

SPORTS



BUTLER EAGLE - PAGE 11

Friday, May 13, 2016

Sved will keep running

Mountain training in Bolivia paid off

By John Enrietto

Eagle Sports Editor

PITTSBURGH — The lungs were fine. It was Jeff Sved's legs that gave out.

Sved, 27, of Valencia wound up finishing 99th in the men's division of the recent Pittsburgh Marathon, doing the course in three hours, 11.29 minutes.

"I was on pace to qualify for the Boston Marathon," Sved said. "I started out running with the 3:20 pace group, but caught up to the 3:05 pace group by the 15th mile.

"Honestly, I wasn't really breathing hard. I kept shouting 'Let's go, Pens' or 'Let's go, Bucs' to fellow runners as I was passing by. I felt great."

Not bad for a first marathon. Of course, training for months in the high elevation of the mountains in Bolivia helps.

"That definitely made a difference," Sved said.

Sved has been doing mission work in the prison system in Bolivia for the past few years, working with and visiting inmates. He has been back in the states for a couple of weeks, but will soon return to Bolivia to finish out his contract, which runs out in December.

"I'm not sure what I'll be doing next," Sved said. "I enjoy doing work in restorative justice — restoring relationships between legal offenders and victims — and I like teaching ... I know I'll continue to run no matter where I'm at and what I'm doing.

"Running is what kept me sane over there (in Bolivia). Those 20-mile long runs I'd take, must myself alone with my thoughts, were very therapeutic."

Sved said he was on pace to break the 3:05 mark at the Pittsburgh Marathon before his legs cramped up around the 20 or 22-mile mark.

While that affected him over the final few miles, he was still thrilled with his time.

"My goal was to hit 3:20, so, yeah, I was happy," he said. "After that experience, I'm hooked. I'm going to do more marathons."

Sved is already registered for the Washington D.C. Marathon next March. He says he will run Pittsburgh again, but can't guarantee it will happen next year.

He still doesn't know where he will be at this time next year.

"My next goal is a sub-three hours," Sved said of his marathon running. "It's not that my heart is set on running Boston. It's more of posting that (qualifying) time, that milestone.

"Whenever I do run Boston, I don't want to do it by myself. I want to run it with friends, family ... I want to enjoy that experience to the fullest.

"Running the Pittsburgh Marathon was fantastic. All the fans that line the streets and cheer for you, and just running along those streets in town — It's definitely something I want to do again," Sved added.