

CPI IELTS Samples Reading

READING PASSAGE 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on questions 1-13 which are based on reading passage 1 below

ETHIOPIA'S LONG RUNNING SUCCESS

A

Ever since the advent of televised athletics in the 1950s Ethiopia has long dominated long distance running. Since 1993 it has won all but one of the World Championship and Olympic 10,000 metre titles. So what is it that makes this small East African country – population 65 million – the one to beat on the long distance running track? Although natural talent plays its part, it is not the only factor helping one of the world's poorest countries produce some of world's most successful athletes. As one would suspect, diet, lifestyle and genes are also important, as are training techniques and the “hands on” approach of the Ethiopian Athletic Federation [EAF]. Analysts suggest in fact that it is these last two factors that give Ethiopian athletes a winning advantage over their neighbours and closest competitors the Kenyans.

B

While Ethiopian athletes jostle with their Kenyan neighbours for places on the championship podium, in recent years it has predominantly been the Ethiopians who have stepped up to receive the coveted gold medal. The area yielding world-class long distance runners crosses the border between the two countries and is relatively small. The difference may well lie in external controls. Kenyan training camps – where athletes train intensely for months on end – are famous but they are invariably privately run. This means in effect they are involved in a bidding war for top athletes and are vulnerable to oil rich countries such as Qatar effectively buying off their top talent--a notable example being 3,000 metre steeplechase world record holder Stephen Cherono of Kenya, who defected to Qatar in 2003 and is now known as Saif Saaeed Shaheen. By contrast, Ethiopia's EAS enforces more cohesive, centralized governmental control. There are fewer agents, fewer

coaches, fewer disagreements about how things should be done and, it seems, fewer distractions.

C

A distinguishing feature of Ethiopian long distance running is the finishing kick, the most famous practitioner of which was Miruts Yifter, or Yifter the Shifter as he came to be known. On one occasion, in the 1980 Olympics Yifter sprinted into the lead approximately 300 metres from the finishing line, going on to win by an astonishing 10 metres. In the 1995 World Championships he completed the final 200 metres in an astonishing 25.2 seconds. The sprint finish is a unique characteristic of Ethiopian long distance running. But where does it originate? The key may lie in the gruelling training regimen the runners are put through back home in East Africa. Coaches have developed intensive training techniques specifically targeted at helping runners speed up at the end of the race. So every training session includes a series of sprint drills, starting at a fast pace and ending in a sprint over 50 metres. Ethiopian athletes also do a lot of intensive hill work as well as training specifically designed to maintain their elasticity and ability to accelerate throughout the race.

D

It may in fact be this that makes the crucial difference but there are regional advantages that both Kenyans and Ethiopians share. One these is the area in which they both live and train. Training at high altitudes means they are 'supercharged' by increased oxygen levels in other parts of the world. Physiological factors such as increased lung capacity, commensurate with the ability to function at high altitudes, also helps, although scholars have tended to shy away from theories such as these for fear of being labelled racist. Recent research suggests that East Africans may be more effective at fighting fatigue – a important factor in long distance races – and benefit from a lower level of lactate production produced by tired, oxygen deprived muscles. Excessive blood lactate produced by muscle cells prevents efficient muscle contraction, causes muscle pain and forces the body to slow down. The tall and thin body shape of East African runners may also be an advantage, as any excess weight – however miniscule - can make a vital difference when the margin between winners and losers can come down to hundredths of a second.

E

The Ethiopian lifestyle also favours runners. In rural areas children often walk and run 5-10 kilometres to attend school. The country's poor infrastructure means there are few roads and many are in a poor state of repair. Even if the roads are passable, poverty means the vast majority of the population cannot afford transport. This in itself provides an elementary training ground for the young athletes of the future. Running and walking are simply part of daily life, unlike the West where people other than professional sportsmen and women lead increasingly sedentary lives. In one of the poorest countries on earth, international sporting recognition also brings with it fame and wealth. That is also not to underestimate the intense patriotism of those running in the red, gold and green colours of the Ethiopian flag. It is a rare opportunity for Ethiopia to distinguish itself on the world stage in a positive way. Not surprisingly, sportsmen like Haile Gebrselassie and Kenenisa Bekele are highly revered icons back home.

F

Another factor that should not be overlooked is the East African diet. Although poor, traditional dishes in this part of the world are in fact also some of the healthiest. The Ethiopian diet is mainly made up of cereal grains such as teff, root crops such as potatoes, pulses and oil seeds. *Injera*, a type of flat bread made from teff, forms a major part of the diet. It is traditionally eaten with meat and vegetables in a spicy sauce. *Injera* is known to contain iron, phosphorous, iron, copper, aluminium, barium and thiamine. This carbohydrate-based diet provides essential energy needed for intense physical exertion, as well as a high level of calcium and protein for healthy teeth and bones. The food has a low sugar and salt content and it is also free of artificial preservatives, colours and additives.

Questions 1-7

Reading Passage 1 has six paragraphs A-F.

Which paragraph contains the following information?

Write the correct letter, A-F, in boxes 1-7 on your answer sheet.

NB You may use any letter more than once.

1 an explanation of how certain foodstuffs can aid performance **F**

- 2 how East African runners' can come from behind to win **C**
- 3 how the natural environment benefits long distance runners **D**
- 4 a reference to wider cultural controversies based on race **D**
- 5 how successful international competitors are treated back home **E**
- 6 an overview of sporting achievements and accolades **A**
- 7 a reason for centralized control of training facilities **B**

Questions 8-11

Classify the following features according to whether the writer states they

A are naturally occurring in East African athletes

B are the result of rigorous physical preparation

C are neither naturally occurring nor the result of training

Write the correct letter, A, B or C, in boxes 8-11 on your answer sheet.

8 stamina reserves **B**

9 financial motivation **C**

10 sprint finishes **B**

11 low body mass index **A**

Questions 12 and 13

Answer the questions below:

Choose **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** from the passage for each answer.

12 What is the Ethiopian flag an emblem of? **National pride**

13 What essential elements for exercise does the Ethiopian diet contain?
Vitamins and minerals