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Runner determined to make it to the top

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Thomas "T.O." Okazaki encountered more adversity than anticipated at the Pikes Peak Ascent in Colorado.

A major winter cold front forced organizers to halt the 13.32-mile run on Aug. 16. Okazaki was among those who had already passed the final aid station when the race was called.

• [E-mail](#) Okazaki said about 80 rain-drenched, under-dressed runners were stranded in driving winds, freezing temperatures, hail, snow, thunder and lightning. Many were treated for hypothermia.

In Okazaki's case, his blood sugar dropped, his muscles cramped and he was so cold he said he struggled to breathe. He credits the El Paso County Search and Rescue Team, a volunteer group, for saving his life. They provided dry, warm clothing and hot packs until reinforcements arrived to carry him to safety.

"If I have to die, at least I was doing something I love on top of Pikes Peak," Okazaki recalled thinking.

The next day, Okazaki attempted to reach the summit by running the Pikes Peak Marathon. He reached the 10-mile mark, where one of the rescuers told him he admired Okazaki's courage but advised him to turn back.

Last year, Okazaki reached the 10-mile mark. Altitude sickness forced him to stop.

"I was going to take care of unfinished business," he said of this year's race, where he reached Mile 11. He said he trained more intensely, improved his diet and lost 20 pounds. Altitude sickness and fitness weren't issues.

Race organizers warn that such winter storms are possible in August. This year's was said to be one of the worst anyone could remember, Okazaki said.

He plans to return to the Pikes Peak Ascent next summer, in hopes of reaching the summit.

"I still think I can make it up to the top," he said.

Global event attracts stars: Several prominent athletes plan to participate in Sunday's Nike+ Human Race 10K, an event being held in 25 cities worldwide, including Austin. They include seven-time Tour de France champion Lance Armstrong, former WNBA player Cynthia Cooper and former University of Texas swimmers Brendan Hansen and Aaron Peirsol, who helped the United States capture the 4x100-meter relay gold medal in Beijing.

Organizers anticipate more than one million runners will complete 6.2 miles that day. Other host cities include: Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, Paris, Madrid, London, Melbourne, Warsaw, Istanbul, Mexico City, Sao Paolo and Vancouver.

For more information, visit www.nikeplus.com.

Briefly: Ally Davidson, winner of *American Gladiators*, will compete in the inaugural Muddy Buddy Dallas race Oct. 26 at Cedar Hill State Park. For more information about the local trail running/mountain biking adventure race, which is part of a national series, visit www.muddybuddy.com. ... The State Fair 5K and Big Tex Mile will not be held this year. Fair officials said a task group will consider bringing the race back next year.

Calendar

SATURDAY, AUG. 30 – Plano Pacers Dog Days Relay 3 x 3K relay and 1K Jr. Sprint, Harrington Park, 16th Street & U.S. Highway 75 (behind Spaghetti Warehouse), Plano, 8 a.m., members free, others \$5, 972-967-7223 or www.planopacers.org.

SUNDAY, AUG. 31 – Carrollton Runners 5K and 1-mile, McInnish Park, Carrollton, 7:30 a.m., www.carrolltonrunners.com.

SUNDAY, AUG. 31 – Nike+Human Race 10K, 6th Avenue and Congress Avenue, Austin, 6:35 p.m., \$35, Austin is one of 25 cities hosting races all over the world in what is billed to be the largest worldwide event in the history of running, www.nikeplus.com.

SUNDAY, AUG. 31 – Kolache 5000 Fun Run, Westfest Grounds, West, Texas, 8 a.m., \$15 early, \$20 race day, 254-826-5058 or www.westfest.com.

MONDAY, SEPT. 1 – Labor Day 15K and 5K fun run/walk, Bath House, White Rock Lake, Dallas, 7:30 a.m., 15K \$30 through Sunday, \$35 race day, 5K \$25 through Sunday, \$30 race day, 214-821-0909 or www.thrustonracing.com.

MONDAY, SEPT. 1 – Labor of Love Run 1K, 5K and 10K, Stonebridge Beach Club, 6203 Virginia Parkway, McKinney, 8 a.m., 5K \$20, 10K \$25, 214-726-9886 or www.stonebridgeracers.com.

MONDAY, SEPT. 1 – Fort Worth Runners Club, Labor Day 5K and 15K runs and 1K run-walk, Luke's, 1540 S. University Drive, 7:30 a.m., Fort Worth, \$8 members, \$12 others, 817-654-5390 or www.fwrunners.org.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 6 – Dallas Running Club Breakfast Bash 5-mile, Winfrey Point, White Rock Lake, Dallas, 8 a.m., members free, others \$10, 214-432-6619 or www.dallasrunningclub.com.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 6 – The MK 5K and 1-mile, The Mary Kay Building, 16251 Dallas Parkway, Addison, 8 a.m., \$15 through Saturday, \$20 after, \$25 race day, 972-687-5889 or www.active.com.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 6 – Spuron 5K and 1K, Glenview Baptist Church, 4805 NE Loop 820, Fort Worth, 8 a.m., \$18 through Sept. 5, \$20 race day, 817-281-3361 or www.mercyheart.org.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 6 – Run for Recovery 5K Run-Walk, City Hall, 13000 William Dodson Parkway, off Valley View Lane, Farmers Branch, 8 a.m., 214-317-2987 or www.runforrecovery.com.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 6 – Communities against Crime 5K and 1-mile, River Legacy Parks, Arlington, 9 a.m., \$25, 817-268-0500 or fwracedirector@aol.com.

SUNDAY, SEPT. 7 – 343 Memorial Stair Climb and Firefighter Relay Competition, Pizza Hut Park, Frisco, Noon, Pledges, www.343memorialclimb.com.

SUNDAY, SEPT. 7 – PrairieMan Long Course (Half Ironman distance: 1.2-mile swim/56-mile bike/13.1-mile run), Sprint (500-meter swim/20K bike/5K run) and AquaBike, Lynn Creek Park at Joe Pool Lake, Grand Prairie, 7:15 a.m., Long course and AquaBike \$165 through Sunday, \$190 Monday

through Sept. 6. Relay: \$225 through Sunday, \$250 Monday through Sept. 6. Sprint: \$60 through Sunday, \$75 Monday through Sept. 6. No race day registration, 817-707-0500 or www.ironheadrp.com. (USA Triathlon membership required. Annual fee \$39. One-day permit \$10)

TUESDAY, SEPT. 9 – Plano Pacers Prediction Race 5K, Schimelpfenig Library, 5024 Custer Road, Plano, 7 p.m., free, 972-967-7223 or www.planopacers.org.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 11 – Freedom Run 5K and 1-mile, American Airlines Center, Dallas, 6:30 p.m., \$20 through Sept. 10, \$25 race day, 972-235-2513 or www.freedomrun.com.