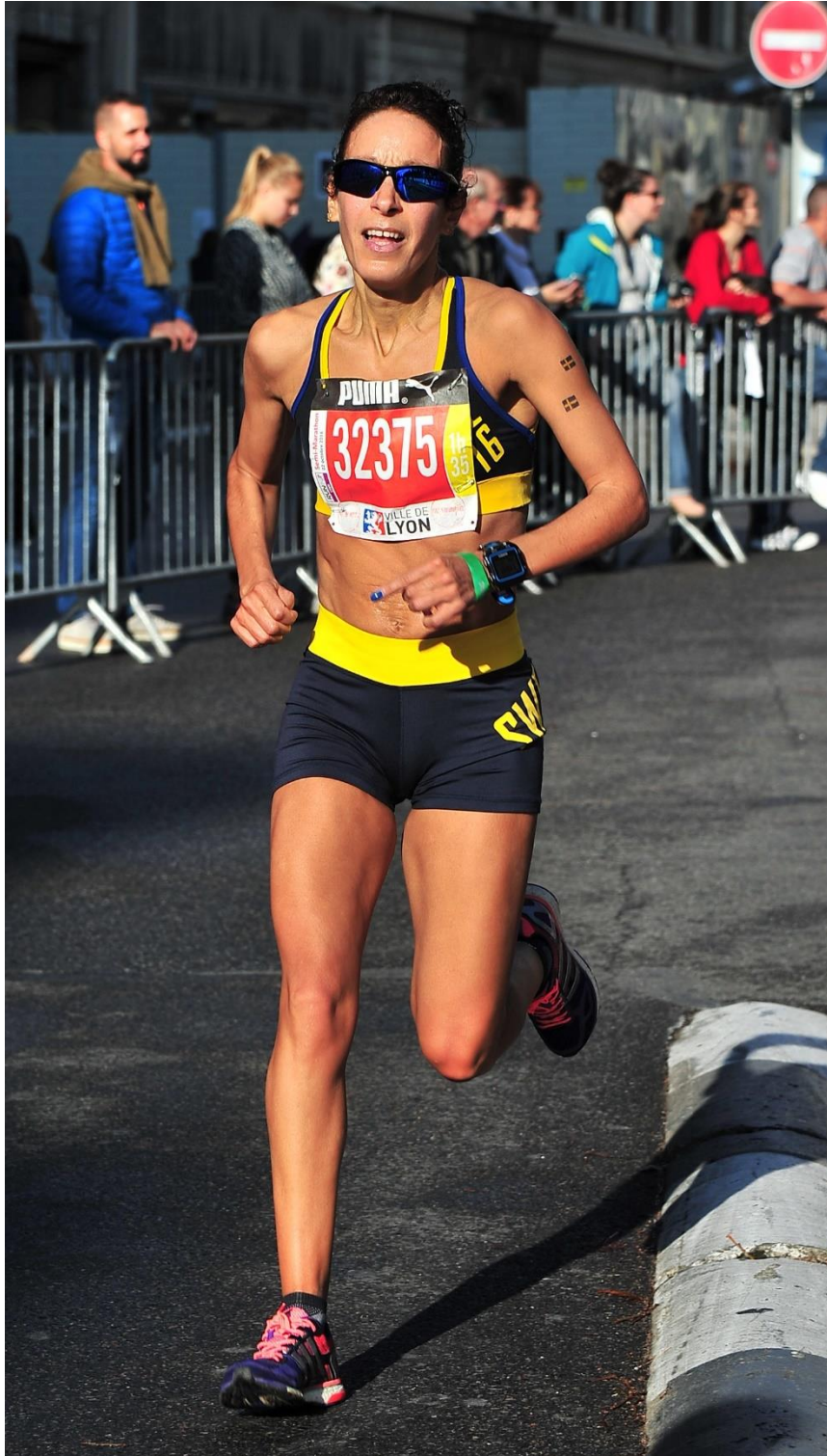


**Run in Lyon (RIL) half-marathon (France)
took place in Lyon on Sunday 2 October 2016.
1:27:14**



Short race = Short update... Although a 4th place and a sub90 finish does require a bit longer than that!

Run in Lyon (RIL) half-marathon (France) took place in Lyon on Sunday 2 October 2016. Continuing the training on half-marathon distance this year and getting another sub90 and second best time ever on the distance (beating by 12 seconds the recent second-best done in Copenhagen 2 weeks ago). Training race, so definitely far from all-in. Enjoyed fully from start to end, even without podium this year :-)

1:27:14 – new PB on this race, by almost 3 minutes since last year. Feeling way fitter as well. Aimed for sub90, but also for another podium. Got a great race completed with a 4th place women, 2nd in age category and 284 out of 11,235 finishers. A well-spent Sunday morning in the City of Lights!

The objectives of the race were pretty simple (as usual, right?...): setting a PR on the route, i.e. sub90, but although trying to get a podium this year too (was 3rd last year). Had set the time-goal to 87 minutes, hoping to find some guys to follow to reach the finish line a little faster. But still keeping in cool as being the last training race before the real one.

In short? Strong and very stable paced first half with a mid 40s 10K, let it roll for the next 5-6km, tricky run in a close-to-2km-tunnel, understanding I was placed 4th since a while, acceleration at the end and that's it! Jogging easily to the massage table and meeting at the RT tent afterwards. Definitely a great day to run a (new) second best time ever in half-marathon :-)

Rewinding a bit on this one. Had planned to have it on the running this year, but unsure it was very well placed timewise, as being only two weeks before the final race closing the season and two weeks after the A-listed half-marathon race of the year. Whatever. Decided to take it as a training race and hopefully would be well-replacing the otherwise-planned final long run. Travelled to Lyon with early Saturday flight, smoothly arriving to a very rainy city. Picked up by the best crew ever :-) Quick stop for resting and changing to running gear before heading towards Bellecour in the center of Lyon, where we picked up my BIB and got a bit around the expo. The rain was not the best part of it... Got dropped off around km5 of the race route and I took a final 5.5km leg shaking on the route towards km12. All fine. Even the "evil" hill around km9 felt quite ok to run (measuring it to slightly longer than 250m... piece of cake, right?).

My best-ever crew preceded me in the car for the final km. Felt very luxury and super professional ;-) Quick change of clothes in the car and headed back home. Light late lunch around 5pm and unpacked my stuff. All felt ready for the race day. Even got one of my best ever crew members to get the car to Decathlon to find some Gatorade. What can I say?!? Best crew ever! Tea and honey on white bread for late dinner and time to get to bed.

Woke up at midnight, 2am and then 4am. Feels like a pattern! Still felt very well-rested. Light breakfast of chia seeds, green mix and Gatorade before sleeping a bit more. 5:30am and I got myself ready. Tattoo of small Swedish flags on the arms to puff it up a bit :-) 6:15am and all in the car to get to the city center. Still dark, had rained during the night, but the temperatures showed kind 13degree then. Got stop by the police as we could not get closer to the Bellecour square. Headed to the RT tent where kind helpers were already working hard for the runners to come. Best crew ever was growing! Met former colleagues and tried to find one (or two) who would be heading to similar finish time as my wonderful pacesetter from last year was injured and would be "only" running the 10K. Found Paul who would run the marathon but with a half-marathon passing time close to my expected one. All good and set then! Got myself in pic before final hugs and kisses and best of lucks. Easy jog to the start. Good move to have an old t-shirt from Dad, as it felt a bit chilly on the side of the river. Found my corral, ran along and towards the first km of the race. Over the red footbridge to get back to the start. More people getting ready. A few accelerations. That was it. Found Paul in the corral and noted as well 3 other gals in the Preferentiel corral. Then arrived the one who won last year (here goes one place on the podium...) and then an elite chick came before us and for the half-marathon too (and here went another place on the podium...). Last-year winner was here only for training as she would head to NY marathon soon. Same as me last year :-) Quick chat with Paul who indicated he would start easy the first km. Works fine with me. Dropped my tshirt and that was it...

BAM! Start of the race was given. Quite easy and nice start. Followed last year-winner and have to recognize that the male runners all around did actually behave well. Was never pushed nor pulled nor cursed at. Had Paul right beside/slightly before me. Easy towards the first bridge. Ran carefully on the pavement and then down to the right again. All fine. No idea of the pace, but hey... that's km1! Curious to see the pace though and an eye dropped on my wrist and noted a 3:56-pace. Hummm... ok.

Fast but not crazy as in 3:48 in Copenhagen. Paul was looking back a few times and I was hanging along. Got cheered by my best ever crew at the first little uphill. Already more strengths ;-). Seeing that Paul's pace was far from "easy", decided to skip following and thereafter kept a very stable pace slightly above 4-min tempo almost throughout the first half. Definitely not what I was expecting. The nasty-evil hill around km9 arrived and disappeared. Had in mind the support received last year from Olivier A, encouraging just what was needed. And indeed a bit of his voice was still there on this stupid hill ;-). Down and towards km10. Noted that I had a good pace to get under 41 minutes for the 10K and hop! That was done! Up on the little bridge, a bit of cheering from the guys passing me (although they were not that many). Took a dextrosol at the water station right after the bridge and that was it. First half was done, second half was to go!

Just had to roll easy-peasy for the next 6km to the tunnel. Hang along a marathoner for almost all this stretch. Got a slight little deep around km13, as I felt a bit unsure to pass 15km at the time I wanted (under 62 minutes). Reached km14 not really knowing whether I was at 13 or 14. Hoping for the second... km15 was reached within targeted time. Had dropped in pace, but that was ok. I understood I was 4th in line by now as a gal had passed me around km5 and I had her in sight for a while. Asked a guy right after km15 whether he had seen gals before reaching me. He thought, paused for a short while and answered "Hummm... nope! No gal since a while! You might be alone here! :-)" At km16 we separated from the marathoners in the dreadful Croix-Rousse tunnel. Last year I got passed by a lady around km17 (middle of the tunnel). So this year I was very well prepared and determined NOT to let any chick passing me there (nor after!). Tricky to run there as 1) the GPS is no longer functioning properly (beeped at km17 but indicated a 4:27-pace afterwards... sure!), 2) the air ain't the best to breathe in there and 3) OMG! It is close to TWO km long!!! Could finally see the lights at the end of the tunnel (no joke here!). Chatted a bit with the guy close to me, telling only 3km left. He kindly smiled but I could see it felt hard to talk. Sunshine in the face, that was just great. Regretted a bit not to take the left line for the full marathon, the those legs of mine will eventually get one soon. Reaching soon the last little uphill towards the last bridge. Best-ever crew in place as planned. Cheering as loud as a full crowd! Cool as it made other screaming my name too :-P OK, Bridge and almost there.

Thought of Olivier A turning back to me last year on this bridge. Could not let him down this year, right? Passed an additional gear and passed a couple of guys there. Heard once again "look another woman" and a guy telling me I was fourth, right when turning towards Place des Terreaux to reach km19. On the square, I checked carefully the runners ahead of me as we were running back after turning. Could not see any gal, i.e. #3 was further before me. Lost a little on the 360°-turn. No chick behind me there. Slippery on the square which was wet. Finally back on the asphalt. Long stretch now. Recall I had not taken my final gel. But I was 500m from km20. No time and no need. Not easy to accelerate in Rue de la République with the ground being a bit slippery. And soooo finally reaching Place Bellecour again. Waving my arms up to make the crowd cheer (worked pretty well!) and turn right. Long (too long!) stretch under the sun. Passing two guys and another turn left, hearing someone screaming that sub87 was in reach to a guy a few meters before me. Another gear passed! Turning left once more. Choosing to run on the right side of the road as most guys take the left. Passing a few there. Could accelerate without any problem. And that's it! Stop the watch. I.AIN'T.TIRED. Where is the rest of the race?!?!

Official time: 1:27:14. Meaning a new second-best half marathon! 12 seconds faster than Copenhagen two weeks ago! And on this route! Brilliant! Talking to the speaker after the finish line who tells me I missed the podium, but 4th is still good. Telling him back that I trained and got to the finish faster this year. With an invitation to next year's race, I would probably run even faster! :-) Feeling nice and light, jogged to the massage tent after receiving my medal. Passing the 3rd lady who seems pretty off and tired. Congratulating her. Taking water and cereals bars. Nice and long massage of the legs and back to the RT tent. More people there. Still the very best red-jacket crew from RT :-) Sun shining, meeting former colleagues and friends. Just sunshine and happiness here... Wonderful Sunday morning!

What next? Quick change to dry clothes, drove back home with my best-ever crew. Well-deserved hot shower, nice lunch and rested for a while. Best finish of a week ever! Nothing wrong with the form! Keep the sun up and shining and all will be fine!

>> Lots of thanks for the cheering throughout the training getting to the race, to Olivier A for his tips (great as ever), to Paul (for the couple of km I could follow him), to all those who kindly shared training runs with me or gave feedback on them. Thanks to the RT-crew which was all smiles and kindness, providing all what runners needed prior and after the race! Always a pleasure to meet them.

>> A very special thanks to Marianne and her two well-located cheerings, but also to my best-ever crew on-site (and the one off-site...). Never underestimate the power of small (or big) cheering and loads of smiles! Preparation is still going on, still warming up...

Have a great week!

//Kind regards from a really-freezy place on Earth (aka Gothenburg!)
Karima
>justrunningaround<