

SPORTSDAY **Other Sports****A little light reading on Irving runner**

Irving man who once could barely last a block has run five 26.2-milers

10:05 PM CST on Monday, January 1, 2007



Debbie
FETTERMAN

In 3½ years, Tony Flesch of Irving has become half the man he used to be. The Lake Grapevine Runners and Walkers Club member is now a 5-2, 130-pounder who has completed five marathons and eight half marathons.

Flesch, 56, resolved to change his life in the summer of 2003. Flesch said he weighed nearly 250 pounds at the time and would be breathless after walking a city block.

He started walking a little farther every day until he could go around the block, then around a couple of blocks. He also watched his diet.

After a year, he joined the Grapevine Runners and Walkers Club as a walker. He added short runs to his walks to get his heart rate up. In October 2004, he entered his first race, the club's annual Double Trouble 5K. He planned to run-walk but ran the entire 3.1-mile course.

He's been running ever since.

"I've done two sub-four-hour marathons in a row, which is amazing to me," he said. "I never thought I'd even be able to walk a marathon."

Flesch said belonging to a supportive group has helped him maintain his fitness. He doesn't look at club runs as a workout.

"It's pretty much a way of life," he said. "My friends, the people I do stuff with, are runners and triathletes. It's more meeting your friends and going for a run. You look forward to it."

Flesch, now a club board member, said he's training to do the Chevron Houston Marathon on Jan. 14 with eight to 10 fellow LGRW members. He's also traveled to Alaska, California, Ohio and Oklahoma with different members.

"It's good to be able to go to different places and meet different people," he said.

After the initial progress he made, he said he credits being part of the running group with helping him lose approximately 50 percent of his body weight.

"It's amazing the support everyone gives you," he said. "A lot of it is being able to stick to it and having a place to go. If

you don't show up, friends will call you up and ask where you were. It's been easy for me to keep my motivation."

Briefly: The NHL All-Star Game festivities in Dallas will include the NHL All-Star Saturday Race and Roll 5K run and walk, a recreational inline skate and a competitive 10K Pegasus Flyers Masters inline skate. For information, visit www.dallasstars.com. ... The Luke's Locker 2007 Beat Programs gear up with three orientations – this Sunday, Jan. 11 and Jan. 18 – at 7 p.m. at the Dallas store, 3607 Oak Lawn Ave. For information, visit www.lukeslocker.com. ... Run On's Running 101, 201 and speed classes begin on Jan. 8. For information, visit www.runontexas.com. ... Open registration for the Oct. 7, 2007 LaSalle Bank Chicago Marathon begins Monday at www.chicagomarathon.com. Registration will close when it reaches 45,000. Organizers have increased capacity for the race's 30th running.

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Courtesy photo
Tony Flesch credits being part of a running group with helping him lose approximately 50 percent of his body weight.

AREA RUNNING CLUBS

Burleson Runners Club: 817-496-3734

Carrollton Runners' Club: www.carrolltonrunners.com

Dallas Masters Track & Field Club: www.dallasmasters.com

Dallas Running Club (formerly Cross Country Club of Dallas) – www.dallasrunningclub.com

Flower Mount Striders: www.flowermoundstriders.com

Fort Worth Runners Club: www.fwrunners.org

Lake Grapevine Runners and Walkers: www.runnersandwalkers.com

North Texas Trail Runners Club: www.nttr.org

Plano Pacers Running Club: www.planopacers.org

Texas Race Walkers: www.thewalkingsite.com/texasracewalking

The Colony Roadrunners Club: www.tcroadrunners.org

CALENDAR

SATURDAY, DEC. 30: Plano Pacers 8K, 3K and Jr. .7-mile sprint, Harrington Park, 16th Street and North Central Expressway behind Spaghetti Warehouse, Plano, 10 a.m., members free, others, \$5, 972-967-7223 or www.planopacers.org.

MONDAY, JAN. 1: New Year's Five Mile Run, Flagpole Hill, Northwest Highway and Goforth, 10 a.m., \$25 through Sunday, \$30 race day. 214-821-0909 or www.thrustonracing.com.

MONDAY, JAN. 1: Texas Marathon, Greentree Park, Kingwood, Texas, 8 a.m., \$50, 713-826-5833 or www.50statesmarathonclub.com/texas.html.

SATURDAY, JAN. 6: Dallas Running Club (formerly the Cross Country Club of Dallas) President's 10K and 5K, Winfrey Point, White Rock Lake, Dallas, 8 a.m., members free, others \$10, 214-855-1511 or www.dallasrunningclub.com or www.cccd.org.

SATURDAY, JAN. 6: Resolution Run 10K, 5K and 1K, Addison Conference Center, 15650 Addison Road, Addison, 1K fun run and walk, 8:30 a.m., 5K 8:45 a.m., 10K 9:15 a.m., \$20 through Jan. 5, \$25 race day. 972-280-6716 or www.runontexas.com or www.active.com.

SUNDAY, JAN. 7: 7th Recover from the Holidays 50K, Big Thicket, White Rock Lake, 13, 22 or 31 miles, 7 a.m., free, no aid stations or awards, 214-340-5091.

SUNDAY, JAN. 7: Burlison Runners Back to Basics 5K and Kids' 1K, Burlison Community Center, Burlison, 4 p.m., 817-496-3734.

TUESDAY, JAN. 9: Plano Pacers Prediction Race 5K, Schimelpfenig Library, Plano. 7 p.m., 972-967-7223 or www.planopacers.org.