

## RUNNING SHORTS

### **Are you a jogger or a runner?**

By Darren Grant

When I was younger, people would ask me about my running, often saying, “So, I hear you’re a jogger?”

I would reply, “No. I’m a runner.” Most runners hate being called joggers.

These days, however, the situation is reversed. If someone asked me, “So, I hear you’re a runner?” I would reply, “No. I’m a jogger.” Or would if I was honest enough, which I’m probably not.

So—which is it? Jogger or runner? What is the difference between the two?

I see it this way. When a jogger jogs, time is not their primary concern, just finishing. It’s not about improving or doing your best, however fast that may be. It’s just about covering some ground.

That’s the situation I find myself in now. As some of you know, I injured my foot in a race last Thanksgiving, and it’s been a slow road back—no pun intended. In the spring I taugth on crutches, and took my kids’ old scooter through the halls of my building to go from place to place. (If that sounds like fun, you’re right. It was totally fun.)

I can walk now, and run, but my foot is still recovering. Speed is not the issue, or even doing my best. Right now, injury prevention is everything. Only recently have I become able to run a mile without stopping to rest my feet. Right now, I’m not a runner. I’m a jogger—and proud of it.

For runners, it is different. Running isn’t a pastime, but a sport. They want to do their best. They want to improve.

Runners have personal records—joggers don’t. Runners have time and distance goals—joggers don’t. Runners obsess about gear and shoes—joggers don’t.

As a regular attendee at local running events, I’ve watched many of our neighbors progress in their running. The most exciting part of this progression is the transition from jogger to runner.

In the beginning, these people are getting used to the very idea of running—the concept that you can go by foot a distance that most people would normally drive.

Over time, however, many such individuals come to embrace the sport and the challenges that accompany it. They’re hooked. They are joggers no longer. They have become runners.

You can see this in the intensity they bring to their running. Many of us have come across well-known runner Ken Johnson tootling around town. Next time you see him, don’t watch his feet—watch his face. It has the same intensity that an Olympian’s would have.

I saw that same intensity in a picture this summer, in which David Keithley of Huntsville was finishing his first 10K race ever. (Hopefully, you can view this picture on the Item’s website, [itemonline.com](http://itemonline.com), even if it doesn’t appear in print.) A 10K race is, somehow, more than twice as long as a 5K—or feels that way, at least. The first time you run one, it seems like it will never end.

But, with the finish line in view, Keithley shows no sign of relief, or passivity—he is giving it all he has, to finish strong and do his best. That’s when I knew—our sport had bagged another runner. Who’s next?

(Don't forget to send Ken Johnson your race results at [1941runner@sbcglobal.net](mailto:1941runner@sbcglobal.net). Also don't forget the Seven Hills Running Club's Leftover Turkey Run, to be held on Saturday morning at 8 a.m. at Physical Therapy Associates behind the hospital. Have a Happy Thanksgiving!)

**Recent race results:**

**La Porte By the Bay Half Marathon, Nov. 18**

Lorie Cross, 57 2:26:46

Ken Johnson, 77 3:10:26

**Santa's Wonderland 5K, College Station, Nov. 17**

Kayleigh Pursley, 28 36:16

**Fairchild AFB Turkey Trot 5K, Spokane, WA, Nov. 17**

Steve Allen, 46 23:45

**Conroe Turkey Trot 5K, Nov. 17**

Ken Johnson, 77 40:16

**Cypress Half Marathon, Cypress, Nov. 11**

David Keithley, 36 2:45:05

**Sweating IV Vets 5K, Humble, Nov. 11**

Ken Johnson, 77 39:18

**Run the Woodlands 5K, The Woodlands, Nov. 10**

Ken Johnson, 77 40:00

**Haley Burk Memorial 5K Color Run (untimed), Trinity, Nov. 10**

Steve Allen, 46

**Upcoming races in Huntsville:**

November 24 – Leftover Turkey 10K, 5K, 1-Mile, Physical Therapy Associates

January 1 – New Year's Resolution Run, 10K, 5K, 1-Mile, Physical Therapy Associates

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

