

RUNNING SHORTS

Runners will understand

By Matthew Wagner

Beginning runners that wish to compete in a race are often satisfied with attempting a 5K (kilometer), then a 10K, and gradually increasing the distance and possibly working up to a marathon. If a marathon is not long enough, there are numerous 50K, 50 mile and even 100 mile races to enter for competition.

While the proposition of attempting to run 100 miles may not appeal to everyone, a certain segment of our population finds this task intriguing. To successfully complete a 100 mile run would be (in the words of Yogi Berra) “90 percent mental, and the other half would be physical”. Probably most of us have the physical capability of completing a race like this: it is the mental aspect of both training for and completing in a race this long that defeats many of us.

So why bring this up? I have unfortunately realized that as I get older, I will not become any faster. The race times I put up many years ago for the 10K, half marathon and marathon are destined to be my individual personal records. Therefore, because the appeal of competition still remains, I must increase the distance of my races to satisfy my competitive needs.

However, years of running 50-70 miles a week have not been without a cost. My spinal column has taken the brunt of those millions of steps over the years. I was diagnosed with two herniated disks in my lower back, one of which my radiologist referred to as “a big, honking herniation” (Apparently it is a medical term – go look it up).

Therefore my running is limited to the State Park – well known to most runners and off road cyclists in this town, but still a relatively unappreciated treasure. Acres and acres of woods combined with miles and miles of trails and dirt roads make for a wonderful environment to train. The best part is the trails are not as hard on my back as the concrete and asphalt of our local roads. But still the training aspect of completing a 100 miler means that I will be spending a great deal of time out in those woods if I want to successfully complete this race.

But most doctors will tell me because of my back that it is time to retire. And besides, what person in their right mind would want to do this to themselves? Why subject yourself to all of that discomfort? The snakes, the bugs, and the nasty roots that tend to grab our feet prompting a rapid visit to the ground. Why would we do this? I am not sure how to address all of those questions. But the only way I can respond is to use the words of General George Patton: “God help me: I love it so”.

See you at the park.

Recent race results:

Trail Run at Millican Reserve, 25K, College Station, Mar. 7

Dana Formon, 26 2:54:15

Habitat for Humanity 5K, Livingston, Mar. 7

Jose Torres, 22 18:50

Steve Allen, 42 23:05
Donna Fabian, 40 23:57
Ken Johnson, 73 36:40

Race Against Violence 5K, Houston, Mar. 7

Larissa Rios, 22 23:16

Upcoming races in Huntsville:

March 21 – Color ‘Em Kats 5K, SHSU campus

March 22 – Run the Trails, 3.5 Miles, Non-Competitive, Huntsville State Park

April 18 – Hog’s Hunt 50K, 25K, 10K Trail Run, Huntsville State Park

April 18 – Spring Fling 5K, 1-Mile, Elkins Lake Sub-division

May 2 – Five-0 Color Run, 5K, 1-Mile, Kate Barr Ross Park

For more information about these races and others in the area, visit the Seven Hills Running Club web site at <http://www.7hills.us> and click on Race Schedule.