

RUNNING SHORTS

Proper hydration critical with hot weather

By Ken Johnson

We have to face it; the hot and humid weather is here to stay for awhile. That makes staying hydrated even more important if we are to avoid heat-related injuries while we are running. We know that dehydration also reduces performance.

Expert advice on how much fluid you should drink to stay hydrated has changed over the years. Even just several years ago, we were advised that the more fluid we drank the better. Some marathons had aid stations every mile on the course and we were encouraged to drink at every aid station. Now, the experts say that too much fluid can lead to “hyponatremia,” which is an imbalance in the fluid-electrolyte ratio in your body. More simply put, when you drink too much water, your blood sodium concentration falls below normal levels. This can lead to serious medical problems.

As a general rule, the advice now is to drink when you are thirsty and drink enough to satisfy your thirst. Do not avoid drinking early in your race or training run. If you are running and it is particularly hot, drink ahead of your thirst. Do not rely only on plain water. You need to replace sodium and other electrolytes lost by sweating to avoid hyponatremia. Drink a sports drink that contains sodium.

Many long distance runners use electrolyte replenishment tablets, in addition to water and sports drinks. These are available online and at running stores.

Running is a great sport for achieving and maintaining physical fitness, but to maximize performance and avoid heat-related injuries, you have to stay hydrated. This is especially true in the hot and humid weather of southeast Texas.

Congratulations to John Slate, 52, of Huntsville and to Jerry Flanagan, 67, of Madisonville for completing the Boston Marathon on April 21st. Slate completed the 26.2-mile course in 4:02:07. It was his 62nd race of a marathon or longer distance. Flanagan finished in 5:31:27. It was his 25th marathon. This was the second Boston Marathon completion for both.

The 1st Annual City of Huntsville & Wiesner-Huntsville 5K Run was held on April 26. Drew Bean, 19, of Orange was the overall male winner with a time of 15:29. Taylor Terry, 12, of New Waverly was the overall female winner with a time of 22:33.