

XXI WMAc marathon Lyon Sunday 16 of August 2015



Long race = long update... Participating to the XXI World Masters Athletics Championships deserves an update worthy of the name J

The XXI WMAC marathon took place on Sunday 16 August 2015. First marathon of the running season, tricky 4-laps course, sunshine (behind the clouds) and little wind and a fast-ending-into-a-second-place-in-a-world-championship...

3:08:29, more than good enough for a first marathon since last October (after the left foot had been unnecessarily aching since mid-January and shortened the race list of the year start to nothing...and with a very short 12 weeks preparation and no rehearsal for this race). Happy race J

Completed the race with a 2nd place in my age category (i.e. silver medal), 6th among all women and 1st place of Swedish women
Good start, even though a bit late in the year...

Since the start of the year, the race calendar has been limited to a 10K training race and a swimrun ending with an 8th place and a bad bruise on the face and hurting knee and hand after a fall...No need to tell the objectives of this marathon were quite simple: ending the race and depending on the daily form, completing those 4 loops under 3:30/25 would be fully acceptable.

Always a short version first: 4 laps, 1-2-3-4-and a little more :-) or one week of heat training at home to get used to the warmth that reigned in Lyon (France) during the WMCA-week 1, and for the race, a good and stable first half (2 first laps), a bit heavy-drifting 3rd lap and a good and happy final lap. Surely not the fastest runner of them all, but more than happy to have entered the stadium with enough strength to sprint to the end...

Final week was as usual focusing on tapering and in this case adapting to the weather, changing from crazy heat to more-normal warmth. All different than at home at least. Carb depletion for three days, 2 run tests of the route at 7am in the morning (just to see how it felt...) and the usual and so appreciated carboloading of the final days prior to the race. Felt all good. The sun was helping a lot to focus and relax, but it was still tricky to figure how to run the race if the temperatures were as high as the previous week (over 38°C on lots of WMAC events...). Anyhow, the goals were set after the last fast workout on the Thursday. No chance to make a major breakthrough regarding the time, this would be a test of how the foot is holding since it becomes better only 12 weeks before the race and how the body would react for this long run, being the first one since a while. A bit chaotic start when dropping the personal bottles at 6am, in the dark with no one knowing what to do, but always good to know French and talk with the volunteers helping.

Stood at the second row on the start line, where both half-marathoners and marathoners were standing shoulder to shoulder. 7:00am and the start shot was given. As usual it felt like a bunch of wild horses were left free, a bit of pushing and by km1, it felt that most of the people had passed me... Could see the long line of runners ahead of me...and my watch indicating that I was way faster than what was planned. Therefore slowing down a bit (and still having a sub3-marathon pace for a while...): But when the body feels good, it is very tempting to let it decide the pace. Passed km3 and the tricky "under the trees" part, it was just to get back to the main road and asphalt. Reaching km5 was great as my little personal fan club was there and cheering J They even had a banner and took pictures J. Missed my 5K-bottle and got the 15K-bottle instead. Yes, I know, does not sound like a bit deal, but I had prepared exactly what to drink and when. And on a 42.2km run, missing carb-drink can mean having a problem at the end. My cool Swedish outfit was unfortunately having no pocket, and therefore I really had to rely on those well-prepared bottles... U-turn back to km6 and straight line to km7 under the trees. Continued with my own pace and was still off-the-charts...well, i.e. faster than planned. But still, continued and headed towards the hippodrome. This was nice and there were still few passing me, but reaching km8 it was mostly the half-marathoners (they had 2 loops to go through, when we had four to complete the marathon). Quick chat with Finnish men who were very surprised I was to run the marathon...Hmmm...why? Tried to follow their back as well as the one of a French guy. New "almost" U-turn at the end of the hippodrome including an little abrupt uphill and continuing to run on gravel/broken asphalt (can you hear how pleased I was then?...). The only thing making me smiling there was to see the 40km-mark on the pavement (which meant only 2.2km left to the end...but I had still 3 loops before reaching this distance...). Let's go on then! Run run run and a liiiiittle uphill (which made my brain thinking "Yeaaaayyy... one done, three times to go..." (and no, I don't like uphill...)). Down to the main road and turn left on the asphalt and then the final straight line to the end. Passed the first mat for the 10K, followed by a U-turn and the second mat and...this was for loop nr 1... 3 more to go... Got my second cheering squad at the water-station close to the stadium, holding me my 10K-bottle and offering a large smile. All good. Second loop went on rail and definitely faster than planned. Still having to pass those unnecessary U-turns, abrupt turns, parts with broken asphalt...but I had a kind Spanish guy named Luis who run by my side from km15 up to the end. Great for supporting each other, although he had to drop the pace when he had 2km left (he was a half-marathoner). I needed to continue and just cheer loudly he was close to the finish when I still had two laps... Must have helped because he caught up with me when only one km to "his" end and I received the largest smile and thanks ever J Two laps done, two to go!

The second half started with another bottle with energy gel. Well-needed. Passed the half-way in a more than decent 1:31. Just half the race left then! Started to drift a bit after km22.5. OMG I started to hate this little and abrupt and up turn towards km23 (having the only positive thought then being that it was the third time I went through it and only once more after that!). Got passed by a few men M45 and 50+. The field was more empty as lots of halfmarathoners had been finishing. But lots were still there. I started to look at the women coming on the other side.

Trying to see what category they belonged to. W40, W40, W50...could not see any W35 (my age category): Would that mean I was the first one? Don't think so! Passing the 25+K and getting my energy drink from my fanclub. As well as being cheered by the policemen and the officials standing at the U-turn there. Got another Spanish guy for the next few km of this loop. Surely his pace was slower than I wanted, but at least I had someone to stop me from drifting slower. Got passed again by a Polish gal W40 who had the nicest step ever. She kept running ahead of us until the end of the loop. I half-fell at the abrupt turn back at the end of the hippodrome L and of course seeing the 40km-sign got me a smile as well as the 30km-sign a bit further on the road: ONLY 12km to go! Nothing! I even thought I would make it in less than an hour. Had no clue of how long I had run, not checking my watch at all. Final stretch to the mat and the U-turn aaaaaaand this.was.the.final.loop.strating... already? Really? Final bottle with gel and largest smile from my cheering squad. Saw the first Swedish female stopped and drinking, so I cheered a bit and continued. Side by side with the W40-Polish woman. She had indeed a great step. She breathes the same way as me. Her steps were in sync with me. Brilliant. I won't let her go whatever it takes, I thought. This is the last lap. Time to use those strengths the body apparently still has. But by km33, I could not see her beside me any longer, could still hear her step though. Was surprise to hear the Argentinian lady who had been cheering every single lap at this place shouting "Vamos chicas". What? Is there another gal close to me? And indeed I got passed by a British W40 before this stupid little abrupt&up turn. Took a bottle of water there. All went on the head. Could not hold her pace, but she suddenly stopped for drinking. Youhou! Time to pass her. But she came back and started to run by my side. Nothing like the Polish gal. She did not have the same steps as me, the breathing were so in sync that I actually slowed down to let her pass me. Final stretch towards the water station. Fan-club in place holding the last water bottle with gel. After the U-turn the officials tell me I am the 6th woman...and then the British is passing me again (she had stopped for water)...and here disappear my 6th place I thought... My cheering squad is moving towards the stadium for the arrival and I happily shout to them that at this pace I will arrive before them J Yes, I know. Bragging a bit at this time. There was no chance I would reach the finish before them if I was not using superspeed (which I am not mastering...yet J). Got to follow this Brit as good as I could, final stretch along the hippodrome felt so tough and so easy at the same time. Hurt my left foot again in the upturn back to...km40-sign! No pain is so well earned! The Brit had stopped again but got support from another British man and she started again...Nooooo.... Just went along and got cheered by a Central African guy I had done my final jog in the park a few days before the race. Cool with some support there! And a few more *#*& turns (sorry, but cursing is sometimes needed, when you pass a stupid and abrupt turn for the fourth time!) and here it was...the final stretch. Seeing the km41-sign on the pavement just got me to smile. Just accelerating then. This is after all what we all prepare for. This final km... Final U-turn, the Brit being a few 100m ahead of me. Let her go and passed her teammate instead J Final left turn in the shadow of the stadium, down to the tracks and finally on those beautiful red lines. Passing the British lady after she just entered the tracks. Digging into the deepest storage of strength/stupidity/boldness/courage...and just increased my pace and passed finally the finish line. 3:08:29. This just felt good!

Congratulated the W40-polish woman, got lots of smiles from French gang who encourage me with their "Come on, IKEA", and met my personal fan club who got an even larger smile when hearing I was making a podium. Meeting the Finnish guys as well. who struggled to the end after me. And the Spanish guy having a big smile... One hour later, meeting the 1st (Poland) and 3rd (Finland) of my category. Silver medal it was for me. Not too bad for a (first?) World Masters Championship J Took it easy for the rest of the day. Which was more than well-deserved. No need to say the result was way beyond the expectations and with all the conditions prior to the race, this is more than satisfactory J Great Sunday for running (and very happy the weather was just all perfect for running!)

>> Thanks a lot for all supporting and encouraging words during the training and the race. Especially while not being able to run and still receiving support for keeping up with the alternative training. Running season has finally began!

Have a great week!

//Kind regards from a very nice and sunny place on Earth (aka Gothenburg!)

Karima

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