

HARALD LANGE IS A BLIND RUNNER.

HE COMPLETED THE 30TH SULTAN MARATHON DES SABLES WITH HIS GUIDE, 10X WINNER OF MDS LAHCEN AHANSAL. **HERE IS HIS STORY**



You ran MDS with 10x winner Lahcen Ahansal. How/why did you decide to do it together?

The problem was that I was not allowed to take the start of MDS without a guide. The question is not if I am able to do it and do it alone. The organization just wanted that I do it with a guide.

So I had to search somebody at the German team and nobody wanted to do this job, they wanted to run by themselves or wanted to be paid for it.

So I asked the organisation to help me or to cancel my registration. They talked with Lahcen Ahansal and asked him if he wanted to do the race with me and he said he will do it of course. Our main problem was that he speaks very few German but always better than my French or Moroccan, and, on my side I only speak English and German, only a little bit of French and no Moroccan at all. So we spoke with hands and feet and the few words we have got made it work very well.

How did you prepare for it?

I did the preparation of the MDS by myself. One time Lahcen visited me in Germany with Nicola Wahl, a good friend of us, she speaks French fluently and so she translated what we wanted to say.

Lahcen looked at my backpack and my food, the material I used and gave me tips on what I can do or can not do.

Also Anke Molkenhuth gave me tips on what to do and what to use and then I trained with my trainer Kurt Stenzel. He is a coach for Marathoners, but has also a little experience with Ultrarunning. So we did about 100km a week, powersports in studio twice a week as well as training with my backpack.

At the beginning we started with a backpack of 4 Kg and added weight up to 10 Kg. Once in February I ran 12 hours with my backpack full with all the material I will take for the race, it was 12 kg then, at least!

What are your feelings, tell us about your MDS?

I love to use the words Lahcen says: "The MDS is hard but it is beautiful".

First day I got a terrible headache and I had to learn how to eat and drink in the desert and manage the climate. Lahcen helped me and gave me tips when to use the salt tabs and when to eat, drinking a little every 5 minutes and so on.

So, the second day in the desert I felt well. I knew now how to drink and eat and focus only on the race. I tried to think only from stage to stage, from CP to CP, from day to day. Not thinking about the last day or the finish, only thinking about finishing the stage, eating, drinking and resting at the end of the day, reaching the bivouac and being happy with the people I am with, visiting other tents and having fun.

All you have to do is to run from point A to point B, it is clear what you have to do. Don't be angry against the organization – they did not invite you. Don't care about what you do at home, care about what you have to do here and have fun and pleasure in the desert because you never know if you will come back again, could you afford it again, be able to start again, or will you have a guide again?

So be happy and enjoy every moment in this amazing country. Ultras are always hard and your feelings goes up and down but when it is over you know what you have done, you are proud of it and you know what you can do and you will do that again.



What is your next challenge?

The next challenge depends on if there is a guide, if there is enough money to do the race and if I stay healthy. At the moment my real problem is, that I am not interested about smaller things you know? So a normal Marathon or a 100k run is not the same feeling as a self insufficient race like the MDS or other. But I learned to love this project because it is not only a run, it is a project and it is a pleasure to find what is good or not for you, to learn a lot about yourself.

