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6 uur Challenge van Hamme 2023 3 hour 31,442 km

What started with a difficult 5 km turned into a smooth 10 km. Today I am smoothly running a half marathon

I started running from 2020. Before that I was also involved in sports, but never really running. In 2020 I discovered the passion for running, which is still present today. It started with a difficult five kilometers, which turned into a smooth ten kilometers. Today I am smoothly running a half marathon. Smoothly I view as no problems on the way and without too much effort. I train between 35 – 45 km four times a week.

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Ultra running is my biggest dream and goal. I like challenges, especially the combination between the physical and the mental. For example, I have already walked the Dodentocht five times. I also participated in the light edition, which is twice 50 km on two consecutive days. And I also participated in The Great Escape, a race with more than 2500 vertical meters over 80 km. The Helletocht was a race with 1200 altimeters over 58 km. And so I ran a few more. Occasionally I also train for longer than two to three hours, but I mainly train between an hour and 90 minutes per training. Ultra running is the dream, but grinding many long training sessions is unfortunately not possible due to lack of time. A marathon, running under four hours, is certainly also a goal, but the intensity and pace are different from ultra running.

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My goal was to be able to run at a decent pace for three hours. Through this 3-hour run, I wanted to test how far I could run and how I can tolerate a distance, beyond the half marathon, at high intensity. My heart rate is still too high while running, so I use my reserves too quickly. This is a

recurring problem during longer runs. My energy source becomes empty, stomach problems arise and it is difficult for me to absorb gels or food. So I also made a 'nutrition training' out of this.

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In itself I had not set a goal and I saw this competition purely as training to learn from. But beforehand I had set 33 km as an achievable goal, with 31.5 km as the minimum. I run smoothly at 12 km/h, and I can also keep this up in a half marathon competition. It is true that I am on the limit in terms of heart rate and combustion. So after that half marathon the tank is empty. My strategy was to finish the first hour at 12 km/h and that worked out perfectly. The second hour I would reduce to 11 km/h. This also worked and I would finish the third hour at a speed above 10 km/h. But I didn't achieve that last goal.

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After 2 hours of running I was perfectly on my schedule. Finished 23 km, still an hour to reach the predetermined, achievable 33 km. Unfortunately, it went wrong shortly afterwards. It was very hot that day, so my fluid and salt loss was greater than expected. I developed mild cramps in the calf, which required me to stretch and take short walking breaks every now and then. Not a problem in itself, but after 2 hours 30 in the game I also felt sick. I probably went too deep. Or did I not digest the food and gels very well? It could all be a reason. As a result, running became impossible. Since it was mainly a long training for me and the three podium candidates had started flying, I decided not to force myself any further. For example, I alternated short running moments, as far as possible, with brisk walking paces. Very unfortunate, but certainly also instructive.

Better luck next time!

Better luck next time! I will definitely participate in hour races. And if I have enough time to train, a six-hour run certainly seems like a nice challenge for the future.