

2002 CELLCOM GREEN BAY MARATHON

Kuznetsov blazes to finish

He comes from behind on Fox River Trail for win

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With about seven miles to go in Sunday's third annual Cellcom Green Bay Marathon, it appeared to be a two-man race.

Jonathan Ndambuki and Vincent Temu, both of Kenya, had a sizable lead of at least one-quarter mile on the rest of the elite pack as they headed into the Fox River Trail at Mile 19.

But by the time they emerged from the most scenic 5-mile stretch of the race, neither one was winning.

Andrey Kuznetsov of Russia had blazed through the trail to take a surprising lead, and the 44-year-old veteran marathoner went on to win easily, crossing the finish line in downtown Green Bay in 2 hours, 23 minutes, 33 seconds.

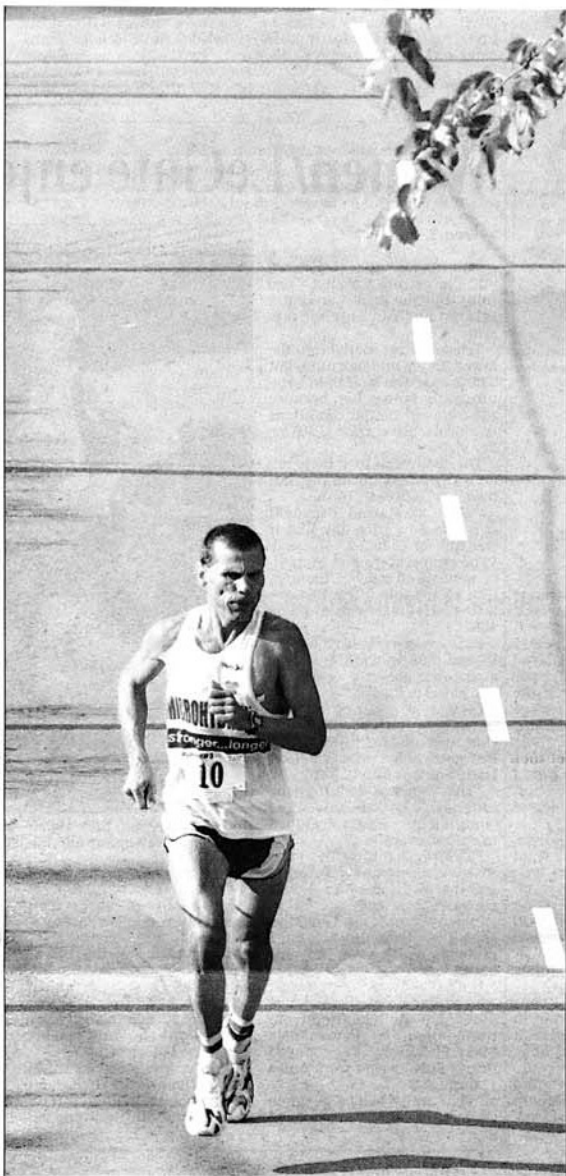
"After 15 miles, I think maybe I take second because I don't see first guy," Kuznetsov said in his broken English, referring to Ndambuki in the lead. "But after 20 miles, I saw first guy, so it's possible I win. And I try."

By winning both the overall race and the masters division (over 40), Kuznetsov earned \$4,200. He also won the Washington, D.C., Marathon in March, and he has placed as high as seventh at the prestigious Boston Marathon, in 1999.

Early on, Kuznetsov was in the lead pack of five runners who separated themselves at about Mile 6. But he started to drop back by the midway point, and at Mile 15, the leaders were Ndambuki, Temu and Geoffrey Kipruto, another Kenyan.

Kuznetsov thought the conditions — it was over 75 degrees and climbing midway through the race — were too tough to sustain such a rapid pace, and he was right.

"The Kenyans went out too fast for me," Kuznetsov said. "I wanted to pace myself, my speed.



Men's champion Andrey Kuznetsov runs along the Fox River Trail at the Cellcom Green Bay Marathon on Sunday. He came from behind to win with a time of 2 hours, 23 minutes, 33 seconds. Selena Jabara/Press-Gazette