



Hendrik Van Ekert started running together with his father since childhood, a fervent distance runner. Aged 20, after a couple of top 10 places on the field and the track, he decided to exchange running for cycling. Around his 30th birthday he came back on his decision and started to run again. The focus is set on short street runs and races on the track.

The Durme-Scheldemarathon was your first marathon. How did you come up to run a marathon ?

To run my first marathon is an idea I already had for a couple of years. Until last year the goal was to run the first marathon under 3 hours (because my father ran his first marathon in 2h54 without specific training). Recently I put aside this objective and when I accidentally saw an announcement for the Durme-Scheldemarathon last year, which was on my favourite training track, I started dreaming of my first participation. Last minute I decided to enter the race.

How was your first marathon experience?

Since I'm quite injury prone, I couldn't prepare myself in the best conditions for the marathon. I never ran more than 30 km either so I didn't know what I had to face. I started easy, in company of another runner and felt relaxed until halfway. However, halfway we endured quite some headwind, and instead of slowing down, we started to accelerate. This is probably the reason why I lost so much strength between km 22 and 25. On km 31 I seriously hit the wall the first time. The last 10 km were a real agony. I had to walk several times due to the acidification in my legs. Eventually I reached the finish within 3h29. Not very pleased with my finishing time, but I'm glad I reached the finish line. In the afternoon I felt as good as new.

Are you going to run other marathons (or longer distances)?

I won't be running a marathon at the moment. I'm thinking about running shorter distances (5 km) during summer to gain some speed. During winter I'll run a couple of crosses and afterwards I hope to start, with a good basis, a marathon training program, set up by my trainer. Hopefully this program trains me to finish around 3 hours for the marathon. I possibly will run the marathon at Hamme again, otherwise it will be Antwerp.

Which distances did you run regularly before you switched to the marathon distance?

In previous years I mainly ran the middle distances on track (800/1500/3000 m). In recent years I run mainly street runs from 10 up to 15 km (speed about 15km/h).

To which race you have the most beautiful memories?

Two years ago I entered de Hel van Kasterlee. Despite it was a heavy race, I greatly enjoyed it. I enjoyed the final 30 km run the most, where you really feel at one with nature. The Durme-Scheldemarathon suits that list too: enjoying nature in peace.

Thank you for the interview Hendrik. We wish you success.

Kevin Simons