



VAZHISOJIAN/Gulf News

Delighted

Abeer Al Sharif, along with her coach Richard Ryan, won the Dubai Marathon wheelchair competition.



الأردنية عبير الشريف (من المصدر)

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الرياض

Abeer wheels her way to marathon glory

Athlete wants to try New York marathon next

By K.R.NAYAR
Senior Reporter

Dubai Abeer Al Sharif, who won the 42.195km marathon wheelchair event, is delighted with her achievement. A polio attack had confined her to a wheelchair from childhood.

"I wanted to win here and had come all the way for it. I feel so nice that I could win a race," remarked Abeer, a Jordanian living in Riyadh.

Proudly touching her gold medal that sparkled, she smiled. "It is so good to become the first Jordanian to win a marathon. If my win will encourage more wheelchair bound people to attempt to race in marathon, I will be very happy," added Abeer, who works in diplomatic quarters in Riyadh.

"I decided to attempt wheel chair marathon after I met Richard Ryan. He was a former marathon runner and he agreed to

train me. Achilles, a charity organisation that donates wheel chair for those who love to race, gave me one. The wheel chair costs \$4,000 [Dh14,680] and I am thankful to them for their gesture," she said.

Appreciating Abeer's hard work, Ryan said: "She worked really hard and it is nice she won it here. Every day we used to do weight training, stretching exercises and train in stationary wheel chair as well as her racing wheel chair. In fact, I also monitored her nutrition."

Abeer wants to achieve more glory. "This victory has given me the boost. My next aim is to participate in the New York marathon. To win there will be special because over 4,000 disabled athletes will be taking part in it. I will start my preparations right away," said Abeer, wheeling away to shake hands with her friends

عبير بطلة ماراثون الكراسي المتحركة

تمكنت الأردنية عبير الشريف من نادي «أشيليس تراك» من إنهاء الماراثون والفوز بفئة ماراثون الكراسي المتحركة لأول مرة بزمان ساعتين و 34 دقيقة و 7 ثوان، واستقطبت الأنظار خلال السباق.

وقال المستشار أحمد الكمالي المنسق العام لماراثون دبي العالمي "لقد أثبتت هايلي أنه بطل عظيم، لقد كان الطقس سيئاً خلال الجزء الأخير من السباق ولكن هايلي تمكن من تسجيل ثامن أسرع زمن في التاريخ. ونحن نتطلع قديماً لعودته إلى دبي في العام المقبل للمشاركة للمرة الثالثة في ماراثونها العالمي".

Embassy Employee Wins Dubai Marathon Wheelchair Competition



Edward Feeney, Abeer Al Sharif and Richard J. Ryan

Abeer Al Sharif, a Jordanian national employed at the US Embassy in Riyadh, won the 42.195km marathon wheelchair event at the Dubai International Marathon on January 16, 2009. This was her first race of any kind.

"It is so good to become the first Jordanian to win a marathon. If my win will encourage more wheelchair bound people to attempt to race in marathons, I will be very happy," says Al Sharif.

Achilles, a charity organization that donates specialized wheelchairs for competitors, donated a wheelchair to Al Sharif.

Al Sharif decided to attempt her first wheelchair race after meeting Richard Ryan, an American employed at the US Embassy in Riyadh. Ryan, a former marathon runner who now races in the wheelchair division due to injury, agree to train her. In preparation for the race, Al Sharif trained six days per week for

10 weeks. Ryan's program included endurance work, strength training, flexibility and nutrition. With one gold medal under her belt, Ms. Al Sharif is gearing up for future competitions. "This victory has given me a boost," she says. "My next goal is to compete in the New York City Marathon in November."