

It's Starting to Get Real Again

On March 1, I participated in the Publix Marathon, and then six days later I ran the Myrtle Beach Half. My year was off to a very good start, and I didn't see anything slowing me down. I had raced every weekend, and had already run three Half Marathons as well as the full, and was getting ready for more. On my schedule, I was looking forward to running the San Francisco Half in April, and then the Seattle half, in early June. I would have never guessed at the time that this was going to be my last "real race" before everything started shutting down.

We had all heard of COVID-19, but none of us ever imagined how hard it would hit here at home. And it hit quickly two. By the end of the following week, all professional sports were shutting down, people were encouraged to not congregate, businesses started closing, travelers stopped traveling, and road races started shutting down. In the blink of an eye, everyone in this country was affected in one way or another, and none of it was good.

For me personally, I am definitely one of the lucky ones. I was able to transition from traveling every week to safely working from home remotely and effectively. This is actually allowed me to slip into a very nice running routine, and I have only missed one day of running in the last two months and increase my mileage significantly over what I would normally run. I finished up with over 200 miles, and that is the first time I have done that in nearly 20 years.

Other than my runs, I have primarily stayed inside the house were sitting on the porch in my backyard almost exclusively. I have taken the shelter in place orders very seriously, because I am in a high risk category, and Iris have a strong fear of the unknown. This spring has been unusually comfortable up to this point, but with June now arriving, I think we are about to settle into the normal summer heat and humidity.

Although my running has been great, I have definitely been missing the weekly races and the friendly camaraderie that I experience when I participate in these events. With June now here, things are starting to change, and although it will be a long time before we are back to normal, we are starting to take steps in that direction. For the entire month this May, just about every single race was either canceled, postponed, or switch to a virtual event. Although it is still running, virtual events not the same as a real race event, where you get chip timing, and chocolate chip cookies if you are lucky.

As I look at the June racing calendar, the majority of events are still either postponed, canceled, or switched to virtual, but more and more are starting to pop up that will be held live. They won't look like they have in the past. Starts will be staggered, and winners will not be judged by when they cross the finish line, but by the time on their chip. This will be done to keep people socially distanced and safe. There will be a lot of other changes as well, all with the intention of adhering to recommended state and government guidelines, which make it possible for events like these to be held in the first place.

I plan to attend some of these life events, starting with Sour Patch this coming weekend. I am still a little nervous about all of this, but I am really to slowly dip my toes back in the water. It is vitally important that everyone who participates in these life races follows all rules and guidelines put in place, respect people's space, where facemasks when not running, and make a point of not congregating in large groups. Most importantly, we must adhere to all guidelines that race directors have in place, and if you

are unable to do that, then it is better for you to stay at home. If we abuse the privilege we have, races like this will have to cease until the threat is over.

I look forward to seeing all of you again at races in the future, some sooner, and some later. But eventually, we will get there. We're all in this together.