

December 30, 2021



For me, as with most people, the closing days of December tend to be a time of reflection and a time of hope. It is a time to take inventory of the year that is just wrapping up, and to look ahead to the coming year with as much optimism as possible. After the last couple of years, and the current state of things, We can all use a little optimism.

This past year has had some rough moments. My father passed away a year ago this morning, and he was laid to rest on the last day of 2020, wrapping up a very difficult year on a very sad note. We knew the day before that he would not likely make it through the night, so we had a chance to say our goodbyes the evening before.

Immediately after I learned he had passed, I went out and improvised a route through the neighborhood that I had never quite run before. The total distance ended up being exactly 4.94 miles. I stopped just shy of 5 miles to honor the full 94 years he lived. This immediately became the route I used to visit him many times over the next few months.

When my Plantar Fasciitis set in in late April, I had to drastically reduce my running, and suddenly, after averaging over 6 miles a day every day for the previous year, 4.94 miles was out of my reach without severe pain and potential damage. In early July, I was starting to feel a little better, and on July 3rd, I did one last Dad Route before having to shut down my running totally in mid July. For the next three months, I didn't really run at all. I couldn't. I was in healing mode.

Around the middle of October, I finally really started to turn the corner on my injury, but at 66 years old, you don't just bounce back from months of inactivity and pick up where you left off. I was really shocked to see first hand how quickly my fitness dropped off the end of a cliff in such a short time. At first, I couldn't run slowly for more than a mile before I had to take a breather to walk. Eventually, I got back to 3 miles without stopping, but at a much slower pace than before.

It really wasn't until November that I started to feel somewhat like a runner again, only older and wiser. I had gained about 15 pounds during my downtime, much of which I still have, but I've been there before and fought my way back. I've impatiently been waiting for my shot at returning to what I love, and I think I am at a point that I am finally on my way back. As I have said many times in the past, I will never, ever just throw up my arms and give up. I personally know a few of you who are tenacious just like me, but who are down at the moment, and feeling somewhat hopeless about ever healing to the point that you can run again. All I can say is don't give up. You know who you are, and I do expect to see you back on the roads some day.

I have really only had one specific goal this past month. I've been working at building my endurance and mileage to the point that I might be able to run the Dad Route again today, on the 1 year anniversary of his passing. I just miss him, and wanted to spend some special time with him this morning.

Serious storms moved in last night, and when I woke up this morning, there were rumbles of thunder all around, and it was raining pretty heavily, but I needed to get the run in, or at least give it a shot. So between rumbles, I went out very slowly and deliberately with a singular goal of spending an hour on the roads with Dad, and do the 4.94 mile Dad Route, my longest distance in months.

I ran slowly as I cried in the rain. The run was cleansing. This last year has been a very difficult one emotionally. Dad was my father, but he was also my friend, and for many years, my running partner. All my running inspiration has come from him. I miss him every day, and have especially missed being able to do the Dad Route. I still don't know if I am back 100%, but today, all that mattered was the run.

Looking ahead to 2022, I am full of hope that things will fall in place, and that things start getting back to normal. I love the January and February races. There are so many good ones that are a good way to kick off the year. I will be at many of them, and look forward to seeing my fellow runners. Please say hello when you see me. Have a great month of running.



Michael Selman
Senior Ambassador
durunruner@yahoo.com