

Baltimore Road Runners Club Scholarship Essay

Theme: What motivates you to run?

Ever since I could walk, I was always playing soccer. For over ten years, soccer was my passion and my sport. Everyone, including myself, expected me to play soccer for the Dulaney soccer team, especially since I had a good chance to make the varsity team. So, it came as a huge shock when I decided in the summer before ninth grade to try out for the cross country team.

When I first began running, I probably had the wrong motivations. In eighth grade, I tried cross country for my middle school team at Cockeysville, and I ended up loving it. A big part of that was because I won every race. I knew that I was naturally gifted at running, and that definitely influenced my decision to join the high school cross country team because I knew I would be primed for success. As it turns out, I ended up being right, as I worked my way into the varsity top seven by the postseason and helped my team win a state championship during my freshman year.

While my first year was surreal, my success-oriented motivation proved to be detrimental to my passion of running. I was so driven to be the best runner and to break records that I burned out by the following summer. All of my sophomore year, I battled knee injuries and a lack of motivation to train every day. I regressed from freshman year times, which caused me to question my decision to join the team in the first place. I had become so obsessed with running a certain distance and burning a certain number of calories every day that I had fallen out of love with the sport.

After my sophomore year, my motivations drastically changed for the better. While I still worked hard to be the best runner I could be—junior year I made a comeback and won second-team all-county for cross country, and senior year I ended up breaking my freshman year personal records—my primary motivator was my pure love for the sport. I stopped worrying about times and rankings and started enjoying going on runs with my teammates.

While my senior year didn't end the way I expected, running is still a big part of my life. I have been running every day because I enjoy the chance it provides me to clear my head and I feel much better after I go for a run. Even as all of the competitiveness has faded away from my experience with running, I have still been motivated by a pure enjoyment and by the benefit to my personal health. While I am content with stepping away from the meets and the races, I will never leave my passion for running behind. As I head to college, running will remain a part of my identity, whether I join a club team or continue to run on my own. My enjoyment will always be there, and I hope that one day it motivates me to run a marathon and push my limits.