



Amsterdam marathon took place on Sunday 16 October 2016  
2:59:56

Long race = long update... New third best ever marathon time...deserves a bit longer than usual [?]

Amsterdam marathon took place on Sunday 16 October 2016. Third marathon this year, four half-marathons in the past 2 months prior the race, no major issue with the body, sunshine, wind and a finish in 22<sup>nd</sup> place and 6<sup>th</sup> age category. And another sub3! [?]

2:59:56, not fully reaching up to the expectations and the way the race was run. But still... a sub3 is a sub3... Getting under 3 hours was definitely the plan, but a bit under was the aim. The body felt great throughout the race and indecently fine after the finish line. First half under control as planned and a second half a bit too much on the "comfortable"-side, meaning a bit slowing down around km35-40, but including a strong(er) finish after that. A nice way to end the week under the sunny skies!

Completed the race 22<sup>nd</sup> among all women, 6<sup>th</sup> in my age category, and 488 out of 12.182 marathon runners... A nice third "real long run" for this year...

Training after Ferrara marathon in March has been focusing on building up strength and getting the body fit for faster pace. To get there, no marathon race was planned between March and October (which felt VERY long!!!). Workouts were completed in a nice way and was added a serie of training-races ending with four half-marathons under 90minutes during the 2 months before getting to Amsterdam (Lyon being the fastest one, 2 weeks before). Felt fit. Felt well-prepared. Felt ready. No doubt it would go under 3. The question was "how much under 3...".

Short version? Good training, confident enough in what had been done, happy with several training-races and ready to rock in the Netherlands (where I still have my fastest race ever done from Rotterdam in arch 2014...). Trip to the Netherlands without any problem, chilly and a bit grey two days prior to the race, nice and stable first half, just getting along in the second half. New 3<sup>rd</sup> best marathon time ever. Not fully satisfied, but that will do for now [?]

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**Tapering weeks worked fine. Having races every second weekend since mid-august was quite special as it meant not having a REAL long run during the weekend (yes...a bit of rest is still needed during races, even when they are training-races!). Ending with two best times for half-marathons and stable way of running boosted the confidence. Not to the extreme. Just as it should be. Final quality workout at home felt like rubbish. Which did not really made me happy as in the final week, the body should feel probably a bit painful as it works a bit less, but the feeling preparing to the race should be good at least. Easy runs felt fine though. Had received a few laser treatments for the Achille's heels and they both felt fine. What was I waiting for then??? Carb depletion for a few days (mostly reducing the carbs, not taking them off completely), and then carbo-loading (isn't it the best part in marathon preparation???!). Worked until the last minute and Thursday evening, packed my suitcase and went to bed more than ready. Sunday would go fine. Sunday would go fast. Final two days before the race were spent in Amsterdam, where the weather was far from optimal. But as someone said: "There is no bad weather, only soft people..." :-)**

**Sunday arrived eventually...Up at 5:30am for early breakfast. Back to bed and then the usual ritual of drinking water and sport drink and then sleeping again. Got myself ready by 8:15am and then cycled to the little bus station 1km from the start. Parked the bike and walked to the Olympic stadium. A bit chilly, but the enthusiasm of the race, the adrenaline already kicking, and entering in the Olympic Stadium where we would start... no need to explain that the body felt warm and happy to be running soon! Meeting two swedes in the start corral. Always nice with friendly faces you recognize. Introduction of the elite runners. Countdown to the start...**

**9:30am and BAAAM!**

**Well... there was no real rush. Elbows out to ensure I would not be pushed. The 150m start on the track of the stadium felt like walking. Reached outside eventually and then started to run...to discover that my watch was on pause! And had not recorded the 500 first meters of the race... Great! How will I follow my pace now?!? Got passed by Kent M from my corral and then Henrik D another Swede. Letting all the guys running like crazy. Had no clue about my pace (apart from that a snail would probably have gone faster than me during this first km**

**) Got to Vondelpark and pressed the lap-button on the watch when reaching km2. I was missing approximately 500m and was 3minutes less than gun time. Ran like on a cloud for the next km in the park, then passing under Rikjsemuseum and then along the canal. Getting to km5 was nice as I could have the clock showing gun-time and I could compare to the pace-band I had made and checked on my arm. Under 2:58-finish time tempo. Good! Drank my little bottle of isostar and continue my little run. Meeting the elite men on the other side of the road was the first great insight of those wonderful runners. Had a Swede stuck to my side for the next km and we reached km10 together: he happy to be on-time and me not happy because passing right above 41 minutes when I expected slightly under. 32Km to go... Quite comfortable pace for cruising was reached and at km14 we started to run along the river Amstel. Sunshine, nice landscape, stupid cement-plate paving the road and of course...the wind coming in front of us from the side. Passing km15 under 1:03 and that was it. I was still in the race :-) Enjoying the run, passing from one group to another one. And around km17, another beautiful sight under the sun, with the elite men running...on the other side of the river (meaning they had passed km21 already...): Smiling to the runners around me as we were wondering what we were doing here when the party seemed to be on the other side! A boat on the river started a karaoke-like music singing "It's not unusual to be loooooooved by anyone"... More laughs in the group I belonged to. Could we have some EDM, drums or whatever to help us keeping up our pace, please? Reaching the end of the road and the turning-point...of course, with a little slope to get on a little bridge, cross the river and then down on the other side. 2Km to go and we were already halfway! And completed under 1:29 (got the official cutoff time later: 1:28:48). Very happy! Body feeling fine, sun still shining, wind still blowing and not helping! All under control!**

**The second half continued as the first one finished: good. A bit too comfortable maybe. Reached another group of runners which included the Swede Henrik D. No time to chat more than a good luck for the rest and hop! I was gone. (ok, maybe not THAT fast-gone, but gone I was). Caught up with two Italians who felt to have a good rhythm. Always fun to run a race along people who are chatting...and then when you look at your watch you note the pace they are having...and that YOU are having too!!! Kept up with them for a while, but saw that the pace was slowing down. Next group then!**

The stretch after km28 was in an industrial area and reminded of parts in Rotterdam marathon. Which was nice to think of. Still having a good sub2:58 tempo up to km35. Felt good The pacesetters of 3:00 had not passed me and that was the thing of reference: NOT letting them pass me. In Ferrara they caught up with me around km25 and then it was tough to follow them. Here I was just running along. A bit on my own. Catching up with a guy, letting him fade a bit and reaching to next one. Had taken energy gel and Dextrosol on a regular basis and it felt that the energy levels were stable and well-filled. AAAAAALL GOOD! No clue about the pace I had (as my watch indicating it wrong anyway). Just my check every 5km were helping controlling my pace. My countdown had started already at km1 (1 done, 41 to go...) but now reaching km30 and it was only 12 to go...meaning literally NOTHING...and then 11 and then 10 (which I planned to get under 43 minutes). Km36 and I got two gals passing me. Not happy this time. Because this means loosing two places. Keeping up with them 10-20m before me until we reached the Vondelpark again. Happy there. The ladies had disappeared, mostly because my pace had slowed down a bit. Reaching km40 and seeing the Swede from my start corral not really looking good. Follow me, I hear myself saying. We pass km40 together and there is less than 2km to go. Stupidly passing at the final water station to grab a sponge (loosing precious time there...). Then we are back in the tram street. The sun is shining. We are running close to each other. We are passing guys who are walking. I focus very much for not falling on the tram railways. Passing the bus station where I parked my bike...Only 1km to go... Another gear is passed. There is more in this body to get to the finish line. Have not checked my watch as it does not help anyway. But at km40 we were spot-on to the 3:00-finish time (ie. I had seriously dropped my pace between km35 and 40). Turning right and seeing the "500m left" sign. The crowd is cheering. Hearing my name shouted in the speaker. Waving to the crowd and smiling. Turning right and finally seeing the gates of the Olympic stadium. Hearing the speaker talking about "still time to make it under 3 hours" (but even with a tired brain, I calculated that the last and final 500m would never be fast enough to get me under 3 hours). Sad, unhappy, disappointed, all the feelings in the world pushed those legs of mine on the inside line of the track. Turning left. Seeing the countdown 150m, 125m, 100m...and the clock ticking up...and passing to 3:00:00...01...02... NOOOOOOOOoooOOOOO! A part of me just want to stop right now (sub3 is missed) but nothing in the body listens to this thought and I just continue to run, still focus aaaaand

it's done. Pressing stop on my watch. Bending on my knees. Up again. Cannot be more unhappy and disappointed. Seeing runners all around, laying on the track, tired, feeling bad, feeling happy... I cannot feel anything. I am not even tired. What is wrong in the picture?!?!? Hugging my Swedish running mate who thank me very much for the pull-help since the park. He is happy to have made it right under 3 hours. My stupid watch indicate 2:57:07. So I don't know.

2:59:56. Official finish time is received when I get my medal engraved. Tears are running from my eyes and all those feelings of the world are getting out. The body is still not tired, but the head is happy. Good Sunday run!

Changing quickly to dry clothes, cycling back home for a hot shower, a bit of food and some rest. Then time to celebrate with Swedish friends and spare-ribs with French fries at will. Nothing taste better after a race!

Great race, weather for runners (despite the wind), happy to make it once again under 3 hours and still smiling despite missing my objective. There will be more race and faster ones...For now, the warmup has been well completed to get to this finish line!

*>> Lots of thanks for the encouragement and support during training and during the race. Always appreciating those kind sms received even at time I cannot read them (because seriously...I am not reading them in the middle of the race :-). Thanks for the tips and advices, the comforting words and hugs (yes, hugs are needed even during training). Special thanks to J for his long time chatting and last minute advices (just have to be there next time to just run by my side! That would ease the whole thing!). To whom it may concerns: missing a bit the early and lunch runs, but after a week of recovery it will be time soon enough to find places in our calendars for this. The warm-up is finished for now...but new adventures are already on their way...*

Have a great week!

//Kind regards from a grey, cold and rainy place on Earth (aka Gothenburg!)

Karima

>justrunningaround<