

More than 3,300 runners turn the Kochertal into a race track

Participant numbers rose once again at the 29th ebm-papst Marathon in Niedernhall. Alongside athletic achievements, the event's family-friendly atmosphere remained a central focus.

Mulfingen, September 13, 2026

More than 3,300 participants transformed the Kochertal into a race track this weekend. At the 29th ebm-papst Marathon, centered around the start and finish area in Niedernhall, not only runners but also inline skaters and handbikers took to the course. The event once again recorded significant growth, attracting around 300 more participants than the 28th edition.

"We are extremely pleased and delighted that participant numbers have increased once again," said Hauke Hannig, spokesperson for the ebm-papst Group. For the organizers, there is naturally no thought of bringing the event to an end. Quite the opposite: "Next year, we will celebrate our 30th anniversary, and we want to come up with something special for the occasion."

The ebm-papst Marathon has long since become a fixed highlight in the regional running calendar, as illustrated by the story of Manfred Richter. The 82-year-old from Rot am See has taken part in every single edition. "I'm 82 years old and happy every time I'm still able to run," said Richter. These days, however, he no longer needs to tackle the full marathon distance. "The marathon course is tough, but the 10-kilometer race is enjoyable."

The marathon weekend began on Saturday with Nordic walking events over 7.5 and 12 kilometers, as well as a 5-kilometer fun run open to everyone. Sunday started in the early morning with the main races, followed by children's races, before inline skaters and handbikers brought the event to a close.

The 10-kilometer race attracted a particularly large field this year, with 1,001 runners lining up at the start in Niedernhall. The half marathon saw almost as many participants, with 1,019 runners taking on the 21-kilometer course.

In the 10-kilometer race, Max Feinauer of TSG Giengen crossed the finish line first in 33:31 minutes, claiming victory in Niedernhall for the second time. Feinauer knows the event well and has been a regular participant in recent years. After his win, a special reward awaited him: lunch with his grandparents, who live in Niedernhall.

In the women's race, Pauline von Hebel secured victory in 42:09 minutes. The Künzelsau native, who now lives in Tübingen while studying there, was not entirely satisfied with her performance. "I was a little slower than I had planned," she said. In hindsight, however, her restraint may prove beneficial, as she is set to compete in a mountain marathon in the Chiemgau region next weekend, featuring around 3,000 meters of elevation gain.

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As more and more runners finished the 10-kilometer race, activity also increased on the festival grounds. Children flocked to the bouncy castle and other play areas, the beer garden began to fill up, and visitors explored the offers presented at the running expo. After all, sporting competition is only one part of the ebm-papst Marathon concept.

For years, the event has focused on creating a shared experience for the entire family. The organizing team places great importance on ensuring that even those who are not competing have an enjoyable day.

One person who combines both aspects is Tobias Feyrer. The ebm-papst employee has been familiar with the event for years and first competed in Niedernhall in 2012. This year, things went exceptionally well for him once again. Feyrer successfully defended his half marathon title and also achieved a personal best of 1:12:46 hours. It was a wire-to-wire victory.

In the women's half marathon, Antonia Seeger of Sport-Union Neckarsulm claimed victory. She also set a personal best with a time of 1:19:44 hours. "That was never really the plan," Seeger admitted. She had intended to use the race primarily as preparation for the Berlin Marathon, where she is aiming for an ambitious goal: 2:45 hours.

A record was also broken in the classic marathon distance, albeit of a different kind. Kay-Uwe Müller of TSG Schwäbisch Hall had set himself the goal of finishing in under 2:38 hours. He surpassed that target convincingly, crossing the finish line in 2:35:56 hours. It marked Müller's tenth victory at the ebm-papst Marathon and his eighth marathon title at the event.

"I'm coming out of training and now know where I stand," said Müller. The race also served as an important benchmark ahead of his next major objective: competing at the Masters Marathon World Championships in Zagreb this October.

In the women's marathon, victory went to a first-time winner. Nicole Preyl from Karlsruhe completed the course in 3:25:09 hours, celebrating her first triumph in the Kochertal. Although she had studied the route profile in advance, the challenging course still surprised her.

"I looked at the elevation profile beforehand, but I was still surprised by how demanding it was," she said. However, the conditions and atmosphere more than made up for it. "The atmosphere along the course was fantastic. The event feels very family-oriented and simply wonderful."

It is precisely this combination of sporting ambition, personal challenge, and family celebration that is expected to define the event again next year. The 30th ebm-papst Marathon will mark a special anniversary, and following this year's increase in participation, the Kochertal is likely to be just as vibrant and full once again.

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Captions (Source: ebm-papst):

Event photos can be downloaded until September 30, 2026, from:
ebmpapstgroup.com/ebm-papstMarathon2026

About ebm-papst

The ebm-papst Group is a leading global provider of innovative ventilation solutions for air, refrigeration and climate technology, headquartered in Mulfingen, Germany. The company develops and manufactures innovative components for HVAC and cooling applications, combining advanced fan and blower technology with electronics, controls and software & service.

For more than 60 years, ebm-papst has set international standards through innovation in aerodynamics, motor technology, electronics and digitalization.

With its energy-efficient and intelligently connected technologies, ebm-papst supports the reduction of CO₂ emissions, digitalization and the development of future-ready infrastructure worldwide. Its technologies are used in a wide range of applications, including data centers, building and heating technology, industrial applications, cleanrooms, cold chains and renewable energy.

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