

Deutschland Lauf, "DL-2005"

In 2005 there will be a Germany Foot Race. It is named "DL-2005" for short and will take place between September 12 to 28, 2005. The start is at the north-east most part of Germany at Cape Arkona on the island of Ruegen. It will wind it's way to the South-east part of Germany to the town of Loerrach on the Swiss border. This will make it the longest route through Germany. Seventy runners will be allowed to participate. Runners from Switzerland, the Netherlands, Turkey, Austria, the USA, France, Luxemburg and Germany will be accepting the 1,200 kilometer challenge. Seventeen days without stop, is a challenge for real Ultra Runners. Anyone saying "this is impossible" should look back at the Trans America events that took place in 1928 and 1929.

After sixty years of inaction the race was brought back to life at the beginning of the 1990. The Australians had their Trans Australia Foot Race in 2001 and in 2003 I, Ingo Schulze, directed the Trans Europe Foot Race. It should be said that all race directors were subjected to severe critique as the physical, emotional and physiological tolls are severe.

At such events, which equals the rape of ones body, emotions will be awakened that normally stay dormant to the end of your life. The Americans and Australians had required all runners to provide their own crew who in turn were responsible for their runner well-being on a daily basis. I, Ingo Schulze, on the other hand only required that runners ran, eat and sleep, while I took care of the rest.

I had problems which the Americans and Aussies did not have to confront. In Europe there were several borders to cross, different mentalities, several currencies, languages and travel visas for all to deal with. All which required so much more up front during the planning stage. Especially challenging was the preparation and actual crossing through Belarus and Russia.

Due to the relative low cost of the entry fee, it was made possible for many would-be runners to participate, which otherwise would not have been possible. The high cost for America and Australia came about through the required crews and vehicles, making the overall cost four to five times as high as for the Trans Europe race. This is an aspect many have as of this date not fully appreciated.

For the preparation of the Trans Europe Foot Race I reached back to the experience I acquired during the 1998 "DL-98" and several multi-day races along the river Spree, a race over 420 kilometers in six daily stages. To that add about twenty City-Races and you can see that I had a wealth of experience to draw from.

Will there ever be another Trans Europe Race? This is not very likely, at least not directed by myself. Should it ever happen, I have this advise: Do it like the Americans and Aussies.

My biggest problems were:

1. cold showers, 2. meals were not always what runners wanted, 3. sport halls often too small and dirty. 4. some changes in the daily stages.
2. All four points above were usually outside of my control, yet the runners did not want to hear about that.

If a runner has his own crew, he/she can complain to them making life for the RD much easier. Any RD who stages such an enormous event will always be open to much critique.

The "DL02005" most likely will be held every other year, alternating with the "Spree-Lauf", but I have as of yet not made a definite decision. After running myself for 27 years, I know what can be expected of runners. An organizer will always be questioned about everything he does. I was already asked by some if what I do is not irresponsible?

To qualify my decisions:

I ran twice across Germany solo, experienced the hot wind in the Sahara desert at the "Marathon des Sables" and ran nonstop from Germany to France and have completed a run from Germany to England amongst other events.

I know the pain and the constant questions as to the WHY, the constant doubts, the euphoria, the depressions and the constant changes between all of these emotions. Once you have made it, you fall into a deep whole, where is the joy of having finished and then euphoria? Only much later do we become aware of our accomplishments.

During the "DL-2005", I am sure, we will see scenes from the 2003 Trans Europe race although perhaps not to the same extent. There is a difference if I tell them "come on, only eight more days" or if I say "another 20 or 25 days to go".

During the "DL-2005" I will again have a field of experienced runners but they will have prepared themselves to 2/3 differently. Already now I urge every one to increase your training. 100 kilometers per week is good, but will not be enough for the "DL-2005" event.

In the end you must rely on the understanding of your family and friends. You must explain to them that this is an event that will not take place every month and for many it will be a once-a-life-time dream. I already predict now that some will not reach their goal. However, should I deny them the chance to try to fulfill a dream?

To further motivate them I will write a short column every month which will be available at:

www.deutschlandlauf.com. Anyone wanting more info about me can go to:

www.transeurope-footrace.org and www.spreelauf.com for more info. Sebastian Seyrich created all these sites, who since 1998 has accompanied all of my events.

More about the "DL-2005": All participants will start every morning in two groups. The slower group from the previous day at 6:00 AM and the faster one at 7:00 AM. Breakfast will be ready and available at 5:00 AM. Every 8 to 12 kilometers there will be an aid station on the course. Dinner will be served in the gyms we stay or some times in restaurants. Also during the "DL-2005" the motto "Run, Eat & Sleep" applies. If I will be happy with this concept over the long haul, I am not sure. Should I no longer feel comfortable with this concept, I will quit directing such races. I wish further to cater to my runners although it would make my life easier if I were to increase the entry fee and let the runners take on more responsibilities. But, I wish to stay true to my principles.

I am looking forward together with my crew to greet many new faces and hope to provide a great experience for all, runners, volunteers and organizers alike. We all have one common goal: We want to make this 17 great days where all will have a good time and become one big group that. We want to solidify old friendships and make new friends.

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