

Teesche's

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Stepping it up Again

With the end of my initial EU capital challenge closing in, it was about time to do some training. Brussels, the final one of the 28 marathons, is right around the corner on October 28th, and I didn't do a lot of running over the summer.

Next to nothing, to be honest.

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But I do know myself quite well, and if there's one thing I can count on, it's the signing up for races that gets me to train more adequately. Better yet, have some race before the races, so those function as training themselves. Spice it up with a new challenge and I'm good to go for my main EU challenge.

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"Yo dawg, I herd [sic!] you like challenges (<https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/xzibit-yo-n-dawg>), we put you in a challenge to challenge yourself while you challenge yourself."

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These three marathons I'm writing about rather happened by accident, though. Like this.

1. Earlier this year, I signed up for the Munich marathon (<https://www.generalimuenchenmarathon.de/>), October 14th, because I like the city and would like to visit again.
2. My friend Jürgen's marathon in Rauchwart (<http://www.rauchwart-marathon.at>), Austria, came back into my mind. Two weeks earlier than Munich on September 30th, it would be nice to have our families meet up again. So I signed up.
3. Said Jürgen told me about the seemingly insane Kaisermarathon (<https://tourdetirol.com/marathon-42-km.html>), a mountain race in Austria's pretty Tyrol region, right on the weekend between both races. Naturally, we both signed up.
4. I knew that all three marathons were fitting perfectly into my daughter Julie's first school holidays, she's in 1st grade now. So we built a family roadtrip style vacation around it.
5. We realized that the drive from Munich back to Hamburg, which is

about 800 kilometers, would be too much right after the marathon. I would be exhausted on her first day back at school the next day.

6. So I followed another of Jürgen's suggestions and changed the plan by replacing Munich with the TUSEM Essen Baldeneysee marathon (<https://iam.innogy.com/innogy-marathon>) near the city of Essen, Germany's oldest continuously running marathon race. With just 350 km to drive after the run, that should be a lot easier for Sophie, our four daughters, and myself as well, as I do the driving usually.

I later realized that this Baldeneysee marathon, officially called "innogy Marathon" at the moment, would again be held on the day after the IRONMAN World Championships (<https://www.ironman.com>) in Hawaii are televised in the night, which I really enjoy. That's the third year in a row I'll be running a marathon the night before it. So I've got another challenge on top of it all, which is running the third marathon within two weeks on just about four hours of sleep.

"Action beats inaction."

As my friend Rasmus likes to point out.

Training

My most recent running race was Rennsteiglauf Supermarathon (/blog/rennsteiglauf_supermarathon_74k) back in May, which is around four months ago. By my standards that is a huge gap. So I knew I needed to do something. A few short runs and a few long runs must do, as priorities concentrated around our sweet little Ida, born July 1st, of course her three big sisters, and my special summer project of building an insulated hut in our garden to practice playing the drums. (The hut is finished since and I'll soon write about building it on my personal blog, [teesche.com](https://www.teesche.com) (<https://www.teesche.com>).)

So I'm hoping to count on good muscle memory and my base endurance of the last years to help me during the races.

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Rauchwart is a small town in the eastern part of Austria, not far from the Hungarian border. I ran the race in 2016 (/blog/rauchwart-marathon), because it's organized by my friend Jürgen (http://www.42komma195.at). Our families get along great and we met quite a few times at different marathon events all over Europe, so why not start off the challenge in *Burgenland*!

To get there, we tried some new type of transportation, an overnight train from Hamburg to Vienna which has rooms with flat beds and also carries your car. It's been quite a success, the six of us slept rather well and we were happy to continue onwards from Vienna by driving in our own car. Also, not too expensive! I recommend looking into this type of travel if that sounds like it might make sense to you.





Compared to 12 hours of driving with four kids, this was a breeze

Another one and a half hours of sunny Austria's streets and we arrived at Rauchwart's lake.



Immediately, this felt like the holiday it was supposed to be

Jürgen, his wife Sonja, as well as his twin brother Harald arrived and started setting up tomorrow's race. Jürgen made the decision to remove the side-events of a halfmarathon and a relay race in order to make it easier to organize the event. Around 50 runners had signed up for the whole marathon, the only remaining event, which is a number that Jürgen and his volunteering helpers

were able to handle very well.

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To prepare, I did what I always try to do, which is eat lots of pasta in the evening and lots of oatmeal in the morning before the run. We could easily walk the 500 meters from our rental apartment to the lake, which was perfect. At 9:57 AM we arrived, three generous minutes before the shot was fired, setting off the race.



The twins managing the last pre-race tasks

An International Event

And that's just because of me! Every single participant was Austrian by birth, I'm the only foreigner. A fact which is acknowledged in the speech right before the start. Quite some attention on me right at the beginning.

The 42.195 kilometers were divided up into 9 laps around the lake and nearby area, making it 4.68 kilometers per lap. That way the event is a lot easier to handle for Jürgen. He just requires one aid station with drinks and a bit of food. I'm also happy as it's a lot easier for Sophie and the kids to meet me multiple

times during the race.

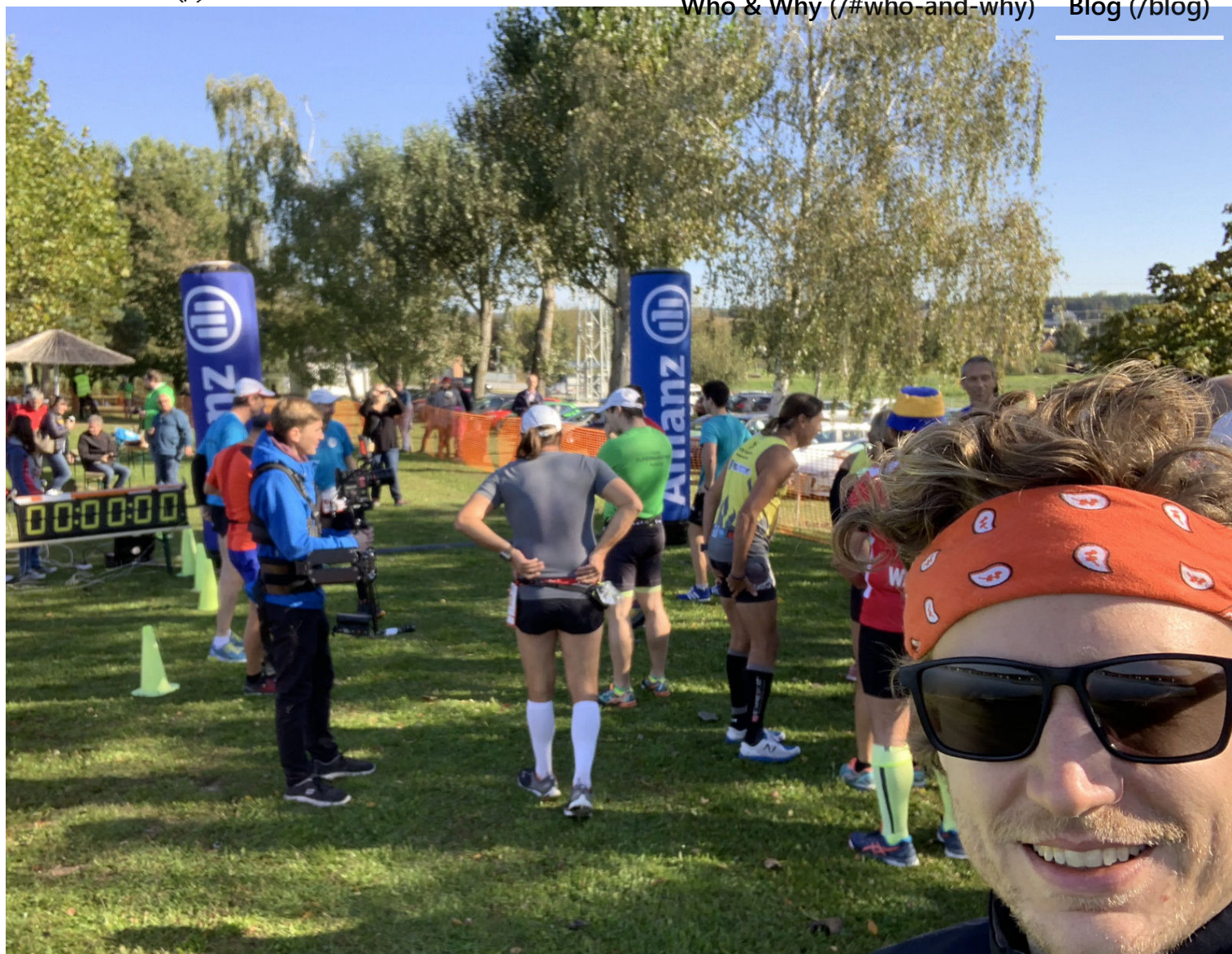
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Really happy and excited to be running a marathon again after four months





Need to remember to start those tracking watches!

There seem to be no really fast participants today, although some start off quite a bit faster than me. The fun thing about such a small event is that you can get a good overview of who you're racing with. It's a lot more personal. Chances are, you'll see every single person multiple times. I keep a pace of around 5:30 minutes per kilometer, which I'm able to handle rather well.



The runners' field still close together

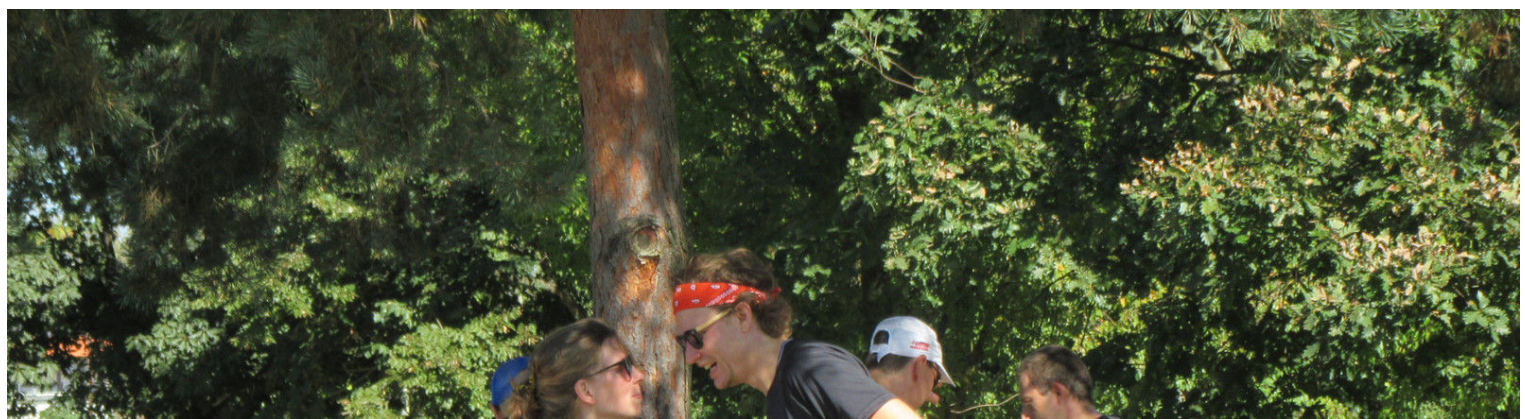
Talking to the other runners is always fun and interesting. I'm greeted by lots of them because I'm the only named announced person as I'm the only non-

Austrian. A couple I'm overtaking tell me that it's her 40th and his 99th
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 marathon. Not too bad!



Some more of these happy Austrian folks

At every lap I'm meeting the kids and unless they're in the middle of playing or having lunch, they run towards me for kisses and hugs every time. I never mind the minutes I'm losing because of this.





My little Hobbits making sure I have enough to drink

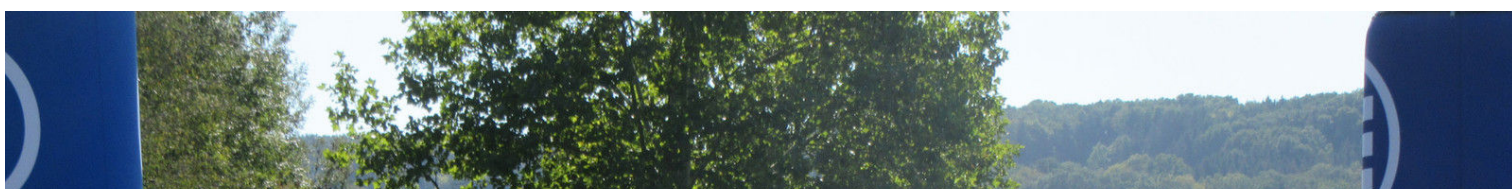
Halfway There

On my fifth lap, roughly around crossing the halfmarathon mark, the runner in first place overtakes me – so he is a whole lap, 4.68 kilometers, in front of me, or around 20 minutes. I'm surprised it happens this late. It really isn't a fast race this year.

After 30 kilometers it starts getting a bit harder for me, but I manage to keep the pace. Some HoneyPower (<https://www.honeypower.shop>) helps me right now!

At every lap, Harald, being the official announcer, looks at his tracking computer and says something about me. At some point he says I'm currently in 15th place. Overtaking a few others, I'm in 10th position later, which is very motivating. Also it's fun to know your own exact position in the field while it changes. I'm briefly in the Top 10, but get overtaken again.

First Marathon Finish of this Challenge



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And then it's suddenly over

In the end I'm finishing 12th out of 41, quite happy about this. 3:47:20 hours is my official finishing time. Also nothing to complain about by my standards.



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My daughter Vera handing me my medal

Time to find a spot to relax a bit. It's not like this wasn't exhausting at all for me. Laying straight in the grass by the lake feels very good right now.



But first, some more family time

The race went very well, perfect conditions and organization by Jürgen, Sonja, Harald, and their volunteers.

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Great job by my favorite Austrians – I'll be back!

We stay for the winner's ceremony and it's fun to realize that if had I run my personal best time of 3:26 hours, I would have come in 2nd place today! Another reason to take up some speed training again and come back to Rauchwart. Standing on a podium some day in my life would be a nice goal to reach.

No blisters, no real physical problems, soreness of the muscles was also not too bad. Can't complain. Off to the next one!



In contrast to my minimalist efforts, here's the stuff I keep collecting from every race

Some [GPS watch tracking stats on Strava \(https://www.strava.com/activities/1875167374\)](https://www.strava.com/activities/1875167374) for the nerds:

The Tour de Tirol

The next race is the most difficult one of the three. It's called **Kaisermarathon**