



Nico Schelstraete lives in Adegem. He didn't sport until he was 37 years old. But because he started to get a belly he decided to start with fitness and running. Meanwhile, he has quit smoking, he has run several half-marathons over the last twelve years and he did also run thirteen marathons.

You describe yourself as a jogger, but you also run quite some marathons. Do you prefer shorter distances?

I prefer half-marathons because I can run them with a group of "friends". In a marathon you'll soon run alone and I don't like to run on my own. Occasionally, I also run a very short race to check if I didn't lose too much speed because of the many long distance runs. I've been running some marathons lately but the finishing time doesn't matter. Usually I only start to realise after 30 km around what time I'll finish. I prefer running half-marathons as a pacer. If I run as a pacer I can help others in achieving a good finishing time. That I like more than running a faster time. And because I don't run at maximum heart rate, I can run again two days later, together with the friends of the jogging club, instead of resting for the rest of the week.

You ran Endurance Day Hamme twice and you entered again for a 3rd time. How would you describe this marathon?

The first time I was looking for a small marathon. I didn't run marathons in the last five years and I was running my first marathon again. I still didn't know how my condition was. The decision to enter this race was easy because many members of JC Aalter, which I joined, entered this race. Whilst I was running, I enjoyed the beautiful surroundings and of the fact that everything a marathoner needs was available. They have a perfect supply zone, warm showers, a nice goodie bag and a cosy atmosphere. You'll notice that this is a marathon that is truly organised by a marathoner for marathoners. And that's why I also entered this race the second and third time...

At the moment you never ran further than the marathon distance. Don't you ever want to go further? Or have you tried it before, but wasn't it your cup of tea?

I did run further than the marathon distance on training a couple of times, but I haven't (yet) done it in competition. On a walk this year, which I ran, I ran already 50 km. I hadn't the feeling that I wanted to do this on a regularly basis. I'm always pleased when I can stop after 42 km. Besides, I don't feel like running another 20 km further, but that can change soon. Two years ago I wasn't going to run any marathons again, but in the meantime I ran 10 marathons in a year and a half.

Which marathon do you want to run again sometime?

Someday I want to run the marathon of Athens again, but unfortunately this marathon takes place in the same weekend as the half-marathon that our jogging club organises. But in the coming years I'll have to decide when I'll be running this race again. The marathon of London is also on my bucket list. Many say this is a special marathon.

Thank you for the Interview Nico. We wish you good luck.

Kevin Simons