



Manu, father of Axel and Lena, works at Decathlon Schelle. He started running from the age of 16 and he enjoys trails. In addition, he is also willing to run a marathon or an ultra. Finally, he is also chairman of the jogging club Joggers Klein Willebroek.

Manu, you are doing the Strava Challenge in cooperation with Decathlon. That seems to be time consuming, isn't it?

I worked out the Strava Challenge for my employer Decathlon Schelle. It became a huge hit. Originally we wanted to involve 60 customers in our operation. After a year and a half our concept still exists, but we now have over 13.000 runners and cyclists. The concept rapidly became a national, even an international, story. The Strava Challenge partly became a hobby. The Challenge doesn't stop when I finished working. I love to do my job and it's hard to draw a line between your job and your hobby. The Strava Challenge revolves around a community and this will be put on a central level in the future. The system of collecting vouchers for every kilometre you ran shall be replaced in the near future by other benefits for the participants.

On top of that you are active in a running organisation and you also run yourself. Do you have days that you don't run?

I'm chairman of Joggers Klein Willebroek vzw, a small club with 55 members. Eight years ago I started the organisation Klein Willebroek Loopt because I wanted to give something back to the runners in the area. I also keep on running if it gets too busy. To me running is a way of absorbing positive energy. On top of that it's an outlet and I brainstorm while I'm running.

You also organise races. What is the most satisfying for you?

I'm proud that I was at the very heart of the Sporta Runs and I'd love to support organisers who share the same values. For me, it's important that sport events are accessible and affordable and that it revolves around the sport itself. I prefer sport events that are organised from the heart and not just for the money. I just don't like events where people just need to pay too much. I choose events that have a soul and I am honoured to support them with my own knowledge, my energy and what lies in my hands. What's most satisfying for me is hard to define, but I enjoy sporting together and the fact that I can get people in motion.

Thank you for the interview Manu. We wish you good luck.

Kevin Simons