

Brad Havixbeck

I joined the MRA as an athlete and Board member back in 2009 and was active with the Board until 2013. I joined the MRA Board as a way to be involved and give back to the community. As a new and inexperienced runner, involvement with the Board allowed me to meet experienced runners and provided me with an insider view to the various events across the Province.

I started my pursuit of running in 2008 when I became engaged with a group of friends (split between Manitoba and Saskatchewan) who were involved in running. It became my social circle and my way to stay active and fit. We ran all sorts of races in various locations, meeting for the weekend to compete. Some of the highlights included numerous Fargo Half Marathons, the Vancouver Half Marathon, Disney Half Marathon (and the Disney 1 Mile Run with my young sons) as well as destination marathons such as the Cayman Islands and Athens, Greece.

I also found that running was an excellent way to see the sights in various cities. As someone who traveled extensively for work, I always packed my running gear and used my training runs as a chance to see various cities. Over the years I have run through numerous cities in Europe (Paris, London, Munich, Frankfurt, Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Prague, Brussels, Budapest, Vienna, Athens, and more), Asia (Tokyo, Osaka, Shanghai, Beijing, Chongqing, Qingdao, Singapore, Brisbane, Sydney and others), in the heat of Dubai, Istanbul and Casablanca, as well as countless US cities and nearly every major Canadian city. While travel for work was not always fun, running through the cities in the early morning or late afternoon, always made the travel more enjoyable.

My most memorable experience was getting lost during a short run in Prague in 2010. I had only planned to do a short 30-minute run to find the soccer stadium (another passion of mine). I left my rented apartment equipped only with my watch and a printed map from MapQuest. I soon learned running in Europe is never easy as streets are rarely on a grid. It was only a matter of time until I found myself lost, in a suburb where no one seemed to understand English and the February weather turned to snow. After nearly 2 hours of seemingly running in circles, I finally found some familiar landmarks and was able to find my rented apartment once again. My 30-minute run turned into a half marathon distance. But a valuable

lesson was learned that day, always be prepared and bring a phone, cash and the address on all future runs through the foreign cities!

My worst running experience was likely running the Athens Marathon while recovering from a 24-hour stomach flu. Prior to leaving Canada, my children were sick and I was lucky enough to feel the effects 36 hours prior to the marathon. I remember thinking to myself: I traveled all this way to run in this race, I cannot make excuses and I will run. The morning of the race I felt better, but had not eaten in 36 hours. I ate all the calories I could at every water station. However, by 21k my tank was completely empty and I mainly walked the remaining half in the hot sun. It was a long 6+ hours, but I finished.

My favourite memories are interacting with the spectators and other competitors at different races. Talking along the course. Stopping for photos. Cheering on others. Encouraging racers through the difficult stretches. Living in the moment.