

RUNNING SHORTS

Getting back to the race

By Matt Wagner

I could have walked away. Literally.

I have been fortunate to have accomplished many things in my athletic career. 10K races, half marathons, full marathons, ultras, triathlons – I thought I had pretty well checked everything off the list. Except one.

About 6 years ago when I was looking into races, I realized we have one of the biggest 50 and 100 mile runs right here in Huntsville. I signed up for the 50 miler and was pretty excited about competing at that distance.

And then came the question from a man I had never met and maybe will never see again. Standing near the starting line before the race, he turns to me and says, “So, are you doing the 100 miler or are you doing the FUN RUN?”

How else could I answer? “I am doing the fun run”. ☹

Now, I have run for many years, and I can assure you there has not been too much “fun” going on out there. I have sweated a lot, had some great conversations, tripped over roots, enjoyed scenery, felt so sick I thought I was going to die, but also felt good about what I was accomplishing. Rarely was it “Fun”.

So I made up my mind to complete in the 100 the next year. Cut to the end, and I dropped out at 60 miles. I believe I made that fatal mistake of feeling sorry for myself. “Why are you doing this? You could be home watching football with your feet up and a cold beverage by your side!!!”

Yup, didn’t finish. Oh well, 60 miles is pretty good, right? That’s like from here to Houston. Not bad for one day.

Except it wasn’t the 100.

Somehow it draws you back. Call it unfinished business, a longing to still be competitive, trying to test myself one more time. Not sure what it really is. But come February 4 I will try it again.

Maybe I will see my “friend” out there – And I can say “Look! I am no longer a FUN RUNNER!”

See you at the park!

Recent race results:

Toughest 10K (6.2 miles), Kemah, Sept. 18

Dan Byrne, 58 44:15

Cypress Bend 5K, Jefferson, Sept. 18

Steve Allen, 44 22:07

Woodforest Charity Run, Conroe, Sept. 17

10K

Ken Johnson, 75 1:21:08

5K

Cindy Pate, 55 43:57

Gruene 10K, New Braunfels, Sept. 10

Eric Keith, 44 1:00:05

Ken Johnson, 75 1:21:29

Daily News Press Run 10K, Galveston, Sept. 10

Steve Bickford, 55 48:38

Monica Lopez, 33 1:00:02

Cathy Bickford, 54 1:22:23

April Russell, 40 1:48:26

Kolache Krunch 5K, Caldwell, Sept. 10

Steve Allen, 44 22:24

Upcoming races in Huntsville:

September 25 – Texas 10 Series Huntsville, 10 Miles, 5 Miles, 5K & 1 Mile

October 8 – Dye for Dogs Color Run, 3.9 Miles, New Waverly

October 22 – Huntsville Half & Quarter Marathon & 5K Run/Walk

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.