

## Ignore Injury at Your Peril

In 2011, I was trained and ready for Fat Dog. Having done a significant amount of hill repeats as well as distance, I was prepared compared to many previous hundreds. But, a few weeks before race day, you sent out warnings about the condition of the course and the likelihood that the race may not take place. My response followed a typical Kubler-Ross model: 1) Denial –right through the official cancellation I was sure that I would go and do the run; 2) Anger –I won't describe my reaction but my wife can attest to this ugly state; 3) Bargaining –this is the stage that got me as I attempted to negotiate a solution. A friend told me that the very same day that Fat Dog was scheduled to start there was a relay race starting not too far from my home. It took dirt and paved roads 69 miles (that would be ~111 km for most of the world) through the coast range to the ocean. I was prepared for 120 miles. This was not much more than a 100k which I have done many times. While a relay race, the organizer already had one entrant going solo and was happy to get another last minute solo runner. What could go wrong?

Some of my friends warned me. This was a road run. Pavement is dangerous. But since I was fast approaching the Depression stage, I grasped at this opportunity. By the 50 mile mark, my calves started to seize and spasm. I have had this problem in fast 50k's, but usually in my quads and hams, never in my calves. I walked and pushed the pace as best I could. Eventually I finished coming in second in the solo runner category. (Yes there were only two of us.) In the following weeks, I ignored the slight sensitivity in my Achilles. Then, four weeks after the relay, I finished a 100k race with a swollen Achilles.

I did not run much for some time. I went to doctors, physical therapists, an acupuncturist/Chinese herbalist. Eventually, I did something right. By March, I could run 3 miles with no pain after 2 days. Perhaps I could actually run Fat Dog in 2012. In April, I ramped to 10 to 15 mile runs. Then I had to make a choice. I could push the ramp, risking additional injuries, but making Fat Dog a possibility. Or...I could listen to my wife and use the rest of the year to build a base for 2013.

I took the riskier path and almost made it working through a variety of the usual overuse injuries. Then, a week ago, as a reality test, I pushed the distance to run my favorite route, a circumnavigation of Mt Hood. This 40 miles loop is only runnable for about 3 months a year. It is spectacular. If I could not make it without issues, I could not do Fat Dog. The bottom line is that I have a doctor's appointment on Friday.

I have reached the state of Acceptance. However, I am still hoping to run a hundred this year.

J. L.

Note from Heather: This is a real story provided to me just before Fat Dog 2012. I told him I would like to share it with others.