

Short run on long road
 FCN reporter participates in jog against cancer



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 By BJ Corbitt

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This past Saturday combined two things that have taken up a good bit of my attention lately. One is running. The other is the personal story of West Forsyth safety Trey Rood.

I've written a handful of stories about Trey and his continuing battle with melanoma. His story seemed at first to be an inspiring one, as he fought off the disease in his freshman year of high school. After getting a clean bill of health, he joined a few walk/run events to help raise money for other kids with cancer.

Then last summer, the story got more complicated. Trey's cancer returned, resulting in a number of trips to Germany for experimental treatment. The disease has taken an aggressive stance, and Trey was recently taken to Houston to undergo surgery to remove a brain tumor, where he was still recovering this past weekend.

I met Trey for the first time in December. He had just been named Most Valuable Defensive Player for the first annual Rotary Bowl All-Star Game. He's a tall kid with a calm demeanor. When I tried to get him to tie in his football achievements with his health concerns, he almost brushed it aside. It just didn't seem to weigh heavily on his mind. As his coach has told me before, he just wants to play football. I have to admit, the guy impressed me.

So back to Saturday, where Jog For a Cause was staging a 1 mile/5K/10K event at North Point Shopping Village in Alpharetta. The funds went to four young people fighting cancer, and this time Trey was one of them. I came across the event and decided to participate, as a small sign of solidarity with Trey and for the enjoyment of running.

I had already signed up for a 5K (that's a hair over three miles for those of you unfamiliar with the metric system) on May 1, and decided to sign up for the same race on Saturday.

To make a long story short, I didn't quite make my goal. I was running a little over two miles in my training sessions, but a full 5K still seemed a little out of reach this past weekend. So I switched over to the 1 mile "fun run" instead, as my toe in the water.

When I saw a group of little kids lined up, I knew I was in the right place! This was the kind of race I might stand a chance in.

I finished fourth, behind one tall guy in his 30's or so, and a couple who might have been in third grade. Clearly, some of these kids have been in serious training.

Trey couldn't make it Saturday, but I talked to his mom, Cherie, who was smarter than me and just walked the 5K.

She said roughly 200 of the 1,100 people walking and running were there as part of "Team Trey."

She said Trey was hoping to be home Monday, and hasn't wavered in his toughness.

"He's still got a great attitude. ... He just keeps going, he's doing alright," she said.

"He's got a long road ahead of him, but doing awesome."

This story is spreading way beyond Forsyth County, Cherie told me. CNN's Nancy Grace has featured Trey a few times and well-wishers from all over have contacted the family.

Life might not be fair, but people are inherently decent. I like to believe that, anyway.

For myself, I'm still aiming to hit the road for that 5K in May.

The road in front of Trey is going to be a lot more challenging, but if determination makes any difference, he'll cover every mile.

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