

RUNNING

Slinsky rebounds after being hit by car

Elite runner from mid-Hudson ran Classic 10K despite aches, pains

By C Jackson Cowart
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MIDDLETOWN – Even getting hit by a car couldn't keep Mike Slinsky from racing in the Classic 10K.

It happened on May 24, 10 days before Sunday's historic race through Middletown. Slinsky – one of the top distance runners in Dutchess County – says he saw the car coming, speeding through a red light on Route 9 in Fishkill. Slinsky stopped, hopped on the hood and fell onto the pavement, developing road rash on his backside and hurting his knee.

He immediately went to the doctor for an ultrasound and sought out acupuncture for the pain. Three days later, he was back on the road.

"Okay," he said to himself, "let's do this."

He had doubts when he woke up early before Sunday's race, his body still aching. But he ran it, anyway, finishing the race in exactly 37 minutes – good for 16th overall and third in the master's division with a 5:58 mile pace.

Slinsky stops at nothing, inspired to run while he still can. He qualified for the U.S. Olympic marathon trials in 2000 and has tried to improve ever since, even through the pain. Last summer, he came up with the idea for "Grassroots Running," a group that he hopes will empower runners with the basics of training and encourage them to push themselves in races like Sunday's.

He wore his team's name proudly across his chest as he crossed the finish line at Faller Field – something that seemed unlikely just 10 days earlier.

"A week after getting hit, I'm okay," he said. "I'm just happy to be here."

A well-intended fund-raiser

When he was 8 years old, Van Remenar – now a freshman at Valley Central – was diagnosed



Mike Slinsky was hit by a car on May 24, 10 days before Sunday's Classic 10K in Middletown. Slinsky ran the race in exactly 37 minutes – good for 16th overall and third in the master's division. [C JACKSON COWART/TIMES HERALD-RECORD]

with Nephrotic Syndrome, a rare kidney disease that can lead to other health programs. So he started the racing team "The Fighting Kidneys," which partners with the Classic 10K and

donates money to the Nephcure Foundation. Lin-Lin Remenar, Van's mother, says the team has raised almost \$50,000 in six years and brings approximately 40 runners to the races each



Former local track star Martin Hehir with wife Monica Hehir and newborn daughter McKenna Brooke Hehir, born at 10:23 p.m. on Sunday, almost 15 hours after her father finished second in Sunday's Classic 10K. [PHOTO PROVIDED]

year.

"Not only are we raising money and awareness for his disease," she said, "but also I think I'm raising some runners now."

Family runs together

Tyler Kilcoin has fond memories of cooling off in the fountain as a toddler after watching her parents, William and Valerie, run the Classic 10K at the Orange County Fairgrounds.

Nearly three decades later, Kilcoin, 29, finished second in the female 25-29 age group, finishing just behind her sister, Caitlin, 32, who placed first in the 30-34 age group. Behind them was William, while Valerie, the race's registration director, topped the 60-64 age group in the 5K. Valerie says it's the first time all four have

run together in the races that are so embedded in Kilcoin tradition.

"It's a family affair," Tyler said.

Baby follows silver medal

Remember when Martin Hehir learned that his wife's water broke just moments before Sunday's race? Well, his daughter finally arrived.

McKenna Brooke Hehir was born at 10:23 p.m. on Sunday, almost 15 hours after her father finished second in the Classic 10K.

"It was the perfect whirlwind of a day," Hehir said via text Monday morning, "and I wouldn't have changed a thing."

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