training camp and he's come a long way in three years. Seeing the work youngsters put in and get the results they deserve makes me feel proud."

"I love my family and I want to see them enjoy it. They have been a massive part of my success and now we can finally spend more time together and I can be more of a family man."

Mahamed Mahamed finished second in 61:16 and Andrew Butchart finished third in 62:15.

The elite women's race was won by Calli Thackery, who ran 69:15 to finish comfortably ahead of the rest of the field.

Rose Harvey finished in second place in 70:02 and Abbie Donnelly [70:31] was a shock third-place finisher, racing her first half marathon eight years after her last for pleasure.

Thackery said: "I really enjoyed that. I felt good and having so many bodies to run with was a pleasure. The race went as I hoped, I know I am in PB shape and even though I know it is hard to PB on this course, I fancied my chances. I can't wait for the World Championships, that was the main objective, and I am so pleased to be there."

David Weir won the men's wheelchair race in 47:06 while Samantha Kinghorn won the women's wheelchair race in a new course record time of 52:05.

Weir just missed his own course record of 47:18, set here in 2022, as he beat Danny Sidbury in a sprint for the line.

Weir said: "I knew it would be a tough race with Danny. I've been training in Switzerland with Marcel [Hug], which has put a spark back in me, but I got back yesterday so I've been home for less than 24 hours and I felt it a bit this morning, but the result shows my fitness is there."

"It's always good to race The Big Half and on the streets of London, and the weather was great today."

Women's wheelchair winner Samantha Kinghorn said: "I was thrilled with a debut win. The crowds around the course were amazing. It was a good course, an enjoyable course, not too

hilly, not too twisty, it was quite nice. The cobbles were a bit challenging at a few points, so you get rattled about a bit. Me and Eden [Rainbow-Cooper] did it together, so it was nice.

“Going over Tower Bridge was my most enjoyable part. It was an iconic part – that was pretty special. It has been a great atmosphere – there were loads of people out with their kids because the sun was out, cheering. It’s great to show up for a sport and show how cool our sport is.”

TOP THREE IN BOTH ELITE RACES EARN RIGHT TO RACE AT WORLD ATHLETICS ROAD RUNNING HALF MARATHON CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Big Half 2023 was the official British Athletics trial race for the World Athletics Road Running Half Marathon Championships, which take place in Riga, Latvia, on Sunday 1 October.

In both the elite men’s and women’s races, all three podium finishers earned the right to race at the upcoming event – Rowe, Mahamed and Butchart in the men’s race and Thackery, Harvey and Donnelly in the women’s race.

To be eligible to compete at the World Athletics Road Running Half Marathon Championships, athletes had to finish in the top three of The Big Half and have achieved the qualifying time of 62:30 for men and 71:30 for women.

FLASH QUOTES

Mahamed Mahamed, runner-up in the elite men’s race at The Big Half, said: “It was a good race, to finish second and with a qualifying time, I’m happy with that. I’ve achieved a massive personal best. It was a good day today.

“I was so proud to race with Mo. He’s my role model and competing with him is one of the best achievements I’ve ever had.”

Andy Butchart, third-placed finisher in the elite men’s race at The Big Half, said: “My legs weren’t there today, but I’m in the middle of a big marathon training block, which is going well. Whenever Mo is around there’s a great atmosphere, so he’s going to be missed in the sport. Shame not to get the win but today was good.”

Rose Harvey, runner-up in the elite women’s race at The Big Half, said: “That was hard, that was really hard, half marathons hurt but it was an awesome run. We had a great route, the girls

out there were amazing and they really pulled me through.

“The crowds were awesome, the sun was shining and everyone seemed in really good spirits, the crowds were really great all the way through.

“I wasn’t expecting to qualify (for the World Championships). I haven’t run a half marathon for two years ago, so training has been going really well, but I’m very much in a marathon build up so it’s difficult to know how I’m going to go over a half. A PB, a world championship place and second place!”

Abbie Donnelly, third-placed finisher in the elite women’s race at The Big Half, said: “I can’t believe it. I am so pleased and have heard so much about the last four miles being painful, but I found a way though. The crowds were so good and helped me through. I have never raced 13.1 miles before and to qualify for the World Championships is amazing, I have had such a good day.”

Danny Sidbury, runner-up in the men’s wheelchair race at The Big Half, said: “So second place, same as last year. It would have been better to win. I’m just more of a track guy, I’m not really a road guy, so to be in touching distance of first place is still a good result for me. I tried to make several breaks in the race but couldn’t shake Dave [Weir] off and then I knew it was going to be a kick to the finish...and he just took me on the final bend, he’s just so much more experienced when it comes to roads, he’s a lot more confident, I haven’t developed that skillset yet.”

John Boy Smith, third-placed finisher in the men’s wheelchair race at The Big Half, said: “By the time I caught David (Weir) and Danny (Sidbury) I was really tired, so I’m very happy to be on the podium today. I would have liked to be a few places higher, but I’ll take it!”

Mel Woods, third-placed finisher in the women’s wheelchair race at The Big Half, said: “That was my first time on The Big Half course so it was good to get practice at doing the turns and being with other racers; it was fun. There were so many people cheering, ringing bells, which really kept me going.”

ABOUT THE BIG HALF

Now in its sixth edition, The Big Half is London’s community running festival with the half marathon starting near Tower Bridge and finishing at the historic Cutty Sark in Greenwich.

You can watch full coverage of The Big Half at thebighalf.co.uk

Images for The Big Half 2023 are available [here](#) (password: TBH2023).

Footage of The Big Half 2023 is available by emailing media@londonmarathonevents.co.uk

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NOTES TO EDITORS

- The Big Half is a world-class mass participation event, organised by London Marathon Events, over the half marathon distance (13.1 miles)
- The community event was first held in 2018 and takes place in four London boroughs: Greenwich, Lewisham, Southwark and Tower Hamlets.
- The Big Half is also a campaign called #WeRunAsOne. This unique event will demonstrate how sport and community can come together to inspire social change, create social cohesion and improve health and wellbeing. Find out more at thebighalf.co.uk
- London Marathon Events Ltd, organisers of The Big Half, gifts its surplus each year to The London Marathon Foundation (the operating name of The London Marathon Charitable Trust, a registered charity (283813) and a company limited by guarantee registered in England & Wales (01550741), registered office: 190 Great Dover Street, London, EYB).
- Since 1981, The London Marathon Foundation has awarded grants totalling in excess of £100 million to more than 1,600 projects in London, Essex and across the UK.

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