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To Run or Not to Run

Running is a daunting exercise. It takes its toll on the body. It is said to be more of a mental game than a physical one. Every muscle in your body is worked when you run. Your heart is pumping, your legs are pounding against the pavement, gravity is working against you in every way possible. Running, even just a couple miles is difficult and requires some training. But there are the brave few who set their minds to run more than three or four miles. They run the races, like a 10K, a half-marathon, a full marathon, a triathlon and more...

For those who seek the challenge of the long distance run, Baylor University's Student Foundation organization host a half marathon every spring, affectionately called the "Bearathon." All of the money raised during the race goes towards scholarship for students to attend Baylor. The Bearathon has a race course that begins on Baylor's campus and then snakes around downtown Waco and into Cameron Park, along the Brazos River, and finally finishes back at McLane Stadium to complete a whopping 13.1 miles of strenuous running. It is well known among runners that this is a tough race the toughest half-marathon in Texas. Take a moment to digest that statement. All of Western Europe could fit inside the state of Texas. Texas is the largest state in the continental U.S. and half marathon races take place all over this state in cities including Dallas, Austin, Houston and more. But, here, in little Waco, Texas, along the Brazos River is the toughest half marathon in the whole state.

If you are native to Waco or are currently calling it your home through Baylor, then you already know why this is the toughest half marathon in Waco. The Bearathon race course goes directly through Cameron Park, with about 4 to 5 of the 13 miles going up and down hills. People spend months training the hills in Cameron Park to prepare themselves for the Bearathon race. It not just 13 miles, it is 13 miles with tough and dreadful hills thrown in there.

Although this race is challenging, the physical aspect is not the only reason people run the race. Baylor University student Olivia Flora, a junior and a current member of Student Foundation, says that the Bearathon is a “fun” race because it is mostly made up of Baylor Nation. The most challenging part is “persevering through the training” because it can be “monotonous and tiring” she said, but it is important to keep pushing yourself.

Flora and her friend say that they are running the Bearathon to honor the memory of one of their friend’s mother, who passed away early this year in January. They want to run in honor of their friend to “remind (them) why they are pushing through” to run the race. Flora encourages other students to run the Bearathon to “get outside and be active” because students today are so glued to technology and prone to staying indoors. It is important to get outside and see the world.

Another Baylor student, Courtney Hammit, a sophomore, says that she is running the Bearathon to push her body, stay healthy and build strength. “Running a half marathon makes you feel incredible and accomplished,” Hammit said. She even got her mother to train with her and they both ran the race last year in 2016, and she says that they plan on running the Bearathon every year that she is at Baylor. It is a bonding experience for her and is “something that (she) will remember for a lifetime.” She enjoys running to keep her body healthy and she runs the Bearathon to maintain strength and health.

Lastly, many Baylor students run the Bearathon to fulfill a goal that they set of running a half-marathon. Senior Liz Phillips is training for the race to “fulfill a goal that (she) set freshman year” that she would run the Bearathon before she graduates. Now that she is a senior, this is her last opportunity to fulfill that goal and run the race. Many people set it in their minds to run a half marathon at some point in their lives for various reasons. For Baylor students, the Bearathon is the perfect race to train for because it is made up of school spirit and it is a great way to get to know the city of Waco a little bit better.

The Bearathon will take place this year on Saturday, March 25, 2017. There is also a 5K fun run for those who want to participate but do not want to run the whole 13.1 miles. To register, visit Baylor.edu/student_foundation. The race is \$50 for students, \$65 for faculty and staff and \$75 for the general public, all of the money goes towards Baylor University scholarship.