

Race Director Linda Maxwell shares her thoughts on Labor Day — and tough training runs

Where did the summer go? The season is winding down and Labor Day is almost here.

Speaking of “labor” day, we are approaching what I believe to be the toughest of all of your long run/walks in preparation for the Bellin Women’s Half Marathon, and possibly even tougher than event day itself. You’re asking yourself a couple of questions here, aren’t you?

The first question you may have: “Why are you telling us this? Are you trying to stress us out before this week’s long run?”

Nope! If any of you find yourself struggling during this long run, I want you to find comfort and strength in knowing you **will** get through this, and that once you do it, it will be smooth sailing through the rest of the training and race day.

The second thing you might be questioning: “We’ve got an even longer training run in a few weeks, not to mention the 13.1 miles to complete on race day. How can you say this 10-mile training run may be the toughest?”

While I know it won’t be true for everyone, here are a couple of reasons this long run may be the toughest:

- 1) What can make the 10-mile long run physically most challenging is that it is the third week in a row we have increased our long run by 1 mile. The physiology of training is that we work hard enough to break our body down slightly, and then step back to allow it to build back up again. After this long run we take two weeks to build up, giving our bodies a break. After this break you will be raring to go for that last long run.
- 2) Just as important is the mental aspect of training. I think you will agree that the emotional support we receive on race morning from the other participants and spectators is significant to our success in achieving this goal. I would posit that the mental challenge of this week’s long run is also tougher than the last long run. During our **last** long run, you will be thinking just that – “This is my **last** long run. I can do this.” This week you might be thinking, “I have to do an even **longer** run in a few weeks,” which may provide a challenge to stay motivated and inspired.

So during this week’s long run, use this knowledge to inspire yourself to push through if you struggle, give yourself a break if you need to slow your pace, and celebrate the victory of finishing this training run. And remember, for many of you, it might be all downhill from here.

