



Stockholms Marathon Saturday 31 May 2014

Fast race = fast update...(although it was a long distance...so might be a long update...)

Stockholm marathon took place on Saturday 31 May 2014. Third marathon of the running season, second time running it, Swedish Championships, sunshine and drizzle, limping knee and third best marathon time ever J

New PB on this route: 3:02:38, 7 minutes 43 seconds faster than last year race (also a "warm edition")... Completed the race with a 30th place among women, 28th in age category (!) and 18th place in Swedish Championships :) Not bad for a race done with a crazy knee...

This race's objectives were simple (as always J): faster than last year, no walking and if all good, under 3hrs. Having had a problem with the left knee during a run 7 days before the race, limping 3 days before the race, the objectives were changed radically to: complete as much as possible, if all done- that is good, quit the run if the knee ever shows problem.

Short version? First half very stable and controlled, following the original objectives, second half still under control until the knee started its rebellion and final 5K not under the best pace. Against the odds set with the "knee-situation", the race was duly and greatly completed J

Travel to Stockholm the day before, getting all prepared, heavy rain when reaching the city (yaaaah?), knee feeling fine but not normal still. Got a friendly test run on terrain completed with a fast km on asphalt...OK, the knee was holding – ready for start. Morning of the race, the mindset and mood was fine, the knee was not too happy. So the revised objectives were definitely the ones to follow. No joke with the knee... By not being a prioritized race, but still the Swedish Championships..., this race was a bit special: need for focus, but not necessity to act bold and stupid... Got to the Stadium to drop my refuelling for the race, and 3.5hr later I was there, standing on the front row (!) of this race, side-by-side with international elite runners (this is the coolest part of the races :oP). Focus on, 12:00pm – start is given. Good pacing from the beginning, following the others, but not too fast. Pace indicated on my watch was averaging 4:06/08min/km, which was already too fast, but nothing (neither mind nor body) was complaining. Reaching the bridge for the first time @km8, taking it nicely and not killing my thighs on the way down. Good! Passing the 10K mark according to the original plan slightly above 41min, let's continue. Still having runners all around. Arriving at km16, seeing the Stadium...aaaaand turning right to start the second lap of the race. No need for "knee-check" because the mind does not hear any complaint (so far, so good!). Even taking the time to chat with other runners (this was a fun part of this race: have done so much talking around...with a cruising pace of 4:08/4:10...). Actually enjoying and really happy to be able to do this "controlled" part for the race. It might spare the knee for a little longer. Reaching half way in 1:28:37... Cool, I think – this IS the original plan! And the pacesetters for 3:00 have not passed me yet (this is where they caught up with me last year...).

The second half start like the first half ended J A bit boring part to run due to lack of public, but in such cases what do you do? Talk to other runners ;) French, Finnish and Swedish... All good. The head is still fine and can communicate with the outside world... Don't really see where km22 to 25 disappeared, but was prepared for km27 which was dreadful last year. Took it nicely this year... after it became a bit harder J Pushing the boundaries, right?... Getting back to the first route (around km3 of the first lap) and there the crowd and its support is back. Have been receiving regularly my bottles at the water-stops, which is great. Refuelling work this way. Getting extra water from friends right before km30 and there the 3:00-pace setter and his followers are catching up. Meeting a club-buddy under Slussen tunnel and continuing on the long straight line towards the bridge (yes, it is not enough to run it once...let's make it fun and do it twice!). Strengths are still there to follow the 3:00-flag until we reach km32 and I have troubled to get my bottles and have to run back to the table to catch it. Not a chance the 3:00-pace setter is acting as a gentleman and wait for me... Too tricky to catch up with him, I continue in my own and still decent pace. 3 slower steps on the way up to the bridge indicate that the knee is clearly not wanting to cooperate much longer. Choosing to continue to run (otherwise I would have sat down and would probably still be there...). The pace, the time... nothing really matters anymore. Just getting off this bridge and it is less than 8km left. The straight line to km 37 and the train station IS boring. Running there side-by-side with Superman (not the real one, but a fellow-runner with a Superman tshirt). Starting to limp around km37, but by then the body is no longer in charge. This is the mind and the mind only running... Passing a few guys on the way to the stadium (was is really THAT long during the first lap????). Finally seeing the clock tower of the stadium, not much left. One turn left and two right, passing a few more guys. Entering the stadium and this is sunny here, this is cheering here, this is the end here! (well, still 250m to limp/run before the finish line). Got frustrated to be passed last year at this specific part, so digging as deep as possible for all the strengths left and taking an outside line of the tracks to pass a few more guys...and the clock is still at 3:02:xx... great, just a little bit more of effort, this guy on the left is accelerating...why? Ok, then I do it as well...Aaaaaand crossing at the same time (so much for being gentleman in such races...). (official time: 3:02:38)

Difficulty to catch my breathe, the knee is definitely showing its unhappiness, drinking fast a protein drink, hugging a running-buddy who passed me twice during the first half and that I passed finally after km30 with my limping knee). Getting my medals, meeting with the fast female runners, getting changed and it is time to meet some friends outside the stadium.

Rest of the day dedicated as usual to rest, food and walk. Got the result of the race later on.

Every finish line is worth celebrating :)

Long trip home, unpacking and then packing again. Week of well-deserved rest (from running only...), trying to patch this unhappy knee and what is happening after that... only future will tell ;)

Still learning, still running and still smiling – great day for running under sunny Swedish skies. Expecting continuous fun ahead!

>> Once again, buckets of thanks for the supporting words, the listening, the coping with the running chat, the common trainings and all that I probably forget. This is what making the races even more fun J

Have a great week!

//Kind regards from a nice and sunny place on Earth (aka Gothenburg!)

Karima

> justrunningaround<