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Soochow ultra-marathon aims to help runner

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A 24-hour charity ultra-marathon featuring several internationally recognized runners begins in Taipei this morning to help a Taiwanese runner who lost her legs after she contracted a severe bacterial infection earlier this year, the organizer said yesterday.

This year's Soochow International Ultra-Marathon 24-hour Race would be dedicated to Chiu Shu-jung (邱淑容) this year, Soochow University president Hwang Jenn-tai (黃鎮台) said.

Chiu, an ultra-marathon runner who has broken the Asian record and placed second in the Spartathlon race in Greece in March, had to have both her legs amputated because of a bacterial infection she contracted after completing the 18-day, 1,150km Transe Gaule run in France.

Chiu returned home in late September after recuperating from the surgery in France, and is now undergoing rehabilitation.

Twenty-eight participants from around the world will run around the school's athletics track for 24 hours, including Hungarian Edit Berces, who holds two world records, and Japan's Ryoichi Sekiya, who has won three world championships titles.

Sponsors will donate NT\$100 for each lap a participant runs and the organizer hopes to raise NT\$1 million.

The seven-year-old Taipei race, certified by the International Association of Ultra Runners, is the only ultra-marathon held regularly in Taiwan and has produced world records in five races.

Soochow International Ultra-Marathon:

- The 24-hour race begins this morning.
- Sponsors will donate NT\$100 for each lap run by a runner.
- The money raised will go to help Taiwanese runner Chiu Shu-jung, who lost both legs after contracting an infection during a race in France.

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