

Sister City Marathon Guest Runners' Tour of Iwaki

The Iwaki Sunshine Marathon is held on the second Sunday of February each year. The event attracts over 10,000 runners annually, including many running enthusiasts from Tokyo. Starting from the Iwaki Athletics Stadium, the course takes runners along Iwaki's scenic coastline including Ena Fishing Port, Iwaki Marine Tower and Aquamarine Park.



The guest runners take part in a Japanese tea ceremony at Shoko Kanazawa Art Museum

As part of Iwaki's international exchanges, the city invites guest runners from its overseas sister cities each year. This year, Iwaki welcomed Tony and Sonja as the winners of the Townsville (Australia) marathon and Martin as the winner of the Kauai (Hawaii, USA) marathon along with his wife.

Although what was to be the 10th Iwaki Sunshine Marathon was unfortunately cancelled due to an unprecedented snowfall (which also caused the 5th marathon to be cancelled back in 2014), the guest runners were still able to enjoy their brief time in Iwaki by visiting some of the main sights in the city.



Tony and Sonja, the male and female guest runners from the Townsville Running Festival (left), and Martin, the male runner from the Kauai Marathon (right), with his wife trying out kimonos at the same museum

During their time in the city, the runners visited Aquamarine Fukushima, Shiramizu Amida Temple, Wonder Farm and Shoko Kanazawa Art Museum. At the museum, they tried Japanese calligraphy and tea ceremony as well as tried wearing kimonos.



The overseas guests in front of Shiramizu Amida Temple, which is seen here covered in a white blanket of snow

Despite not being able to run in the marathon, the runners were still able to make the most out of their time in Iwaki and were fortunate to experience the city during one of its rare snow days.

With the marathon to likely be held on the fourth Sunday of February as of next year, some more suitable weather for running is expected for the 11th marathon.



The three runners on stage at the Welcome Party for the 10th Iwaki Sunshine Marathon