

In The Picture

May 2016

Geert Stynen

Spartathlon finisher 2010

Belgian Champion 24h 2011, 2012 and 2015



Geert Stynen, fireman by profession, is one of the best Belgian ultrarunners. In 2010 he reached the finish at Sparta after 30 hours 36 minutes and 23 seconds. The following year he became Belgian Champion 24h at Steenberg after 248,297 km! In 2012 he ran 252,498 km in 24 hours at Steenberg! Three years later he became Belgian Champion again with a distance of 242,951 km.

How did your passion for ultrarunning start?

Actually I started running in 2000. The following year I ran my first 100 km, like many the 'Dodentocht'. It was the start of many beautiful runs that followed. The interest was there much sooner. Somewhere between 1990 and 2000 I read, as a young individual, about the great performance by Kouros at the Spartathlon. That has always captured the imagination I guess.

How many hours of training do you complete per week to be able to run 24 hours?

It depends. Usually I trained between 8 and 20 hours per week. I reached my largest training volume in March last year. When preparing for Steenberg I reached 800 kilometers in one month time.

Are there months that you don't run at all?

Until last year I didn't have any months that I didn't run. But since July last year, I don't run more often than I wanted. Due to problems at the back running is at a very low level.

At Steenberg I heard that you probably would quit ultrarunning. Is it true?

Quitting? I still have a number of running projects in my mind that I wish to achieve. Anyway, if the body really doesn't want to... I certainly have hope that everything will be fine eventually. Patience is a virtue.

Did you develop a special technique in order to keep on running at an average pace of 10 km/h?

No, it is just self-knowledge. You must know what you can. You must also bend your body to your will when the body wants to stop, so that you complete the race schedule.

Do you change your sleep pattern before you start a 24-hour race?

I don't change my sleep pattern. I don't see any benefit in doing so.

Do you still have plans for this year?

Not at the moment. I hope that someone can fix my back, so I can regain the pleasure of training. I still had some challenges that I wanted to complete.

Is there something that you would like to share with other (ultra-)runners?

Chase your dreams. Not by writing about it, but by training hard.

Thank you for the interview Geert. Hopefully we can welcome you again in the ultrarunning world after a couple of years.

Kevin Simons