

Phil Cisneros might to a "light weight," but that's a good thing

If running a good way to lose weight? Greg Takacs might be the perfect example because he dropped from 240 pounds to his current 155-160 when he started taking to the streets in his running shoes.



Runner
in
the Spotlight

Phil Cisneros, the newest Runner in the Spotlight, is another example, though not as extreme. He began first running in 1986 after becoming somewhat disgusted of an image he saw of himself in a store window. He weighed 185 and for someone 5-foot, 6 ½-inch tall, that

didn't present that good of an image.



Though he hadn't run since high school, where he ran sprint distances at Trimble Tech, he didn't run after that except for what was required when he went into the U.S. Army, he decided to lace up his shoes and try again in late '86, mainly to drop weight. Maybe those who are trying Weight Watchers should take heed.

Sure enough, the running led to a shedding of pounds and he realized another benefit...he started getting faster. The more weight he lost, the faster he got and soon he was becoming competitive in the 40-year-old age divisions. He wasn't the fastest, but he wasn't too far behind them. Because he had made such an improvement from when he had first started running, he said several runners would ask him about his training. He'd impart some training knowledge, which another competitor, Sam Balandran, noticed. Sam, now the Fort Runners Club president, gave Phil the nickname "Coach." The name stuck and most of the time his running buddies refer to him as Coach.

He logged some impressive times from 1987 to '96. His personal bests were 17:45 in the 5K; 38:07 in the 10K; 1:01:01 in the 15K, 1:24:27 in the half marathon, 2:14:27 in a 20-miler, and 3:08:32 in the marathon. His marathon time at the '88 Dallas White Rock was good enough to qualify for Boston. He ran that historic marathon in '89 and posted a 3:22:38.

In 1996, though, his running career went on a hiatus...a long one. Coach, who had begun working for Haltom City, twisted his right ankle at work and had to take some time off from running. When he attempted to return a few weeks later, he found it easier to prop in front of the TV and drink a beer. "I got into a comfort zone. I guess I was burned out. It was nice not to have to get up early on cold mornings and go run. It was a lot of fun just watching TV," he said.

The days past, the weeks past, the months past and before Coach knew it, 11 years had past since his last race. And his weight had climbed back to 185. It was another wake-up call. He thought to himself that if he could lose weight before by running, he could lose it again by running.

He returned to the running scene in 2008 and found that "it was real hard to come back. I knew I wasn't going to be able to run the kind of times I used to run, but I couldn't even break 30 minutes for a 5K. It was frustrating. I almost quit."

However, he still had mirrors. The weight, he said, had to go.

Again, as the weight came down so did his times. "I started seeing the results in my weight and that's what kept me going," he said.

He also started feeling better and noticed that not only were his times improving, but so was his memory. He doesn't know if that's related to running, but he said while he was a couch potato, "I was having trouble remembering things. I thought I was losing my mind. Now, I'm more focused (and able to remember things)."

That could come from his running because he says he stays "focused, focused, focused" as he heads to the finish lines. His next goal is to run the FWRC Labor Day 15K in about 1:15. He said he ran a 1:17 last year, but believes he can do better.

So, Phil "Light" is back. His 5K times are in the low 20s he is under 160 pounds. Maybe Phil "The Couch Potato" won't be back.
