

## I'm ready for race day – whatever that may mean...

**Steve Gamel**

Published 07/23/2009 - 11:59 a.m. CST

On August 1, I will be one of a projected 2,500 area runners competing in a 5K race across the new Lewisville Lake Toll Bridge.

OK ... stop laughing, seriously.

The idea came to me several years ago when I covered the annual Dallas Turkey Trot for the Dallas Morning News. For years, I figured these sorts of races were for the most die hard of runners – the kind of people that get up at 5 a.m. every morning in their short wind shorts and run 10 miles or more before work – sometimes without even breaking a sweat.

Granted, there were plenty of those world class runners at the event, and they all probably ran the 3.1 miles as if it were a cake walk. But as I interviewed people after the race, I gravitated more to the obvious first timers or weekend warriors.

They all said the same thing: "I just wanted to prove I could do it."

And ... not finish last, which is my goal when I toe the starting line in one week.

This year's race across the toll bridge is unique in that it marks the first time anyone has even been on the bridge – which is still very much under construction. The bridge spans across the northwestern arm of Lewisville Lake, connecting Swisher Road in Lake Dallas to Eldorado Parkway in Little Elm. It is expected to open next month, and the race is being dubbed as a once in a lifetime opportunity.

The race starts at 8 a.m. with awards given out at 9:30 a.m. There is also a family fun walk at 10 a.m. All proceeds will go to Communities in Schools of North Texas, the Little Elm area food bank and the Lake Cities food pantry.

For those that know me well, staying active and healthy is a huge hobby for me – even though I admit I'm not always perfect at it. I workout at Lifetime Fitness in Flower Mound five days a week and I've been known to run outside in 100-plus degree heat. I know ... it's dangerous and I don't recommend it ... but I can't help myself.

But I'm admittedly not that fast, which is why many of my close friends and co-workers are questioning my rationale for this event. When I was in high school, I was an offensive lineman – which basically means if I was in a race with a turtle the turtle would win. They even gave me a the nickname, "feet of stone" because I didn't shuffle my feet well when pass blocking.

But hey, I've been practicing for an event like this for years and I'd like to think I won't embarrass myself. My best three mile time on a treadmill is 27 minutes, 54 seconds and my best outdoor time is right around 30 minutes.

Not great numbers but not embarrassing either.

Either way, I'm not backing out and I'll be thrilled with whatever happens. After all, we all have to start somewhere.

Until next time, I'll see you on the sidelines.