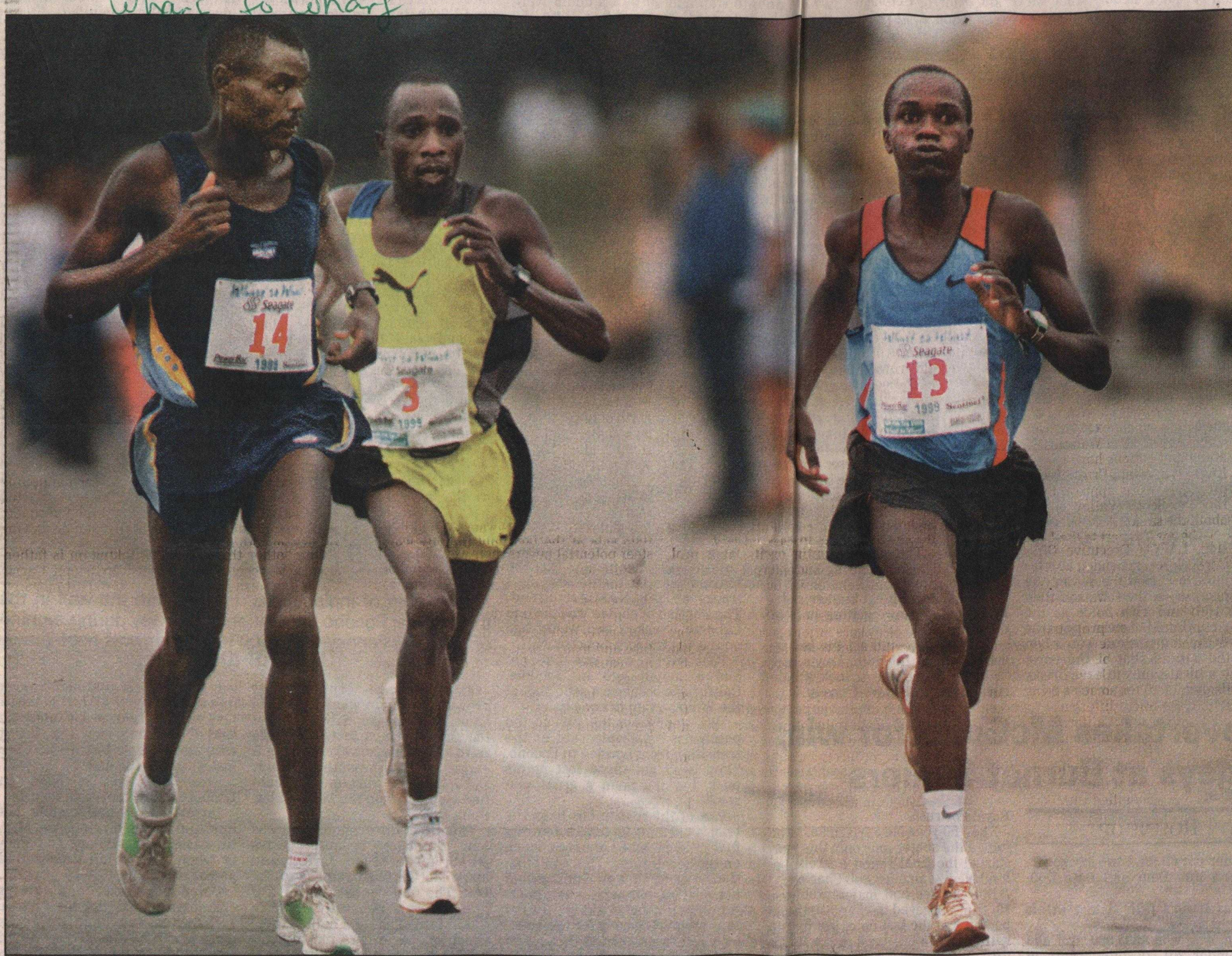


Kenyans dominate Wharf to Wharf



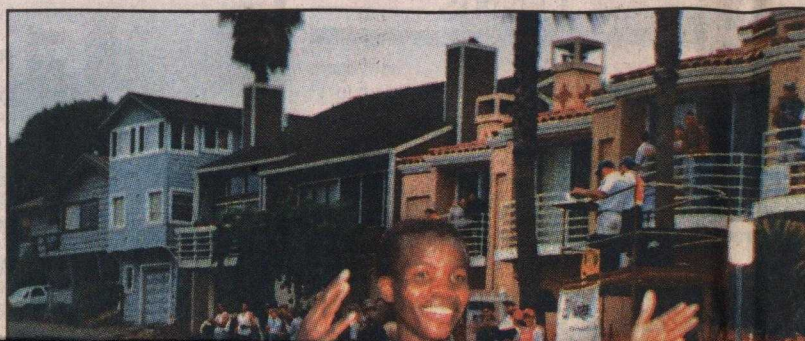
Kenyan Philip Kurui sprints to victory on the final yards of the Wharf to Wharf Race Sunday as countryman, and 1997 winner, James Bungei, left, can only watch. William Kiptum, center, edged out Bungei for second place.

Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel photos

Acosta puts residency rumors to rest

By JEREMIAH OSHAN
Sentinel staff writer

CAPITOLA — Barb Acosta, the top



Omoro takes women's race for second year

By JEREMIAH OSHAN
Sentinel staff writer

Newcomer Philip Kurui outsprints countrymen in tight finish

By DAVID KIEFER
Sentinel assistant sports editor

CAPITOLA — Each could feel the tension, but none wanted to make a move.

It was the final mile of the Wharf To Wharf Race Sunday and four Kenyans had a chance to win.

The situation begged for someone to surge to the front, but none would stoop to what would be the equivalent of racing suicide. And none wanted to be the odd runner out with prize money limited to the top three.

■ Jose Aispuro captured the men's county title — *Page 4*

■ Only top three finishers receive money — *Page 4*

■ List of the top 100 finishers in the Wharf to Wharf Race — *Page 4*

Instead, each patiently waited for a chance to kick. And finally, on the descent down Opal Cliff Drive to the finish line, the race was on.

The top three finished within one second, with newcomer Philip Kurui outsprinting William Kiptum and 1997 champion James Bungei to win the six-mile race from the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk to Capitola Village in 27 minutes, 35 seconds. Kiptum and Bungei were clocked in 27:36, leading a Kenyan sweep of the first five places.

For Kiptum, the finish brought back memories of last year, when he lost to countryman John Gwako by inches in the closest finish in the race's 27 years. This time, Kiptum got the measure of Gwako, who slowed on the homestretch when his calf tightened up and finished fourth, more than 50 seconds slower than his '98 winning time of 27:08.

The result marked the third consecutive victory by a Kenyan and fourth straight by a foreigner. Kurui, 26, a member of the Kipsicylis tribe, outran a field of 14,000 to earn a \$3,000 winner's check.

"I was only trying to get in the top three," he said of his pre-race goals.

But Kurui accomplished more than that despite holding back in the opening miles.

Kenya's Patrick Muturi, a former Washington State standout, broke to

By JEREMIAH OSHAN
Sentinel staff writer

CAPITOLA — Barb Acosta, the top women's finisher from Santa Cruz County in the Wharf To Wharf Race, would like to put a rumor to rest.

While it is true that she purchased a house in San Jose, she still calls Santa Cruz home, receives her mail here and trains at the Soquel High track.

"We have two of everything," the mother of two said. "We haven't moved at all. It's not like we come over to Santa Cruz to go camping for the weekend."

There had been talk that Acosta was no longer eligible for the title of county champion. As evidenced by Ken Thomas' announcement of Acosta as county champion, that rumor was unfounded.

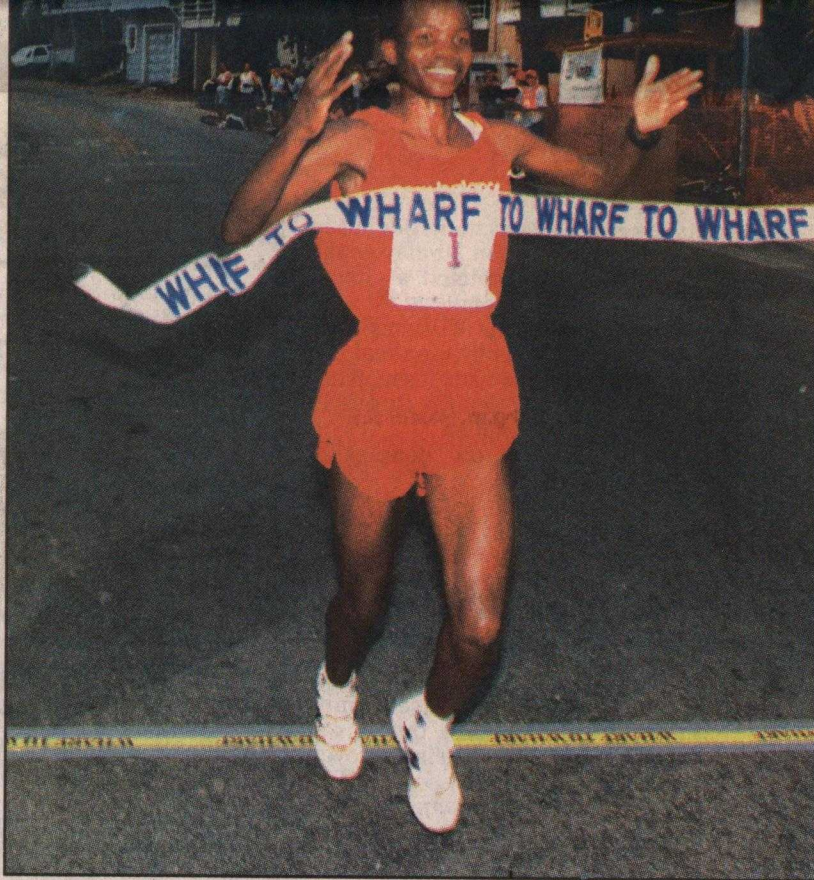
"My life is over here," said Acosta, who stays over the hill three or four nights a week. "The main reason I run in this race is to represent Santa Cruz."

Acosta's children, a four- and nine-year-old, have always gone to school in San Jose and she has worked in Santa Clara Valley since moving to Santa Cruz. She recently got a job at SGI in Mountain View.

Until a year ago, she commuted like thousands of others. But after getting into her second accident in 10 years on Highway 17 — a drunk-driver collided with her at 5:30 a.m. — she and her husband decided it was too much of a hazard to commute every day.

Acosta, 41, has won the overall women's title three times, most recently in 1996 and

Please see ACOSTA — Page B4



Jane Omoro crosses the finish line with a time of 30 minutes, 56 seconds to repeat as the women's champion of the Wharf to Wharf Race.

By JEREMIAH OSHAN
Sentinel staff writer

CAPITOLA — The only woman Jane Omoro did not beat in Sunday's Wharf To Wharf Race was herself.

Although the Kenyan cruised to a second straight Wharf To Wharf victory, she failed to equal her record-setting mark of a year ago. Her time of 30 minutes, 56 seconds was eight seconds slower than her 1998 mark.

Still, it would have squashed the previous record by five seconds, giving her the two fastest times in the seven years the race has been run at its current six-mile distance.

"I was expecting to win," Omoro said. "I never felt challenged."

It's easy to understand why.

A year after her record-setting 30:48, in which she beat her closest competitor by 1½ minutes, Omoro found herself without much competition again.

From the start, Omoro established herself as the runner to beat. She never trailed any of the women and her time would have put her among the top 25 male finishers.

Closing in on the finish line, Jose Aispuro, the top finisher from Santa Cruz County, barely held on to beat Omoro.

Hellen Kimayo-Kipkoskei, a fellow Kenyan, crossed the line at Capitola Village some 50 seconds after Omoro. Her personal best Wharf To Wharf time of 31:49 was good enough for the second-place share of \$2,000. Omoro earned \$3,000.

"(Omoro) was definitely the strongest runner," said Kimayo-Kipkoskei, who often runs against Omoro. "I had no doubt about her. She has been doing this all along."

Lyuda Vasilyeva of Russia (32:18) rounded out the prize-

**'I was
expecting to
win. I never
felt
challenged.'**

**— Jane Omoro
Women's Wharf to
Wharf winner**

Please see OMORO WINS — Page B4

three, he said of his pre-race goals. But Kurui accomplished more than that despite holding back in the opening miles.

Kenya's Patrick Muturi, a former Washington State standout, broke to the front from the opening gun, building a six-second lead by the Riverside Street bridge over the San Lorenzo River.

The one who dared challenge him was Matt Giusto, a member of the 1996 U.S. Olympic team in the 5,000 meters.

Giusto, 32, of Alamo, caught Muturi in the second mile at Seabright Beach, and came through two miles in 9:13, building his lead to eight seconds.

But slowly the five-man pack, minus Muturi who had dropped back, swallowed up Giusto.

As Giusto struggled to stay in front, he realized his strategy had failed.

"I wish I would've made a different decision," he said. "I felt so good early on I didn't want to hold back. But after the first mile, I should've consciously slowed to a jog, let them pass me and run with the pack."

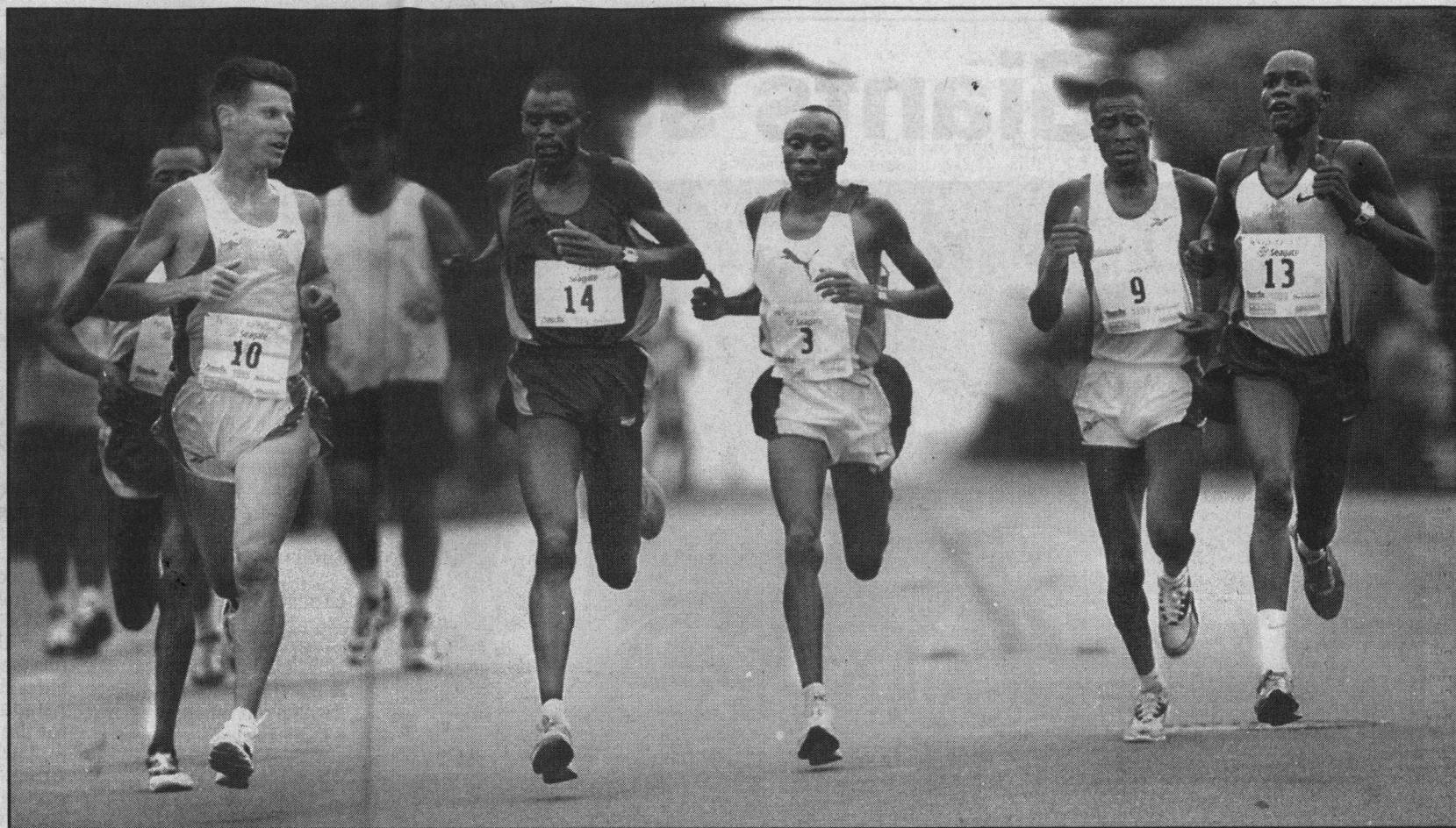
"I know if I was with them the last half-mile, I would've been right there. None of them have good leg speed."

Giusto, who has run a 3:55 mile, may have greater finishing speed, but it didn't matter because he was caught at Portola and 20th, about 3½ miles into the race and was unable to hang on. Giusto, who intends on making a serious attempt at the 2000 Olympic

Please see KURUI WINS — Page B4

1999 Wharf To Wharf Race

Top 100 Men			Top 100 Women		
PLACE	NAME, HOME	TIME	PLACE	NAME, HOME	TIME
1	Philip Kurui, Kenya	27:35	1	Jane Omoro, Kenya	30:56
2	William Kiptum, Kenya	27:36	2	Hellen Kimayo-Kipkoeski, Kenya	31:49
3	James Bungei, Kenya	27:36	3	Lyudmila Vasilyeva, Russia	32:18
4	John Gwako, Kenya	27:59	4	Marina Rodtchenkova, Russia	32:55
5	Mbarak Hussein, Kenya	27:59	5	Rosa Gutierrez, San Jose	33:30
6	Matt Giusto, Alamo	28:14	6	Tatiana Salazar, Russia	33:48
7	Patrick Muturi, Kenya	28:47	7	Maria Trujillo de Rios, Los Gatos	33:53
8	Chris Schille, Lafayette	29:20	8	Kathleen Smith, Irvine	33:59
9	Paul Thomas, Solana Beach	29:48	9	Barb Acosta, Santa Cruz	34:28
10	Ryan Hayes, Chico	29:54	10	Cathy Dubay, Santa Rosa	35:15
11	Ben Turman, Kensington	30:00	11	Ceci St. Geme, Atherton	35:30
12	Luis Quintana, San Luis Obispo	30:01	12	Carol Legate, Green Bay, Wis.	35:38
13	Michael Livingston, San Jose	30:03	13	Rosemarie Lagunas, San Jose	35:50
14	Aaron Ramirez, Albuquerque, NM	30:06	14	Liz Leigh-Wood, San Luis Obispo	36:03
15	Adam Boothe, San Luis Obispo	30:12	15	Eileen Brown, Santa Cruz	36:23
16	Sean Phillips, Goleta	30:24	16	Yvonne Lund, Sunnyvale	36:25
17	David Braund, Cottonwood	30:27	17	Trina Cox, Santa Rosa	36:29
18	Arturo Martin, Chico	30:34	18	Roxanne Lara, Chico	36:41
19	Kevin Selby, Pacheco	30:44	19	Sonya Patton, Santa Cruz	36:47
20	Juan Pablo Miramontes, Merced	30:47	20	Kristen Dowell, Santa Cruz	36:50
21	Gary Towne, Chico	30:49	21	Dana Jones, Alamo	36:55
22	Rudy Muñoz, Fresno	30:49	22	Liisa Nichols, Felton	37:13
23	Jose Aispuro, Watsonville	30:53	23	Sheri Wright, Superior, Colo.	37:24
24	Steven Moreno, Salinas	30:59	24	Lynice Anderson, Reno, Nev.	37:30
25	Liam Jones, Watsonville	31:04	25	Janie Nolan, Antioch	37:31
26	Stephen Overgaard, Stockton	31:04	26	Julie Rohloff, Los Gatos	37:43
27	David Jackson, Crestline	31:05	27	Carrie Mangiapane, Eureka	38:00
28	Charlie Brennenman, Santa Clara	31:08	28	Karen Smith, San Francisco	38:02
29	Dan Stefanisko, Big Sur	31:10	29	Theresa McCourt, Sacramento	38:09
30	Steve Pappa, Hayward	31:16	30	Betsy Diaz, Woodside	38:13
31	Kenny Goodrich, San Luis Obispo	31:18	31	Sandy Patterson, San Francisco	38:14
32	David Beals, Salinas	31:22	32	Mo Bartley, Cool	38:15
33	Brian Singleton, Newark	31:26	33	Monica Townsend, Los Gatos	38:24
34	Edward Burns, Sacramento	31:32	34	Susie Blake, Campbell	38:27
35	Gary Blanco, Chico	31:40	35	Teresa Gains, Santa Cruz	38:30
36	Bob Ebert, Santa Cruz	31:42	36	Jeanette Gunnarson, Reno, Nev.	38:36
37	Ian Dobson, Klamath Falls, Ore.	31:43	37	Teresa Clark, Los Altos	38:37
38	William Rice, San Jose	31:48	38	Erika Watson, Santa Cruz	38:38
39	Scott Marion, San Jose	31:52	39	Sherri Lee, Santa Cruz	39:01
40	Chris Lanese, Castro Valley	31:55	40	Elizabeth Nast, Saratoga	39:09
41	David Livingston, Aptos	31:56	41	Nancy McDowell, Meadow Vista	39:16
42	Frank Palacios, Watsonville	31:58	42	Angela Tanghetti, Sacramento	39:23
43	Steven Howard, Sunnyvale	32:03	43	Carrie Joseph, Santa Rosa	39:24
44	Gordy Holterman, Hillsborough	32:05	44	Dolores Bergmann, Chester	39:35
45	Steven Chavez, San Ramon	32:09	45	Angela Hessler, Los Altos Hills	39:36
46	Javier Naranjo, Soquel	32:16	46	Theresa Radvanyi, Soquel	39:37
47	Clyde Matsumura, Santa Monica	32:17	47	Kimberly Cloud, Turlock	39:45
48	Bryan Hacker, Cool	32:17	48	Jennifer Johnson, Los Altos	39:46
49	Tim Layden, Oakley	32:18	49	Katrin Tobin, Santa Cruz	39:48
50	Martin Mumenthaler, Menlo Park	32:20	50	Barbara Miller, Modesto	39:49
51	Michael Tapia, Fremont	32:21	51	Ann Conlin, Carson City, Nev.	39:51
52	Robert Tyler, Livermore	32:22	52	Tina Lount-Pretre, Redwood City	40:00
53	Jordan Woods, San Mateo	32:23	53	Laurey Davis, Danville	40:01
54	Brian Engleton, Antioch	32:23	54	Gretchen Schmitt, Scotts Valley	40:05
55	Dave White, Mill Valley	32:28	55	Joanie Carew, Louisville, Colo.	40:07
56	David Nichols, Suisun City	32:28	56	Katie Scott, Santa Cruz	40:11
57	Rob Nast, Saratoga	32:32	57	Michelle R. Shen, Mountain View	40:13
58	Frank Thomas, Roseville	32:32	58	Eva Mendez, Oakland	40:15
59	Kenneth Brown, Santa Rosa	32:37	59	Tami Rodriguez, Antelope	40:16
60	Joe Pawlish, Santa Cruz	32:38	60	Mary Vidovich, Los Gatos	40:19
61	Christopher Phipps, San Francisco	32:39	61	Kristen Staiger, Portola Valley	40:20
62	Erick Studenicka, Carson City	32:40	62	Debbie Leale, San Jose	40:26
63	Elijah Bilotta, Santa Cruz	32:42	63	Marianne Zerebko, Tahoe City	40:27
64	Alan Jackson, Los Gatos	32:42	64	Janel Carrasco, Burbank	40:32
65	Jim Clarke, Santa Cruz	32:43	65	Wendy Bowers-Gachesa, Watsonville	40:33
66	Patrick Rainey, Rocklin	32:44	66	Kristin Villopoto, Durham, N.C.	40:36
67	Antonio Arreola, San Jose	32:45	67	Meredith Mills, Redwood City	40:41
68	Greg Hales, Santa Cruz	32:47	68	Deborah Bleisch, San Jose	40:42
69	Doug Consiglio, Menlo Park	32:48	69	Dina Farage, San Jose	40:43
70	Greg Koniowka, San Francisco	32:49	70	Lynn Sestak, Santa Cruz	40:45
71	Will Clark, Los Altos	32:50	71	Susan Brewer, Los Gatos	40:47
72	Gilbert Muñoz, Watsonville	32:51	72	Patrick Shapiro, Chatsworth	40:54
73	Bill Joseph, Shasta	32:54	73	Kristen Bowen, San Francisco	40:56
74	Gil Guzman, Portland, Ore.	32:55	74	Jenny Martin, San Jose	40:57
75	Shawn Ayers, San Francisco	32:56	75	Brooke Bartholomew, Santa Clara	41:00
76	Ian Shearer, Santa Cruz	32:57	76	Connie Rowden, Folsom	41:07
77	Jeff Pauley, San Carlos	33:03	77	Missy Sandeman, Homewood	41:08
78	Eric Kobrine, Irvine	33:07	78	Rachel Will, San Miguel	41:12
79	Michael Butler, Palo Alto	33:11	79	Deborah Haffey, Reno, Nev.	41:15
80	Grant Guenther, Aptos	33:14	80	Amy Wang, Palo Alto	41:19
		33:15	81	Kelly Emo, Campbell	41:20



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel photos

Matt Giusto looks back in time to see the chase pack catch him during the fourth mile of Sunday's Wharf to Wharf.

Payment awarded to top three

By DAVID KIEFER and
JEREMIAH OSHAN
Sentinel staff writers

NOTEBOOK

CAPITOLA — One of them was bound to finish out of the money. After all, there were four contenders late in the Wharf To Wharf Race Sunday and only three would win prize money.

Because the race does not pay for plane tickets for elite athletes, top runners take a chance by competing.

Prize money is awarded only to the top three in each of the men's and women's divisions, with \$3,000 for first, \$2,000 for second and \$1,000 for third.

In Sunday's race, Kenyans swept the first five places, with four having a chance to win the six-mile race going into a final sprint to the finish. Defending champion John Gwako was the odd one out.

"You feel for somebody who travels a long way and goes home with nothing," said Kenyan third-place finisher James Bungei. "Many good runners want to come here. But you pay for your own ticket, so you might lose money."

"I think they should pay the top three. The race is big enough."

Bay, was the top American. He finished sixth and also advocated deeper pockets.

"With a race like this, I wish there was more emphasis on local athletes," he said. "There's not enough when you've got five Africans, who win the race, take the money and say, 'See ya later.'"

"I think local athletes would appreciate even a couple of hundred dollars. Why not award the top three open places with money and the top three Americans, to support their cause."

The race has experimented with prize money since 1992 and appears to have stability with its current set-up.

"What we try to do is put up a purse that will attract an elite field," race director Kirby Nicol said. "From a media and sponsorship point of view, we need to have world-class runners at the front."

"But it doesn't matter is there are three or four, or 10 or 20. If you finish out of the top three nobody remembers your name."

women ran, but only one — Lyudmila Vasilyeva — came away with any money. Her time of 32:15 earned her a third-place purse of \$1,000.

Still, she and her compatriots — Marina Rodtchenkova and Tatiana Salazar — said they enjoyed the race and the morning would have been close to perfect if the sun had cooperated.

"We brought our bathing suits," said Vasilyeva, amid the overcast conditions at Capitola Beach. "But, there's no sun."

□□□

Defending Santa Cruz Coast Athletic League boys cross-country champion Grant Guenther of Soquel High said he's been running semi-regularly, but not enough to finish as high as 80th.

"I wasn't expecting to do that," he said.

He and coach Jim Clarke ran together for most of the race, but that's where the coach's help ended. "I'm not going to let this little guy beat me," Clarke said.

Order was restored when Clarke finished 31 seconds ahead, in 65th.

□□□

Jules Villanueva came off the best track season of his life, placing eighth in the state community-college 1,500-meter final while running

for West Valley.

But Villanueva, a former Soquel High standout, didn't have the kind of race he hoped for, pulling over after two miles to vomit. The culprit — a three-day-old Thai peanut pizza he ate before the race.

"I ran out of Cliff Bars," he said.

But Villanueva was aware enough to avoid a camera at the two-mile mark.

"I told myself, 'I can't puke in front of the camera,' and politely held off until he struggled past."

□□□

Many were curious to see how Alejandra Barrientos would have done if she competed. Barrientos, 16, of Felton, recently won the junior national track championship in the 1,500 meters.

Barrientos was at the Wharf To Wharf, but as a volunteer at the starting line, along with her father Salvador and sister Raquel, who will join Alejandra at San Lorenzo Valley High this fall.

Alejandra had just completed a two-week break from running, which began after finishing second at the Junior Pan Am Games in Tampa, Fla., and will leave today for suburban San Diego for a week-long camp at the Olympic Training Center.

82 Jim Elam, Manteca	33:16	82 Katie Wallace, Antioch	41:23
83 Larry Woolsey, Livermore	33:18	83 Karen Dowell, Reno, Nev.	41:27
84 Steve Boaz, Los Osos	33:19	84 Sherie Jo Schmidt, Tahoma	41:32
85 Guillermo Cazares, Alameda	33:19	85 Stacey McGihon, Piedmont	41:33
86 Amol Saxena, Palo Alto	33:20	86 Kim Edmonds, San Jose	41:34
87 Steve Gerhart, Walnut Creek	33:21	87 Rachel Adamec, Concord	41:35
88 Eddie Pierini, El Dorado Hills	33:24	88 Catherine Swails, Pleasanton	41:35
89 Mauricio Maia, Fremont	33:26	89 Laura Behrens, Sunnyvale	41:38
90 Ramon Zacarias, Watsonville	33:27	90 Mary Chase, Palo Alto	41:40
91 Jeffrey Kirk, Santa Cruz	33:27	91 Lisa Ryner, Pacifica	41:44
92 R. Matthew Wise, Lafayette	33:28	92 Jennifer Murphy, Santa Cruz	41:45
93 Bryan Thoreson, Davis	33:29	93 Jennifer Cullen, Menlo Park	41:46
94 Mike Maguire, Livermore	33:30	94 Donna Hinshaw, San Francisco	41:47
95 Chris Blancarte, San Jose	33:35	95 Lee Gilbert, Aptos	41:48
96 Dennis Kurtis, San Jose	33:41	96 Erica Marra, San Francisco	41:52
97 Michael Hurlston, San Jose	33:43	97 Jennifer Kervin, Los Gatos	41:54
98 Dave Froncowiak, Gilroy	33:44	98 Ellen Wallace, Mountain View	41:54
99 Christopher Thibert, Austin, Texas	33:46	99 Tracey Savorn, Santa Rosa	41:55
100 Rick Baca, Marina	33:49	100 Katie Christiansen, Salt Lake City	41:56



The Eagle family, parts of whom came from as far away as Wisconsin and Minnesota, as well as points throughout California, keep warm with a group hug before the race.

No chance Aispuro will lose county title soon; feels local can't compete

By DAVID KIEFER
Sentinel assistant sports editor

CAPITOLA — Jose Aispuro captured the men's county title at the Wharf To Wharf Race Sunday for the 11th consecutive year, but he said the days when a local can compete for the overall title are over.

No county runner has won the overall title since Watsonville's Armando Siqueiros in 1984, in the days before prize money, or contended since Aispuro placed second in 1994.

"No, I don't think we can compete, because they bring in the international runners," Aispuro said. "These guys are world class."

The prize money awarded to the first three places has attracted runners from Kenya, which dominate the U.S. summer road-running circuit. Over the past two years Kenyans have swept the top five places, and Kenyans have won the past three races.

"They are going to come where the money is," Aispuro said. "A local will not win it unless he turns himself into a pro runner. Otherwise, a local doesn't have a chance."

Among locals, however, no one has shown they can beat Aispuro, a 37-year-old Safeway food clerk

from Watsonville.

But for the second straight year, Liam Jones, a former Soquel High and UC Santa Barbara standout, gave Aispuro a run. Jones, who lives in Watsonville, finished in 25th, two spots behind Aispuro's 23rd. Jones was timed in 31:04 to Aispuro's 30:53. Last year, Jones was nine places and 25 seconds behind Aispuro.

Aispuro listed some locals he thought could have challenged him if they ran — Albert DeLaTorre and G.P. Pearlberg — but realistically, none was likely to beat Aispuro, who barely held off women's champion Jane Omoro (30:56).

"I've never lost to a woman," Aispuro said. Now, if former county residents were included, Aispuro's streak would be broken.

Watsonville native Rudy Muñoz beat Aispuro by a single place, running 30:49 for 22nd.

Muñoz, who won five Monterey Bay League cross country and track titles for Watsonville High (class of '76), went on to run at DePaul and Nevada universities. Recently, Muñoz won the national masters cross-country championship.

He is an investment banker in Hartford, Conn., and a part-time resident of Fresno.

Ormoro wins

Continued from Page B1

money winners, finishing third at 32:15 and ran away with \$1,000.

This year was the first Wharf To Wharf for Vasilyeva and although she didn't win, the experience lived up to expectations.

Yelena Burykina, who took third last year, told her the Wharf To Wharf was a fun race, which prompted the one-time member of the USSR/Russia National team to enter.

"She said it would be worth it even if I didn't finish in the top three," said Vasilyeva, who normally runs in 5K races.

Similar to the other top finishers in the women's field, Vasilyeva said the course, which runs along the coast of the Pacific Ocean, next to several beaches and is lined with spectators and musicians, is aesthetically pleasing, as well as fast.

"I'll try again next year," Vasilyeva said.

She jokingly added: "Maybe there won't be so many Kenyans."

Barb Acosta was the top female finisher from the county for the seventh straight year and for the 11th time in 13 years, despite running almost a minute slower than a year ago. The 41-year-old Acosta, a three-time women's overall winner, finished ninth overall.



Runners cross 25th Avenue in Santa Cruz.

Kurui wins

Continued from Page B1

team before retiring, finished sixth. He was fifth in his only previous try, in 1997.

The final miles were like a waiting game. The four-man lead pack consisted of the top three from last year's race plus Kurui, a farmer whose best accomplishment this

year was third in the Paris Half Marathon (1:01:37).

"We were waiting to see what would happen," said Bungei, who ran two seconds faster than his winning time of 27:38 in 1997.

"Five guys were running strong," Kiptum said. "There was a lot of tension among ourselves, a lot of respect for each other. So, nobody

wanted to go." By waiting, they each took a chance. But it was only Kurui who made the most of it.

"With 200 meters left, I saw the finish line," Kurui said. "That's when I realized I can kick and win."

And he did just that, winning in the closest three-man finish in race history.

Acosta

Continued from Page B1

increased her county winning streak to seven years. On Sunday, she finished ninth among women with a time of 34:28 over six miles, which was down from 33:26 in 1998.

"We'll see how many years I can hang on until someone younger comes along," she said.

The slower time can be partly explained by a non-running foot injury she suffered in March that sidelined her for three months. It was the second straight year that she was hampered by health problems, after a bout with bronchial flu.

"I just hope next year is a better training year," she said.

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