

In The Picture

April 2016

Willem Mütze

Organiser Limburgs Zwaarste

Organiser Castricum



Willem Mütze was a goalkeeper at a football club in his early years. But he decided to start running as well. At a certain moment he had to choose between football and running. In the meantime he has 1450 marathons and several records to his name. Each weekend he runs at least one, but preferably two marathons. In addition he's also a race walker and a race walker referee.

How did you come up with this idea then years ago?

Ten years ago, in honour of my 50th anniversary, I organised a four seasons running race. In other words a race in the winter, spring, summer and autumn. Three of the four races were organised in collaboration with a (race) walking association. The walking association outlined a race track around 60 km and at 6am the walkers could start. At 9am the runners started to run on the same race track. This was interesting for both groups. The walkers enjoyed the fact that the runners passed them and the runners used the walkers, who usually had a backpack, as a guide. Only in the winter we hadn't a collaboration with them, because the total picture for a walker is different than for a runner. Because of that I had to outline a course myself. I had to verify it, describe it as well as other tasks. Together with the help of some volunteers we eventually finished the job. Our first Limburgs Zwaarste was born.

You started your 10th edition of Limburgs Zwaarste, which is also the last edition. Was it a deliberate choice?

Almost every volunteer stayed with me the past ten years. But every volunteer get older, some of them are even over 70 years. So you can't keep on appealing to the same volunteers. And new, reliable volunteers are hard to find. On top of that there are many new rules and laws, together with the fact that you need licenses for everything. A license costs quickly 100 euro per town. Since we pass a couple of villages it's becoming too expensive for our runners. Apart from the licenses

you also have a series of duties to fulfill. Think of foresters, qualified traffic personnel, etc. to name a few. And if that's not enough we notice that the race track gets sabotaged often, because it's easy to remove the different markings. It's unbelievable how ignorant people can be. That's why this was the last version with ribbons. Running with a GPS is the future thanks to these persons.

If you look back to all the editions of the past years, which edition you liked the most?

Each edition was beautiful. For the organisation it's important that nobody breaks a leg in the woods, because it's the only place you're out of reach of the emergency services. And if all runners enjoyed the day and finish enthusiastic, after running 100 km on hills and in the woods, you immediately understand we are doing it.

Which experiences you remember the most?

Everything that went 'wrong'. It sounds weird, but if everything went perfect no-one talks about it later on. If everything goes wrong, you'll have enough discussions for the following weeks.

Thank you for the interview Willem.

We wish you good luck with the organisation of other running races.

Kevin Simons