

Is the running magic still there?

Injury ended Lenton's racing career too soon

Howard Tsumura

The Province

Tuesday, January 10, 2006

Andrew Lenton comes clean on why the 2006 BMO Bank of Montreal Marathon is such an important event in his life.

"I want to see if the magic is still there," the 37-year-old teacher at Port Coquitlam's Terry Fox Secondary says. "For a long time, it seemed like running was the only thing I did really well. But now I'm 60 pounds heavier and I haven't trained in almost 15 years."

The Province's annual marathon team -- now in its fifth season -- has had a few runners with solid marathon experience. But no one comes remotely close to matching the resume of Lenton, who in his prime was one of the top middle-distance runners in the country.

His is a story of national success, hard luck, perseverance and, as he so bluntly states, a little bit of lingering regret.

While a student at Coquitlam's Centennial Secondary, Lenton won the B.C. high school cross-country championship as an 11th grader in 1984, and finished as the runner-up in 1983 and '85.

In his graduating year, he won the Pathmark National Scholastic Classic 3,000 metres, the unofficial U.S. indoor high school title.

But as he embarked on the start of his collegiate career at Simon Fraser, he suffered an injury serious enough to make many wonder if he'd ever run again.

"I had a bad start at SFU," laughs Lenton, who has never trained for or run a marathon. "I was running Ring Road at SFU and on the second day of school, I severed my patellar tendon."

A stop sign had been knocked down by a car, creating a blind hole in which Lenton's right leg jammed in and tore.

"I couldn't run for three months," he remembers. "I was on crutches and it got infected. I had drain tubes and the doctors told me I'd probably never run again. But I did."

The following summer Lenton rebounded to make the junior national team and set



CREDIT: Jason Payne, The Province

Andrew Lenton is a former high-school champion runner who now teaches at Terry Fox Secondary. The 37-year-old has never run a marathon but is on The Province team for the May 7 race.

B.C. records in the 1,500, 3,000 and 5,000 metres.

He eventually competed in the NCAA at the University of Tennessee, then returned to SFU to finish up. But nagging injuries and pain were enough to tell him it was time to step away.

"I had been battling injuries for a couple of years and it was hurting all the time," Lenton says. "It got to the point where I said, 'I just can't keep doing this.' Emotionally, it got too difficult. So I basically threw in the towel, and it's something I regret. I think I ended my career too soon.

"I overcame huge odds the first time around to come back," he adds. "Now, I'm hoping to do the same thing here."

- - -

THIS WEEK'S TRAINING SCHEDULE

Separate programs for 3:45, four hours, 4:30 and walkers:

Today

3:45 6-k tempo run, 5:25 min/k pace

4:00 6-k tempo run, 5:50 min/k pace

4:30 6 k-tempo run

6:20 min/k pace

Walk 6-k tempo run, 8:46 pace

Wednesday

3:45 10-k tempo run, 5:00 min/k pace

4:00 10-k tempo run, 5:20 min/k pace

4:30 10-k tempo run, 85% effort

Walk 10-k tempo run, 8:46 pace

Thursday

3:45 8-k steady run, 5:35 min/k pace

4:00 6-k steady run, 5:55 min/k pace

4:30 6-k steady run, 6.30-7:10 min/k pace

Walk 6-k steady walk, 10:03

pace

Friday

3:45 10-k fartlek run, 5:05-5:30 min/k pace

4:00, 4:30, Walk rest day

Saturday

3:45 6-k steady run, 5:35 min/k pace

4:00 6-k steady run, 5:55 pace

4:30 6-k steady run, 6:30-7:10 min/k pace

Walk 6-k steady walk, 10:03 pace

Sunday

3:45 13 k: 5:45-6:30 min/k pace,

run 10 min/walk 1 min

4:00 13 k: walk/run 6:30 pace,

run 10 min/walk 1 min

4:30 13 k: 7:07-8 min/k pace,

run 10 min/walk 1 min

Walk 13-k walk/stroll, 10:03-11:09 pace

Monday

Rest day for all

© The Vancouver Province 2006

CLOSE WINDOW

Copyright © 2006 CanWest Interactive, a division of [CanWest MediaWorks Publications, Inc.](#) All rights reserved.