



## RUN THE WORLD: ASICS WORLD EKIDEN 2020 TAKES VIRTUAL RACING TO A WHOLE NEW LEVEL

- New ASICS World Ekiden 2020 unites teams from all four corners of the globe in pursuit of a shared goal
- A specially created virtual race platform will vividly bring to life the connection and motivation of team competition at a time when we're apart
- Inspired by a century of Japanese running culture, runners of all abilities will work together to complete a combined marathon



**[1 OCTOBER 2020 – KOBE, JAPAN]** – ASICS today announces the inaugural ASICS World Ekiden 2020: the ultimate team challenge that will see teams of up to six people from all over the world come together to complete a combined marathon. Inspired by a century of Japanese running culture, the race will be split into six legs of varying distances, making it perfect for runners of all abilities and experience.

The ASICS World Ekiden 2020 will also combine the best of real-world and virtual racing thanks to a new race platform using both Race Roster™ and the

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Anima Sana In Corpore Sano, meaning "A Sound Mind in a Sound Body," is an old Latin phrase from which ASICS is derived and the fundamental platform on which the brand still stands. The company was founded more than 60 years ago by Kihachiro Onitsuka and is now a leading designer and manufacturer of running shoes, as well as, other athletic footwear, apparel and accessories. For more information, visit [www.asics.com](http://www.asics.com).



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ASICS Runkeeper™ app. From tracking their team progress in real time on their Apple Watch, Garmin or Fitbit device to ranking themselves on live online leaderboards and enjoying a customised in-race audio experience, participants will experience the excitement, connection and motivation of team competition no matter how far apart they are. They will even have to pass their very own digital tasuki – the narrow band of fabric used in traditional Japanese Ekidens – to each other at the end of every leg.

### **Bringing people together when they're apart**

The launch of the ASICS World Ekiden 2020 comes in direct response to the findings of ASICS' ongoing global research<sup>1</sup> into the ever-changing needs of runners and sports fans the world over. The research, which kicked off immediately after the pandemic began, reveals that 42% of people who exercise regularly are finding it difficult to stay motivated as they don't have a goal to work towards at the moment.

Meanwhile, three in four (74% globally) of team sport players say sport or exercise is more enjoyable when played with friends and teammates and two thirds (67% globally) admit to missing the chance to compete with others. Half (50% globally) even claim their mental wellbeing has been negatively impacted by being disconnected from teammates.

Through the ASICS World Ekiden 2020, ASICS aims to help people renew their connections with each other, enjoy the mental and physical benefits of team competition and re-energise their collective love of sport and exercise with a shared goal.



**Yasuhito Hirota, President & Chief Operating Officer, ASICS, said:** "It may be inspired by one of Japan's most famous race formats, but the ASICS World Ekiden 2020 really is an event like no other." We know people are missing the motivation and connection they get from team sport, so we are really excited to bring people together from all over the world to train and compete together in pursuit of a shared goal. In the true spirit of the Ekiden, anybody can take part and nobody will be running alone."

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<sup>1</sup> ASICS 2020 Pulse Survey: a live study of 1,250 regular exercisers in total across five markets that explores how runners are missing the connections, community and motivation they get from team competition. Conducted by Edelman Intelligence

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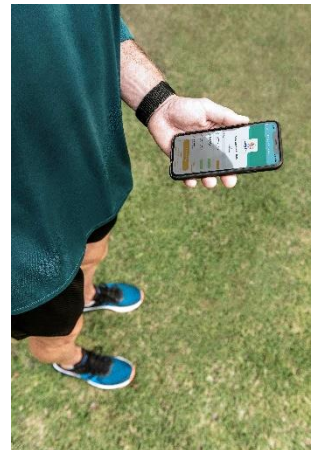


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To help teams prepare to give their very best in the event, ASICS is offering them free access to a variety of products and services in the run-up to race day, including training, coaching and expert tips. To celebrate the achievement of everyone who takes part, all teams who complete the race will be entered for a chance to win some incredible prizes.

**Yasuhito Hirota added:** “At ASICS, listening to runners of all levels and understanding their evolving needs is at the heart of everything we do. Right now, that means helping bring back the mental, physical and social benefits that come with team sport. But as life continues to change in future, we’ll keep on innovating new products, services and events that deliver the experiences people want.”

Anyone can Ekiden - so the ASICS World Ekiden 2020 is open to all, with distances that attract all levels of runner. To take part, people simply sign up for free from 1 October 2020, using Runkeeper or the ASICS website. Teams must complete their relay race between 11<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2020. For expert advice, training plans and the latest news and information about the ASICS World Ekiden 2020, follow #ASICSWorldEkiden.



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#### ABOUT THE ASICS WORLD EKIDEN 2020

The ASICS World Ekiden 2020 is a virtual relay marathon split into six legs, including three legs of 5km, two of 10km and one of a 7.195km. Once all the legs have been completed, the team would have finished a full 42.195km marathon.

Teams of up to six people can compete in the ASICS World Ekiden 2020, with a total of six legs to be completed by the team as a whole.

#### ABOUT RACE ROSTER

- Race Roster was founded in 2010 by a group of friends with combined interests in running, technology, and event management. After organizing their own 10K, it was apparent that the running industry was in dire need of better technology.
- Since May of 2012, Race Roster has partnered with thousands of event organizers to help them grow, manage and execute on race day.

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- In November 2019, ASICS acquired Race Roster to scale an already healthy business and establish ASICS as the #1 endurance event platform and partner.

#### ABOUT RUNKEEPER

- The Runkeeper app was developed in 2008 and was one of the first running apps available in the app store.
- Runkeeper has always been focused on helping runners of all levels get out the door and reach their goals. The app helps you track runs, set specific goals and stay motivated through audio cues, virtual challenges, race training plans and more.
- Runkeeper Go, the premium experience, features additional resources to help users take their training to the next level.
- Available on iOS, Android and Apple Watch devices. The app also integrates with wearables like Garmin.

#### ABOUT OUR COVID-19 RESPONSE

We consider the health and wellbeing of our athletes, customers and staff as our top priority, and we took the decision months ago to close our retail stores and offices in affected markets around the world. Medical professionals say that in the current situation movement is very important to ensure everybody's mental and physical wellbeing. We believe in the power of sport to uplift us all, and in times like this it has never been as important to help everyone achieve a sound mind in a sound body. We will continue to do all we can to help the world achieve that goal.

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