

Training hard, staying healthy helps Sonya Correa drop her 5K times from the 19s to the 17s; then she caps a banner year by winning the White Rock Half Marathon female title



Sonya Correa, 30, of Dallas enjoyed a banner year in 2011 by winning at least 16 female overall titles and posting 5K times from the mid-18s to the low-17s. She won the inaugural Longview Half Marathon in March to earn \$500, and picked up some more cash by winning the Four Seasons Cool 10K with a 38:02 in October. She then enjoyed the highlight of her season by winning the MetroPCS Dallas White Rock Half Marathon female title in 1:21:06. For her efforts, Sonya also earns Special Recognition.

She started 2011 on a strong note by winning the Verizon Super Bowl 5K in 17:26 in January. She won other titles with efforts in the low to mid 18-minute range but still dipped into the 17s to win the Peaceful Tomorrows With Our Troops and Vets in Grand Prairie and the Addison Oktoberfest Wipe Out Kids Cancer in September. She set a PR of 17:18 at the Dallas Race For The Cure.

"My goal is to run healthy for as long as I can and to be a stronger well-rounded runner. I owe so much to my coach Ray Maldonado. I have been training with him over the past couple of years and he has taken my running to a level I never imagined," Sonya said.

She also sees Dr. Kelly Rider at the Texas SportsChiro Care, which sponsors her. "I regularly see him to maintain healthy running and to prevent injuries the best I can," she added.

"About two years ago, Sonya, like many women in their late 20s and early 30s, was at a place in her life where things were just not clicking together in the way she had imagined. In 2000, she...(attended)...McMurry University in Abilene, where she planned on majoring in Dietetics & Nutrition. She also was a part of the women's cross country team. After two successful years, Sonya developed stress fractures and Achilles tendonitis from over-training as well as unbalanced training. Not having proper sports injury care available to her, she was unable to recover and was forced to give up her slot on the team. If this wasn't enough of a blow for an enthusiastic college girl, she also lost her athletic scholarship. Reluctantly, she transferred to another school where she also changed her major.

She eventually graduated and later became a personal trainer...Sonya discovered she needed something more rewarding...and needed to do something that would allow her to positively affect another person's life. And, she knew she had to start with herself.

She began training once more in 2009 (and ran the Mary Kay 5K, where she placed 6th). ...She met Ray Maldonado, a highly sought-after athletic trainer in Dallas, at the race. Noticing her skill and determination, he scouted her and they began training together the

following week. With extra motivation and support from Maldonado, she began to recondition her body into an elite running machine. As part of Sonya's training, Maldonado introduced her to Texas SportsChiro Care and Dr. Kelly. Sonya was taught the importance of maintaining a healthy, strong body by avoiding common injuries that plague runners.

Now, Sonya is focused on helping other people improve their fitness and health. She plans on teaming with the American Cancer Society to serve as its coach for endurance events as well as introducing competitive running into their charity program."