

Thoughts of a Senior Ambassador

The Cycle Continues



I used to be good. Now, I am great. It has nothing to do with times, or distances, because if it did, I would be having a pity party for myself right now. Let me explain.

Running is a BIG part of my life. Big. Huge. Needed.

I have been mostly quiet lately because I have mostly not been able to run. Whenever this happens, I am adversely impacted, and tend to pull away. Honestly, it is difficult for me to cheer other people on when I am suffering, as much as I want to. It's a part of me I am well aware of and working on, but haven't overcome quite yet.

For the last 4 years I was on a steady road of improvement, which is unusual for someone my age. I improved because I trained my ass off. Improvement doesn't come by accident. It comes from hard work, focus, and determination. In April of this year, I set my 60 and over PR at 5K at age 65. I PR'ed at every other distance from 10K through marathon in the past 2 years as well.

Then in May, I had to stop running completely because of Plantar Fasciitis. Every time I ran, I paid dearly for it later that day, and the pain would linger for as long as a week after. I had no choice. It killed me. Last year, from March through the end of the year, I missed only three days of running, none of them after early June.

I am just to the point now where I can run a couple of miles again, and be ok the next day. But at age 65, my conditioning fell off a cliff, and I feel like I am totally starting over again. And that is why I am posting today.

Before I got hurt, I was running a 5K in a little over 25 minutes. Yesterday, I ran a 5K race on a fair course, and after 2 miles slightly under 10 minute per mile pace, I totally tanked, and had to walk a fair bit the third mile. I feel like all my conditioning has left me.

But the run was not a failure. In fact, it was great, simply because I can once again do it. Finish line clocks and GPS watches can either be our friend or our foe, depending on how we interpret it. Yesterday, none of that mattered. The fact that I was out there, working on reclaiming what was once mine, was all that was important.

In my younger days, I could bounce back pretty quick after downtime, but this is very different. It's going to take a long time to get back even close to where I was, and that is assuming I can stay injury free. Before the injury, my favorite race distance was the half marathon, and I had run one each month for nearly 3 years. I also had a 3 year streak of 100 mile months, and many were closer to 200 miles. Today, even the thought of running a 10K seems like a long way off.

But instead of hiding my head in the sand, I'm going to continue to share my running adventure, with all its ugly warts, because I do believe there will be better days ahead. This is just the most recent in a lifetime of running ups and downs, and though I am older now than I ever have been, I know I have at least one more cycle of improvement ahead of me. The one thing I know for certain is that I will never give up. That just isn't in me.

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I have always been eager to share my successes here. Hopefully, this journey will be another one, but time will tell. The last cycle took a lot of work, but I was 5 years younger, so I know that this time around is going to be exponentially more challenging than the last one. The point is that the last 5 years have created some of the fondest memories in all of my 39 years of running, and I expect the next cycle will be similar. There are hopefully still chapters to be written.

So hopefully, my latest journey will be a successful one, and perhaps sharing it can inspire someone else who is either on the fence about throwing in the towel, or possibly motivate someone who is already a step or two ahead of me on the comeback journey.

