



Three years ago Jason Stubbeman, then 22 years old, was training for an Ironman competition. A dedicated long distance runner, Jason ran cross country in high school and though not on a team, he continued running during college. As an outdoor recreation management major, outdoor adventure was a part of life. On any given day Jason could be found biking 60+ miles, swimming, or even rock climbing.

It was one unfortunate day, one fateful slip that changed Jason's life. While rock climbing, Jason fell 20 ft breaking the primary weight bearing/movement bone in his foot. The trauma to the joint and the damage to the ligaments around it permanently altered the range of motion in his foot leaving him unable to ever run again.

Jason spent the next two years as a spectator, cheering on the wife he had introduced to marathons. "While I could still participate in many activities like climbing, I thought my running days were over," remembers Jason. Then one day, the question of running as a special needs athlete was posed to him. "I had never thought about it. It took a while to get comfortable with idea," he continues. "I had always thought there was only one way to do a marathon."

Since college, Jason has been working with the special needs population on and off. Because his disability is not noticeable, when he was introduced to a racing chair he had concerns. "I was really excited at the prospect of not just running again but possibly at a competitive level.

But I was concerned about what people might think if they see me race in a chair and after the race walk away,” shares Jason. “I came to terms with the fact that this is exactly what adapted sports was all about.”

Overnight, Jason went from a sidelined athlete to a viable competitor in one of the world’s most prestigious races, the Bank of America Chicago Marathon. Jason was able to secure a race chair in early July and has been in training ever since. “I always felt I had unfinished business. It’s time to finish!,” declares Jason. “I have had to learn a whole new approach to this race. I have been working on my technique in using the chair. And I am really working on using my energy efficiently.”

Jason is training right along side the Western DuPage Special Recreation Association (WDSRA) runners group. “It’s funny; there was always a point in my run that I would get fatigued. Now, my excitement and determination out weigh that fatigue factor,” comments Jason. “I am going into this as a competitor. And oh yeah, I’ll definitely be doing an Ironman within the next ten years.”

To find out more about adapted sports opportunities, contact WDSRA Adapted Sports and Recreation Coordinator, Trent Thenhaus at (630) 681-0962 ext. 114.