

## **6 months of collaboration with Aidan tested (slightly) with this 13.1-mile run!**

This half marathon was a great opportunity to put to the test all the work done after 6 months of collaboration with Aidan, and gauge my level of fitness. This winter went incredibly well. I feel stronger on all disciplines (most notably on the bike!), energized, and more importantly I went through the winter with no injuries! The motivation has never been that high!

### **Objectives for this race**

Although I ran two marathons prior to this, this was my first half marathon. I wasn't sure what to expect, and what pace I should be aiming for. With Aidan we agreed to shoot for a 6:30 min/mile pace for the first half, and progressively step it up if I felt good. Looking back at my long runs done this winter, I was a bit concerned that the pace we agreed on was a bit too fast. I never ran faster than an 8:23min/mile pace on long distance runs this winter, and despite the great sensations I had on the tempo workouts done this month, I thought I could hold the 6:40, but not necessarily the 6:30 that early into the season. Well, I never say no to a challenge, and this one was extremely interesting and could give me a boost of confidence before entering the last 2 months of preparation before Eagleman (June 9<sup>th</sup>).

### **The race**

**Pre-race: Friday** - I mostly focused on my drinking and made sure I drank 3 liters throughout the day, excluding what I had during the workout. I also stretched in the morning, post workout, and reserved 25 minutes in the evening to fully stretch the legs and lower back.

**Saturday morning** - The race was scheduled to start at 9. I got a good breakfast around 5:15 (1 banana, 3 toasts with butter and Nutella...yummy!, and a cup of coffee), and arrived at the race start by 7:30. I also had a water bottle of Heed (2 scoops equating to 200 calories) on the way. I like to give myself ample time to settle down, let the atmosphere sink in, and get ready. I got this habit when I played table tennis back in France! I did 2 warm-ups. The first warm up is important to me. I usually emphasize on two things: waking up the muscles and slowly but surely getting in my competition mood! I ran for 15 minutes, doing some exercises (knees-up, high heels...), and stretched for about 5 minutes. I felt great!

I calmed down and brought the HR back down to 45-50, ate my banana and drank a 5-hour energy around 8. I have been eating very light before all my workouts so far, and we agreed with Aidan not to change that. With the race being that late in the day, a good breakfast 4 hours prior to the race felt appropriate. Let me tell you one thing! 5hour energy drinks are yucky, but it certainly helped! I did my 2<sup>nd</sup> warm-up slightly after and got 4 min at higher intensity before dropping my bag, getting ready, and heading to the start line.

**During the race** – The legs felt fantastic, and with the adrenaline and excitement of my first race since August, I was set to get a PR on the first mile, had I not restrained myself a thousand times to maintain or be close to that 6:30 min/mile pace! Surprisingly, that was a hard thing to do. In fact it was so hard that I never ran a single mile at that pace. The closest I came to it was 6:26 in mile 12. I felt great and could have run faster in the first 8 miles, but I “managed” to maintain a 6:16 pace in the first half. As the race went on I built up confidence and passed more and more runners, and more importantly, I felt like I could push a bit harder if I wanted to! This was a great feeling, and a proof that all the discipline and commitment of this winter is bearing fruits!

The second split went extremely well too, to the difference that my muscles started to tense up around mile 11. The main reason: Hydration! I filled up my fuel belt with a mix of Powerbar Ironman (lemon flavor) and carbo pro, and had 3 gels. It was an important test to see what I could stomach in race conditions. I now know that I do not like sweet drinks during my runs, and Heed from Hammer Nutrition might be a better option for me. I threw up in my mouth after every sip! The gels helped compensate, but the sensation of dehydration kicked in around mile 9. I managed to get over it and focused on the race. The

finish line wasn't too far and I wanted to maintain a 6:20 pace. I maintained my pace and got a 6:16min/mile pace overall, running the 13.1 miles in 1hr, 22 min, and 53 seconds.

### Takeaways

- The hard work and discipline I put in throughout the winter are paying off. The base I have built (slow pace rides and runs!) in the past 6 months has prepared me well for the spring.
- Good preparation in the day leading up to the race helped me focus on the race.
- This was a very strong and positive result, giving me a huge boost of confidence for the upcoming 2 months of training.
- I cannot seem to stomach sweet drinks heavy in calories and carbs on my runs. I will work on getting most of the calories, carbs, and electrolytes on the bike in the next month or so to better adjust for the first half Iron (Bassman, May 5<sup>th</sup>). There is still a lot of work to be done on the hydration and nutrition fronts, but it looks promising.
- I will need to learn to pace myself better to be able to achieve a strong result at Eagleman, and will rely on Bassman and the Black Bear half ironman to gauge all that.
- GREAT RACE OVERALL!

### Key data

1st split (6.55 miles)	41:20.5
2nd split (6:55 miles)	41:31.3
Total	1:22:53
Average HR	168
Max HR	175
Average Pace	6:16
Fastest pace	6:06
Slowest Pace	6:26

### Standard Deviation from the Regression Line

