

In Pursuit of a Dream

His run from Eugene to Seattle helped raise money for World Wheelchair Sports, but Daisuke Shizuya said the road wasn't always easy

By Katherine Holden
Freelance Reporter

The rain and the wind are determined to stop you from continuing. You try to ignore the persistent chill and keep moving. Your body responds to every step you take on the hard pavement. You've been running now for ten miles and you still have about twenty to go. And then tomorrow you have to do it all over again.

For all but the seasoned athlete, such a feat would be impossible to accomplish, but Daisuke Shizuya (pronounced die-skay shi-zoo-yah) is one such athlete. Shizuya ran an average of 30 miles a day over the course of spring break to raise money for World Wheelchair Sports, a non-profit organization that provides outdoor fitness and sport opportunities for the mobility impaired.

"I ran to encourage others to pursue their own dreams," said Shizuya, who was born with one leg longer than the other.

The following is the story of Shizuya's 330-mile run from the University campus in Eugene to the University of Washington in Seattle.

DAY 1

UO to Peoria and Charch Dr. Junction

Friends came to cheer him on as he left campus. "It was a beautiful, sunny day. It lifted my spirits." Shizuya was accompanied by a van that carried three people who served as his crew for the trip, filling roles that included driver, navigator and masseuse. "The van drove ahead of me for five miles and then pulled over to the side of the road and waited for me to catch up," he said.

Every hour Shizuya took a five- to ten-minute break so his masseuse, Keiji Sato, could massage his legs. "I had my legs massaged on a regular basis to help prevent injuries, such as stress fractures and muscle pulls," he said.

Shizuya finished running at 6 p.m., having run at a steady 6 to 7 mph pace. "The hours seemed to fly by, and I thought to myself that this was going to be pretty easy."

DAY 2

Peoria to 22 and 51 Junction

Shizuya headed out at dawn, not knowing terrain would make this day one of his toughest to run for the entire trip. "It was one of my hardest days because there were so many hills, and the

weather was sunny, and I was very warm all day. I would get to the top of a hill and think that it was the last one, only to see from the top that there were many more to go," he said.

Despite his fatigue, Shizuya was able to continue, drawing encouragement from an unexpected source. "The drivers on the road would honk and wave, or give me the thumbs up sign as they passed by. That support helped keep me going." Shizuya finished running for the evening at 6:30 p.m., grateful that he was finally able to rest.

DAY 3

22 and 51 Junction to Wilsonville Rd. near Willamette River

Hills greeted Shizuya once again as he set out for the day, but somehow they seemed to pose less of a challenge than they had the day before. "Maybe it was easier because I ran most of the hills in the early morning and the temperature was lower," he explained.

On this day Sid Sonnen, a member of World Wheelchair Sports, traveled with Shizuya in his wheelchair for eight miles of the trip. "He gave me a lot of confidence and encouragement when we were running together simply because he was beside me," Shizuya said.

DAY 4

Wilsonville Road to Linton

Shizuya ran 20 miles and then stopped for three hours to attend a wheelchair clinic at Dunaway Park near Portland State University. "The wheelchair clinic was basically a time for people to come out and find out about the latest wheelchair equipment that's available. It was also a chance to create more awareness concerning the mobility impaired," he said.

Local TV stations came to the park to see Shizuya and help spread the word about his dream run. After the clinic Shizuya ran about another 10 miles and then settled in for the night to rest.

DAY 5

Linton to Goble, Ore.

This day would pose the greatest challenge that Shizuya had to

face during his trip because of a painful injury. "I hurt my foot. Keiji thought it might be a stress fracture," he said. Shizuya's masseuse taped his foot so he could continue running, but other problems were beginning to surface.

"Because my foot hurt so bad, I ended up also straining a thigh muscle," Shizuya said. "I was working that muscle extra hard to try and take some of the strain off my foot. Despite the pain, I knew I had to keep going. I told myself that if I stopped running, it would also stop kids in wheelchairs and the disabled from pursuing their own dreams. I remembered that when you face a wall, there's always a way over. With extra concentration I was finally able to overcome some of the pain in the last hour of my run and finish."

DAY 6

Goble, Ore. to Vader, Wash.

Here in the Northwest, spring break and rain seem to go hand in hand. Shizuya wasn't spared by Mother Nature as it rained for three days straight. On his sixth day he crossed the Columbia River and entered Washington. "The bridge I had to cross was a little scary — there wasn't much

room for me to run and huge trucks were passing alongside me. It was extremely windy and when I looked over, I couldn't believe what a long way down to the water it was. I focused ahead and kept going," Shizuya said.

Once in Washington, Shizuya finished up for the day in Vader. "It was a very small town, but the people were all so friendly. A few came and met us at the van and gave donations. Others gave donations to us at a restaurant where the crew ate dinner. I was impressed with their generosity." Shizuya was thankful because he was ahead of schedule and therefore would have an easier run the next day — his thigh muscle was still hurting.

DAYS 7 AND 8

Vader to Roy, Wash.

On day seven Shizuya continued to run through rural Washington. He realized that he wasn't getting the support from the drivers on the road that he had received in Oregon. "People in Washington weren't aware of my purpose and just drove past me. I really missed that support." Shizuya instead drew encouragement from the scenery that surrounded him on every side. "I was running on beautiful country roads all day long. That really inspired me to keep moving," he said.

The eighth day brought Shizuya closer to Tacoma. "I remember that as I ran on this day, the temperature was much cooler than it had been. The rain had started to increase as well." As Shizuya approached the city, road traffic increased. The traffic, coupled with the weather and impending twilight, led Shizuya to quit running for the day. "Keiji and I decided that since I was ahead of schedule, it would be fine to finish early."

DAY 9

Roy to Federal Way

An energy-packed bowl of rice was the way Shizuya geared up for the day. "Most of the time I would have rice bowls and bananas for breakfast and lunch, and then whatever I wanted for dinner — even Taco Bell."

Shizuya was on his way to Tacoma.

He was surprised when University students passed him on the road. "Japanese students from school passed by and honked and waved. It was great to see some familiar faces," he said.

After reaching Tacoma, Shizuya and his crew drove back to Federal Way and crashed for the night. "I couldn't believe I was nearing the end. It had gone so fast."

DAY 10

Tacoma to Seattle

Shizuya was nearing the end of his trip ahead of schedule. This made his last days easier because he had less distance to cover. "We couldn't figure out how I had gotten so far ahead of schedule. I think I probably ran more than I had to for the first three or four days of my trip." Shizuya's trip from Tacoma to Seattle was complicated by the fact that he was now running in the city. Traffic and stoplights posed new challenges for him.

"The stoplights were especially frustrating," Shizuya said. "Waiting for them really broke up my running and affected my pace."

It was on this night that Shizuya took some time out of his schedule to visit the Space Needle with his crew. "Being on top of the Space Needle at night reminded me of when I climbed the Tokyo tower," he said.

DAY 11

Seattle to

University of Washington

Now that the end was in sight, Shizuya didn't feel like he was ready for his dream run to come to an end. "When I thought about it, I felt like I could run back to the U of O. I wasn't ready to be finished. My body felt like it was getting used to running every day," he said.

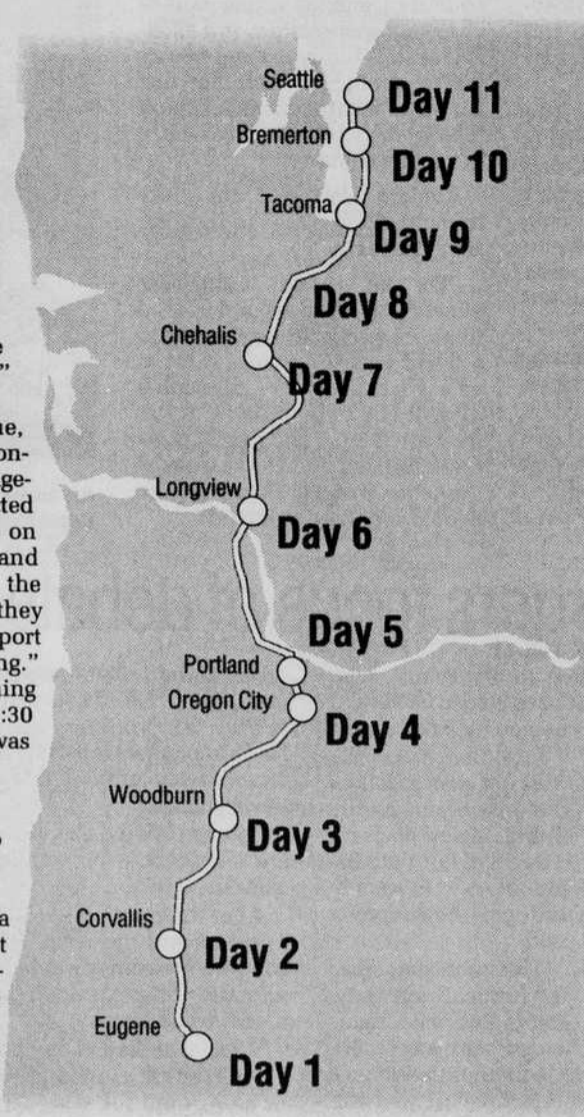
Today Shizuya only had to run six miles, finishing his journey in Red Square at the University of Washington. "It was too windy for media coverage, but members of the Pursuit of a Dream committee were there, along with others from the U of O, to greet me at the end."

Nick MacIvreen, chairman of the committee and member of the team that traveled with Shizuya, remembers the moment he finished in Red Square.

"I could read the happiness and fulfillment on [Shizuya's] face," he said. We looked at each other and I knew that we both were feeling so joyful."

"You made it," MacIvreen said when Shizuya finished.

"Piece of cake," Shizuya responded. "Piece of cake."



Applying Psychology to Real World Problems

Department of Psychology, Summer Session, 1997

Join us for an exciting summer of Psychology! Our summer classes are small and are geared towards investigating real life issues. Course offerings include: Sleep and Dreams • Domestic Assault of Women • Psychotherapies: Healing, Culture and Ethics • Origins and Prevention of Aggression And many others. Individualized courses are available by arrangement with the instructor for both undergraduate and graduate students. Several courses also fulfill social science, science and multicultural requirements.



Register Now for Oregon Summer and Psychology

For a complete course listing and more information, please visit our web page: http://dynamic.uoregon.edu/psych_summer/

ODE Online: <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~ode>

"33 years of Quality Service"

Mercedes • BMW
Volkswagen • Audi



GERMAN
AUTO
SERVICE,
INC.

342-2912

2025 Franklin Blvd.

Eugene, Oregon, 97402