

CONSTANTINA DITA

Born: 23 January 1970 in Turburea, Romania

Height: 1.65 m

Weight: 48 kg

Best known for her marathon expertise, the following is her annual progression in the marathon:

1997 2:35:32, 2nd at Lyon 26 Oct
1998 2:34:35, 17th at Budapest Euro Championships 22 Aug
1999 2:36:28, 19th at World Championships, Sevilla 29 August
2000 2:37:57, 2nd at Istanbul 15 Oct
2001 2:26:39, 4th at Tokyo 18 Nov
2002 2:23:52, 2nd at Amsterdam 20 Oct
2003 2:23:35, 2nd at Chicago 12 Oct
2004 2:23:45, 1st at Chicago 10 Oct
2005 2:21:30 2nd at Chicago, 9 Oct – present Personal best (and National recordholder)
2006 2:24:25 5th at Chicago 22 Oct
2007 2:23:55, 3rd at London 22 Apr
2008 2:26:44, 1st at Beijing, 17 Aug

Over the years she has acquired a reputation as an aggressive front-runner in major competitions. At the Edmonton world championships in 2001 she led at 20 km by nearly 2 minutes, but finished 10th. Two years later at the Paris world championships, she was 32 sec in front at 5 km, but eventually dropped out. This kind of experience, however, gave her a better understanding of her strengths, and at the Beijing Olympics she stunned the world by taking the lead once again, just before midway, and absolutely thrashing an incredibly strong field. Not only was her 2:26:44 a victory by 22 seconds, but also at 38 years and 7 months she became the oldest Olympic marathon champion ever.

Early in 2009 Dita was presented with Romania's most prestigious honor for sportspeople. It is the "Premiul National Pentru Sport," dating back to 1933. One can receive the award only once, and the award covers all sports. Romania's President Traian Basescu presented the award, which puts Dita on a pedestal beside the likes of Nadia Comaneci, Iolanda Balas, and Ilie Nastase.

Constantina Dita currently resides in Erie, Colorado, near Denver, where she takes advantage of the cold weather and isolation to achieve a consistent level of incredible fitness when it counts.