



Göteborgsvarvet Saturday 18 May 2013

News from Gothenburg...

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Shorter distance will require shorter update :)

Göteborgsvarvet took place on Saturday 18 May (Gothenburg, Sweden): warm, close to hot already before start (26-28°C), first race starting in the Elite group as well as first participation in Swedish Championship (SC) for Half marathon. 13.1 miles completed in 1hr 37min 05sec. No personal best, slower by 24 seconds compared to last year... *but* a 99th place among women all categories and 18th place in SC... not too bad for a hot day!

The objectives of the race were simple (!): get a faster finish time than in Paris in March and get a nice place in the Swedish championship (all but last place is a bonus :). Having had Boston marathon a month ago, this was not planned to be easy, but being a home-race, why not?

Pretty warm already at start, the elite field surrounding me was overwhelming and the least said "impressive is an understatement"! The aim was not to give them a match (!) but to participate as good as possible in the SC for half marathon. I did qualify with my marathon time, so why not! Still it was a great number of super-fast people around me when the gun shot the start. Strangely I felt a human wave just transporting me forward and reached the first 500m at a pace way over the limit I gave me for the race. So letting most (or all?) of the fast ones passing me, I tried to settle in a convenient pace, but reaching km4 was already starting to feel a bit uneasy. Passing the 5km at the beginning of the first bridge (Älvsborgsbro), what kept me from stopping was that I have run on this bridge probably over 40 times since the beginning of the year, so why stopping during a race. Strong side wind was not helping really. Pulse was already too high before the bridge but decided to push anyway while running downhill toward km6. Then the awful thought of DNF ("Do Not Finish") reached me. Hole on the side, breathing difficulties, pulse above the authorised limits :(This is the first race I seriously consider breaking (in San Francisco it did cross my mind as well, but this was due to the boredom of meeting hills after hills in the second half of the marathon instead of having it (as I thought it would be) flat! Did finish the race though). Thanks to another fellow runner recognizing me I found some strength to get to the water station, showered literally with most of the water mugs I could get hold on and then continued the race. My fellow runner gave me extra support which push me to change my objectives to the race. It would be a "getting-around-is-good-enough" race. Which decided a change of pace for the rest of the race (actually decided then not stop looking at my watch for the rest of the race). Until km8, the predicted end time was still under 1hr33, but the mind did not want really to help there! Got more help from another fellow runner (a fast one), who should have passed me 4km earlier but had a lot of difficulties to handle the warmth. For me it was more about having taken a too fast start. The week of vacation in Spain I took last week, was a great preparation for this weather. But not for the starting pace.

To cut the following kms story short, got great support from a cheering friend at km10 and then km10.5, lots of help from the public with their cheering, free shower with water-hoses and my own little fan-club meeting me at km19. Because it felt the race started at this moment. The legs were just flying, I was just passing runners, and this continued until the finish line. 1:37:05 – smile on the face and actually lots of strengths left.

After the Finish Line, like after the half marathon in Paris, the whole body was asking for more, but the finish line was passed. I did look like having participated to a wet-tshirt contest, having gone under all the showers along the race route and thrown lots of water on the head during the run. "Soaking wet" was a clear understatement! Anyway, got a nice chat afterwards with fellow colleagues at the company tent – most of them sharing the same feeling about the race (weather killing the expectations). Got a nice massage and then it was time to aim home.

Got the results then: 24seconds slower than last year, but 99th place women all categories, 13th in age category (all before me are elite from the SC) and the place I am maybe the most proud of: 18th place in Swedish Championship – half marathon.

Summary: Göteborgsvarvet is not an easy route for a half-marathon, although it is a training route I take on a regular basis. So should have been a fair-to-easy game, really. The weather this year as well as the starting pace set by the elite field was tougher than expected and not correctly handled. What was greatly surprising and not to underestimate is the support than one can get from the crowd all around. Which was in my case what drove me to the finish line, still smiling (DNF thoughts were gone after km8...). The organization of Göteborgsvarvet was great with lots of water spots to get drink as well as showers. This was really great to have around. Now the running goes on... This race was worth a sub-90 minutes in my eyes and thoughts and definitely will bring some learnings for future races. Would the weather be similar in Stockholm in two weeks, at least I am well-prepared!

>>Once again, lots of thanks for all the support throughout the training and the race and the after-race! Means a lot and does help as well :) The cheering during the race brought some extra strengths and gave me wings really!

//Kind regards from a still-nice-in-the-air-but-not-as-warm-as-yesterday place on Earth (aka Gothenburg!)

Karima

>justrunningaround<