

Good Living

Thursday, April 6, 2006 • Section C



Runners on Saturday included (from left) Pam Talmadge, Mike White, Chris Eiert, Michelle Spehr, John Taylor, Tyson Novinska and Ernie Stremski. Photos by Sam Arendt

The social life of the long distance runner

By CAROL POMEADAY
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Running may be an individual sport, but when it comes to training for long distances — such as marathons or half-marathons — shared misery is motivating.

Members of Run Ozaukee meet at the bridge over Cedar Creek in downtown Cedarburg at 7 a.m. every Saturday to run.

“The rule is if it’s below zero or the snow is horizontal, we don’t run,” said Tyson Novinska, president of the club and principal of Woodview Elementary School in Grafton.

“My first run was nine miles right after a snowstorm and it was cold and icy.”

Mike White of Grafton, who invited Novinska to that run, noted, “A little bit of misery likes company.”

Novinska, who lives in Jackson, and White, whose two sons attend Woodview School, started running together two years ago after learning of their shared interest at a parent-teacher conference.

The men energized Run Ozaukee, a club formed several years ago by a group of women training for a marathon.

Novinska set up a Web site and updated an e-mail list to encourage more runners to join.

A dozen or more athletes, from recreational runners to serious competitors, run between five and 20 miles each Saturday.

Novinska and White put water bottles and sports drinks along the route they post on the Web site. The route changes each week, although the start and finish is the same.

“Some people follow the route and some do their own routes,” Novinska said.

There are no dues, and runners of all abilities are welcome.

“We want to make running part of a healthy lifestyle, have fun and achieve

Running is usually a solitary activity, but the members of Run Ozaukee make it a social outing, sharing the pain and the joy as they talk away the miles—5, 10, 15, even 20

personal goals,” Novinska said.

The club makes certain each runner has someone to run with regardless of their running levels, he said.

Novinska ran 19 miles last Saturday to train for an April 29 marathon in Green Bay. He and White started their long-distance run at 5:45 a.m.

White is training for his first Boston Marathon on April 17. Novinska hopes to join him next year.

Pam Talmadge of Cedarburg only had time to run five miles before heading to work, but said the club is just as important — maybe even more important — for recreational runners who enjoy company while working out.

“Sometimes, I say to the girls, ‘Thank you. You just saved me \$90,’” Talmadge said. “We all save a lot of money on therapy. We talk about everything, all our problems. People have said they can hear us when we’re on the bike trail.”

“I think a lot of people start out being lone runners and then get into a group. It’s so much more fun. I run in the morning and go for coffee, and I run at night and go for wine.”

Brooke White introduced her husband to running, but he runs faster than she does.

“I used to run alone. I was too intimidated (to join a running club) because I thought I was too slow,” she said.

“Now, it makes Saturday morning runs something I look forward to. It’s easier to

get up when you know someone is waiting for you.

“A lot of times as we’re running, we’re arranging social things for later. You end up being part of a social circle as well.”

She and Talmadge are training for a half-marathon in Green Bay.

About 20 club members have registered for the Green Bay marathon or half-marathon, but others just run for fun.

Some who never thought they would run a race have been encouraged to try it.

Talmadge’s boyfriend Bob Weiland joined the original group of female runners and ran his first marathon with them.

“He almost became one of the girls and was president for one year,” Talmadge said. “I like to set a nice, little pace. I try to look happy when I’m running and say, ‘Hello’ to everyone I meet.”



“Whitey and Tyson have tried to make it fun for everyone — those who want to be competitive and the casual, recreational runner.”

While the women tend to resolve personal problems while running, the men said sports, news and work are main topics.

“We talk about running a lot,” Novinska said. “Running has become a science. We’ll try new things. Some things work, some don’t.”

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