

Dear Transmaraton runners,

I would like to share with you my last experience on the running front.

Last weekend I run 100km mountain run called the Mt. Vitosha 100km round. The cumulative altitude difference was 2000-2500m with 2 relatively steep ascents at the beginning and in the middle of the route. This equals 120-125km on even surface/ road run.

The qualification time was 20h. Finishing within it provided 2 points for the Mont Blanc ultra marathon. The temperature was ranging from 26C° in the morning to 34C° at noon time clear and shiny weather.

It was my first 100+ ultra. My previous longest was 70km road run in late autumn/ early winter (-2/+5C° on average).

The runners started off at midnight on Saturday (23rd June). 6 hours later the start of the bikers was given, but I will not touch the bikers' race since it is another genre.

The number of runners started was 270 people of which 98 finished (84 men and 14 women) in the qualification time of 20h.



Running in dark

The first 4.30h were during the dark part of the day and we should use headlamps.

Always use new batteries in a race! I didn't change mine having my headlamp glittering yet surviving till dawn.

The difficulty of running at dark in the mountain, even with a good headlamp, is that you have a narrow illuminated corridor and in the highly uneven surface, particularly downhill you can miss a rock,

pitfall, branch, puddle or any other obstacle which could be a cause of serious injury or discomfort. I heard some guys falling around. So – when running in the night be very, very careful, meaning of course speed compromise.

The route

I felt quite comfortable during the race in terms of awareness of the route since I have investigated it carefully asking also for feedback from experienced on the route runners. The route was very well marked, yet do always follow the marks when in the mountain! You can easily get lost particularly when you are tired and easily distracted.



Speed and running technique

I did the race for 13h26', ranking 33rd in the men's ranking and 37th in the combined ranking. I am very happy since my target, based on previous races and input from other runners, was 15h. This makes on average 7.5km per hour or 8:04' per kilometre speed.

I am also happy that I had a rather even speed throughout the race, of course minding the difference in the ascents and descents. On the ascents I was targeting max. 9:30' per kilometre.

Running 100km for the first time, moreover in the mountain, made me cautious in running fast. On the ascents and somewhere on the flat I

was walking fast. The split running versus fast walking was roughly 50:50. Fast walking is not less tough job than running. A certain combination of running: walking is anyway needed to exercise different groups of muscles. For the next exercise I will definitely run much more now knowing my limits and having the awareness of the route.

Hydration and food

Hydration in long distance races is critical, I would call it strategic. It is times more critical when the weather is over 15C° not to speak over 30C°. I drank near 10 litres of liquids, mainly water, during the race. Measuring my weight I had lost 1kg only at the end, which means a good hydration pattern. I used a camel back with a reservoir of 1.5l. At almost each refreshment point (there were 8 in total) I was drinking 400-500 ml, and a lot in-between. 4 times I did also dissolved Isostar sport-drink tabs to fuel some minerals, sodium, magnesium, calcium etc. lost through sweating. Adding them is critical since without you risk muscle cramps which is the start of the end.

I took 7-8 carbohydrate gels – very important for fuelling the glycogen stocks in the muscles.

I took 2 portions of magnesium at the 50th and 75th km to avoid cramps.

I took also an Isostar shot containing caffeine as pain killer. Rest assured - after 40-50km in the mountain everything starts hurting which is a part of the beauty of the exercise.
I took also 3 tablets of Sportenine - a specialised ultra-runners homeopathic drug – one before, in the middle and after the race.
I ate just a sandwich with cheese and ham and a bit of resins. I cannot eat when I run. But I compensate afterwards...
Another super important point is the hydrating and nutrition regime before the race – a week before I drank a lot of water, no alcohol, lots of carbohydrate and protein food (pasta, chicken breast, beef, rice, potatoes, beans, peas, fruits and vegetables). Avoid eating after 8.00 pm!
Andrei (Rosu), thank you for the precious advices! ☺

Before and after training

Do not run over 20km long speed run 10 days before the race. A week before avoid weight-bearing exercising although cross training, such as swimming and biking will not harm and will keep you fit. Rest at least 3 days after the race. The first day I could barely dress myself and walking as a shot duck.

I started easy and short run on the 4th day when I had no pain whatsoever.

I am happy and proud of not having any injury in this race, just a scratch on my nose during the night. Good sleep a couple of days before and mostly the previous day is super important!!! I took a day off on Fri and was resting most of the day without any demanding daily engagements.

State of mind and psychic

This is not less important than being physically prepared.

I started focusing my attention on the race from the start of the week (5 days before). I avoided any negative emotions and any unnecessary information – limited or no TV, news reading, meeting friends... Playing with your kids and wife is not forbidden - yet do not go too far.

Being aware and focused during the race is very important. Listen to your body, breath, steps, stomach...! Only then you could know what and when to do. Only then you will be able to help other runners too. You shall never neglect helping other runners in need!!!



At the end of the race it is so rewarding and inspiring that you make your life vibrating and full of meaning and purpose!

Next time longer, faster and beyond...

Wish you long-life running and enjoyment in life!

Stan