

Cultural Daily

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There's No Tomorrow: Running Out of Time

Czarina Dominguez · Wednesday, May 24th, 2017

March 14, 2015: The annual Tri-County Small Schools Invitational. The bleachers that were filled with screaming fans calmed down once the man in the red coat gave us instructions. He told us, "I'm giving you two commands: on your mark and set," and walked away to prepare the gun. I remember standing on lane seven feeling somewhat relieved, considering that seven is my lucky number. I wondered how I'd run the 400 meters.

Should I go out fast on this curve? Should I go all out in the last 200 meters?

The gun went off. I bolted forward and led the first 200 meters. I heard someone announce my position with a mic. All I could hear was the loud cheer of my teammates. "Maybe this isn't so bad," I told myself. As I ran, I felt the lactic acid build inside my legs. Like nothing, three runner floated past me. I tried to go after them, but I couldn't feel my legs.

My arms were heavy and my breathing was hard. The finish line felt like it was miles away. "When will this be over?" I repeated to myself. I finally approached the last 20 meters. My feet slowly brought my exhausted body to the finish line.

I will always remember it as an embarrassing loss. There needed to be a way where I could remove the constant cramping on the right side of my stomach and the need to catch my breath. I was done being slow. I was done with the person I use to be. That invitational was the start of me learning the potential I have as a runner and discovering who I truly am.

My first year into Track and Field was the worst in terms of failure. It was my sophomore year, and I was completely new to the sport. I was not in shape to run. Running a lap or two was hell, and giving up was easy. I lost 90% of my races. My body would only withstand the pain of the training as long as it meant I would feel the joy of beating my best time. Nonetheless, I was able to improve throughout the season even though I lost most of the time.

I couldn't attain success without deciding to become dedicated and work hard. I had to be aware that the journey to success would not be easy. After that tough track season, I trained hard. I woke up at 6 a.m. every weekend to run on the sands of Dockweiler Beach, and I killed myself with repeats after school when there was no team practice. My stamina, after constantly training that Spring and Summer, improved greatly to the point where I was able to run Cross Country and become the 2015 Varsity Girls MVP.



Once track season arrived, I knew it was going to be different from the previous year. I won more and demonstrated how much I improved compared to last year. Nonetheless, I was still underestimated by my division rivals. It was so easy to give in, but rather than responding with my words, I responded through my actions. I never allowed the negative voices that surrounded my mind to destroy me. I was able to push through the pain which resulted in a third place win and a qualification to the CIF Preliminaries.

The previous year I placed sixth place in my main event, 800 meters, on League Finals. Unfortunately, at the CIF Preliminaries, I placed last in my heat and did not advance to the next round.

After the 2016 Track and Field season, I took some time to reflect on my goals for my last high school Cross Country and Track and Field season. Achieving those goals seemed like a 50/50 shot. The level of my training became much more difficult for both sports.

My father, also known as my personal coach and one of my main supporters, put me through training that felt impossible to overcome. No matter how painful it was, there was a reminder in the back of my head telling me that it will be worth it in the future. During the 2016 Cross Country season, there were obstacles placed on my path. For instance, getting lost on a course twice and being unable to achieve a new personal best. I was frustrated since nothing was truly going my way.

Despite all the barriers, I was able to achieve my three goals for that season: become the Girls Varsity Santa Fe League Champion, qualify to the CIF Finals, and improve my time from the previous season. Additionally, I ended up breaking my school's record in the 3 mile run.

The 2017 Track and Field season is still in progress. This is the season where my motto must be, "There's no tomorrow." My father told me that should become my motto after a streak of three terrible performances during the month of April. It was atrocious enough to consider whether or not I should continue running. In order to eliminate those type of thoughts, I had to learn to have confidence in myself and remember why I even began and continued running back in 2015.

I also had to remember the teammates who look up to me. The amazing part about this season is the fact that I have been able to improve. During the summer, it seemed impossible to run my current personal best. I am currently preparing to run the 1600 meters and 800 meters for the CIF Preliminaries which is this Saturday, May 13th. I hope to make it my best run of my high school career.

All of the failures and hardships from both sports have taught me if I truly want something and cannot stop dreaming about it, then I need to go for it despite how impossible it appears to be. Anything is possible as long as I put my whole heart and spirit into it; but in order to do so, I have to have confidence in myself. Same rule for everyone else. Through the trials and tribulations of running, I've learned these lessons. Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine that I would break two school records and win a league title.

This entry was posted on Wednesday, May 24th, 2017 at 4:13 pm and is filed under [Tomorrow's Voices Today, Essay](#)

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