

# Run to the top of the world, Taipei 101

Taipei, Taiwan, November 25, 2007

Taipei 101, the world's tallest building, was the scene of top-sport today, as runners from all over the world tackled the 382 meters, by staircase. Although the building contains the fastest elevator ever built, today this elevator was used less than the stairs. Around 2500 people signed up to run the 2046 steps, taking them from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 91<sup>st</sup> floor.

National and international elite runners were the first to enter the building at 8 AM, giving them free reign of the empty staircase, without them being bothered by other participants. Top runners like Thomas Dold (Germany), Suzy Walsham (Australia), Rudolf Reitberger (Austria) and Andrea Mayr (Austria) participated in this event. For these the running up stairs is nothing new, all won one of the previous Empire State building run-up events. Several experienced national runners were also present, such as Li Xiao-Yu (李筱瑜) and Chen Fu-Cai (陳福財), both Taiwanese finished in the top eight in 2006 for women and men respectively.

The record for climbing Taipei 101 is currently held by Paul Crake (Australia), who in 2006 required a mere 10 minutes and 26 seconds to reach the top. He also won the Empire State building run-up five times and still remains the only person to reach the top floor in less than 10 minutes. Due to the cycling accident he had in November 2006 he's unable to defend his position. Rudolf Reitberger (Austria) comments: "Paul is a good friend of mine; I was very shocked by what happened. I lost my motivation, and also due to my illness I wasn't able to perform as good as I wanted." Reitberger has a long history of building run-ups, he ran up the stairs of the Empire State building eight times, winning twice and finishing second three times. Reitberger finished 6th at this year's Taipei 101 run-up.

This year's first place however is awarded to a newcomer in building staircase running, Marco DeGasperi (Italy). It took him 11 minutes and 39 seconds to reach the top floor, only 17 seconds before numbers 2 and 3, Thomas Dold (Germany) and Chen Fu-Cai (陳福財, Taiwan). DeGasperi about his victory: "This is my first real staircase running event. I ran and won the highest building in Milan, but it only has 31 floors. Today I was very lucky, everybody was 40 seconds slower than last year and this allowed me to win". DeGasperi, the current record holder of the Vertical Kilometer ascent, compares staircase running to his mountain running career: "It is similar, but here you have to corner and you have handrails you can use to speed you up. After 58 floors my speed went down, had to walk sometimes and couldn't use my full arm strength anymore. To be faster I need more practice."

DeGasperi's practice for this race consisted of his base sports training, but to adjust to staircase racing he ran the stairs to a power plant in the mountains in his home country, Italy. "I started 8 weeks ago running the stairs. Normally I practice twice a day and run in the mountains for about 190 kilometers a week".

The fastest woman of Taipei 101 was Andrea Mayr (Austria). She is also a mountain runner, and her practice consisted of mountain cycling. She considers running in the mountains easier than running to the top of a building: "Because you don't know if you're in front, you try to give even more. At a mountain race you start together, and during the race you know your position". This is her third win at Taipei 101. Running up, barefoot, in 12 minutes and 54 seconds, she did not manage to break her 2005 record, weighing in at 12:38 minutes. With 13 minutes and 42 seconds Suzie Walsham finished second, followed by Li Xiao-Yu (李筱瑜) third with 14:16 minutes.

DeGasperi's future races are still uncertain. He will be training for next season this winter, and he hopes to attend the New York City marathon. His goal is to qualify for and compete in the mountain running world championship, September 2008. As for building races, he will attend the Empire State run-up next February. DeGasperi: "A building run-up is a good advertisement for the building, the city and the people. I like to come back next year and try my best to win again".

Both first-prize winners took home \$200.000 NT (€4200, \$6200 US), the second prizes were \$100.000 NT (€2100, \$3100 US) and the third prizes \$75.000 NT (€1600, \$2300 US). The total prize money was divided over 16 winners (first 8 of both men and women) and totaled \$1.010.000 NT (€22.100, \$31.200 US). A maximum of 101 people were allowed to enter the Elite running group.

After the Elite Runner group finished their climb, individuals could take their own chance of running to the top floor, followed by groups. The group which finished first would receive \$30.000 NT (€420, \$620 US), second \$20.000 NT (€210, \$310 US) and third \$10.000 NT (€105, \$155 US). Every contestant was given a certificate of participation.

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Photography, interviews and news report by Joost Kuckartz. Feel free to change the news message to your publication specifications, as long as the intention is the same. Press selected photographs and this news report can be found on [www.taipei-city.net/press](http://www.taipei-city.net/press). For photographs, please report at least the photographer's name, "Joost Kuckartz". The photo's can be used for any press-related occasions, but not for promotional use.

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### **Competition results:**

First 8 men:

<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Time</i>
1	Marco DeGasperi	Italy	11:39:48
2	Thomas Dold	Germany	11:56:66
3	Chen Fu-Cai (陳福財)	Taiwan	11:56:91
4	Matthias Jahn	Germany	12:10:60
5	Emanuele Manzi	Italy	12:26:28
6	Rudolf Reitberger	Austria	12:48:56
7	Troy de Haas	Australia	12:48:73
8	Pedro Ribeiro	Portugal	12:50:45

First 8 women:

<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Time</i>
1	Andrea Mayr	Austria	12:54:70
2	Suzy Walsham	Australia	13:42:13
3	Li Xiao-Yu (李筱瑜)	Taiwan	14:16:38
4	Melissa Moon	New Zealand	15:17:34
5	Zhang Shu-Ling (張淑苓)	Taiwan	16:32:46
6	Shi Jing-Hui (施靜慧)	Taiwan	17:01:13
7	Jian Pei-Yu (簡培宇)	Taiwan	17:08:96
8	Zhang Mei-Lian (張美蓮)	Taiwan	17:25:72

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Joost Kuckartz is a 23 year old student at the National Taiwan University, pursuing his master's degree in Electrical Engineering. His photographic experience covers 12 years of hobby work, only recently as a freelance photographer and reporter. Joost is Dutch, lived in The Netherlands all his life and moved to Taipei, Taiwan in August 2007. In his life he has been part of international engineering projects, of which one in Australia and one in the USA. He will be staying in Taiwan until at least 2009. English is his second language and his Chinese speaking capability is close to none, but learning. The camera he uses is a Canon EOS350d (known as Digital Rebel XT in the USA).

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