

My summer racing and why

When it comes to running Ultras (anything over 50km), the physical effort required is matched only by the mental effort and in some cases it's the mental effort that gets you to the finish. That is why most experienced long distance runners will tell you that in order to be successful you need a "why".

The "why" is that motivation you return to, that ultimate reason you need to focus on when your 43 Km's into a race, your body hurts, you're tired as hell, and you swear you will quit after this one. It's the "why" that pushes you past the suffering, past the desire to quit and just finish something monumentally hard.

This year was my first real season where I would run 3 major races over 50 km's and include serious elevation gains totaling more than 18,000 feet. These are not road races in the city; these are trail races that go over mountain passes with exposure to harsh weather and wild animals. Some call them suffer-fests; I needed my own "why".

I came up with two. The first is based on the fact that 10 years ago I could barely walk with a broken back from numerous work injuries in my 20's and I would never take my health for granted ever again. I knew if I didn't work for it I'd be in pain or crippled for the last half of my life. Some of us do not have the option of rehabilitation but I knew I had a chance and worked for it. I am grateful for everyday I can walk and run so I will keep at it until I can't.

My second "why" is a very simple truth. When I run and push myself past my fears and self-imposed limitations, I strip away anything that is holding me back in this life and become more like the person I want to be.

Addendum:

This summer Kurtis competed in 3 Ultras and finished in the top 40% at each.

-Blackfoot Ultra 50km in 5:49:00

-Iron Legs Ultra 60km (10,000 feet) in 10:40:00

-The Lewiston Ultra 56km (6,000feet) in 8:04:00

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