

COPD Patient Who Needs Oxygen to Run in Boston Marathon!

by Roxlyn Cole

Mike McBride, a borderline severe COPD patient is going to participate in the Boston Marathon this April! This is a BIG time first - that a Boston Marathon will be done by an oxygen patient (high flow at that) meeting the qualifying time set for the "mobility impaired." He is considered impaired because of COPD lung disease, and because of his needs of high flow supplemental oxygen – so much so, he needs to tow it in a cart. Without it he wouldn't go far at all.

This IS POSSIBLE! Of course, Marathons are not recommended as pulmonary rehab, but it suggests a person can try to do a little more, such as set a goal to improve a minute more per week and gain 52 minutes/yr. Don't let patients off the hook because they are older than 55. At age 70, I can keep up with him in a "half " marathon (for some silly reason I am daunted by a Full Marathon).

Now you can confidently say to patients (without other limiting physical ailments), that they CAN try to build up walking, very gradually, to do a Half or whole Marathon. Mike has done 3 others. He made the cut off time requirements in Oklahoma. I do several half marathons every year with him at a mile high altitude, including the SLACKER, which went up to 10,880 ft. Mike does many more events each year.

Another thing to learn – if you can be supplied with the oxygen, you CAN deal with the altitude. Mike will use liquid oxygen for the event itself, but will travel with a POC. I have tested the Evergo 2 and the NEW redesign has dramatically improved it in the sound department, and also in providing better pulses of oxygen up to # 6. Mike needs 5 lpm for slow walking here in Denver. My old Evergo did hold his O2 sats at a safe level while sitting on the plane for the short trip to Chicago from Denver. The next flight - to Boston - will take about 4 hours and I thought he needs the newer equipment. Respironics is providing a new one. Now he will be able to tell us if the new one delivers even better for him. Hopefully SeQual may also send him an Eclipse, to test and use for nighttime when he requires constant flow.

Let's hope we get to read some articles in the news or on TV, about this extraordinary COPD patient pushing the limits with his borderline severe lung challenge.

How I wish I could be there to cheer him on! Maybe if some of you are near Boston you could be at the finish line. My guess is, he might finish the 26.2 miles sometime circa 6-7 hours, and it won't be as crowded at that time. The Boston Marathon will be on April 20, 2009.

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Pictured: A pair of healthy oxyphiles – Mike McBride and Roxlyn “Lyn” Cole
Mike, Roxlyn’s husband Lou, and Lyn
Push or Pull Oxygen – either way, it works!
The start of the “Slacker”

