

TheDoingsClarendonHills

Injury sidelines runner before the marathon

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Sometimes it just isn't your year.

Apparently it just isn't mine. It's definitely not the year I will run the Chicago marathon.

Thank you, stress fracture.

Any athlete knows sometimes months of training pays off with an injury that renders you unable to attain your goal. It's disappointing and frustrating beyond belief to watch all that hard work wash down the drain.

Two weeks ago I decided there just wasn't enough time for me to recover fully from the stress fracture I sustained in my right tibia at the end of June. And I only got off the crutches last week.

I believe I can pinpoint the day, the hour and even the street and intersection the fracture occurred. I brushed it off as a pulled muscle and limped the three-quarters of a mile home.

Two days later I ran a very painful seven miles thinking I should eat more bananas. I chugged countless glasses of Propel-infused water before two more three-mile runs. It was when I was describing my pain to my Sam's Team running mates that I realized the pain was probably not from a pulled muscle.

A visit to Dr. Steven Chudik at Hinsdale Orthopaedics confirmed my fear: I had a stress fracture.

Once he said stress fracture, a pair of crutches magically appeared. The treatment was three weeks no pressure on my right leg.

Benjamin Domb, a colleague of Chudik's and medical director at the Hip Center of Excellence at Adventist Hinsdale Hospital, said stress fractures can occur in people who do repetitive training but they aren't that common of an injury.

Wearing good shoes and cross training are important for preventing stress fractures but Domb said people also need to take care of their bone health.

"Most females are vitamin D deficient," he said. "Taking vitamin D pills will help prevent them. That's a very, very easy thing to do."

Depending on the injury, he said a person should wait between six and 12 weeks after coming off crutches before trying to run.

Other common injuries he sees in marathon runners are meniscus tears in the knee and labrum tears in the hip.

"If you're hitting a point where you're having persistent pain, you need to have a diagnosis and find out what's wrong," Domb said.



Runners finished and either took off immediately or refueled on cool drinks, bagels and bananas. (Joe Cyganowski/for Sun-Times Media)

My marathon training mentor, Michelle Maloney, sustained injuries in her knees last year while training. She told me she was diagnosed with patellofemoral pain syndrome, also known as runner's knee, caused by the weakening of the cartilage under the patella and had problems with her Iliotibial band, which strengthens the knee, while running the marathon.

So far this year, the 80-member team has remained relatively injury free, except for me. The team is running upward of 24 miles a week and has a big 15-miler this Saturday. They'll need to take extra caution to prevent an injury like mine.

Enough about my pain. It's really about the bigger picture. This experience wasn't about crossing the finish line, wasn't about being able to put a 26.2 bumper sticker on my car, wasn't about the bragging rights.

It's about telling the story of 10-year-old Sam who has Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, a muscle wasting disease, and fighting to find a cure for his disease.

The team has a goal of raising \$100,000 this year for Duchenne research through Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy.

To read more about the team and Sam and find updates on the runners' progress, visit runfoursons.org and search for Sam's Muscular Team under the Chicago marathon page.

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<http://www.pioneerlocal.com/clarendonhills/news/2585232,hinsdale-marathon-081210-s1.article>