

# Pediatrician running to break his own world record in the name of social inclusion

By Michael Boriero

After setting a new mark in the Guinness Book of World Records last year, running 185.5 km over a 24-hour period while simultaneously pushing people with reduced mobility, Sébastien Roulier is doing it all over again, this time with his mind set on hitting over 200 km.

The Sherbrooke pediatrician and ultramarathon runner has been keeping his body busy for several years through long-distance, endurance challenges, including the *Avançons tous en cœur* event for *Moisson Estrie*. And he is set to return to *Lac des Nations* on Sept. 24 and 25.

The 24-hour challenge is in support of Sherbrooke Shared Runs, an organization that meets once a week to connect runners and people with reduced mobility. It is also meant to promote the social inclusion of people with disabilities, according to a press release sent out last week.

Last year, Roulier ran 53 laps around *Lac des Nations*. And he is determined to surpass his record-setting run this coming weekend. The challenge will begin on Saturday at 2 p.m. at the promenade in *Jacques-Cartier Park*, and it will conclude 24 hours later on Sunday afternoon.

The weekend event is free to attend and open to anyone interested in supporting Roulier's cause. Sherbrooke Shared Runs will have representatives at the park. And the money collected

through registration and donations will be used for maintenance and to purchase new karts.

"I have explored running in many ways. The duo race is a great way to share my passion. People will be able to witness the activities offered by the organization *Les Courses partagées de Sherbrooke* and perhaps they will be interested in participating," he said in a press release.

According to Roulier, who spoke to *The Record* in a phone interview on Tuesday, he knew immediately after completing last year's challenge that he could push himself even more. He shattered the previous record of 161.6 km, and Roulier is confident he will surpass 200 km.

He said when he began to plan this year's event with Sherbrooke Shared Runs, they both decided the challenge should be expanded to a larger group of runners and co-runners. He is expecting to double the amount of runners from roughly 20 to at least 50 over the weekend.

And there always will be a minimum of three or four runners and co-runners jogging around the lake, Roulier continued, with the co-runners swapping in and out every hour or so. He noted the shared run movement has swept across the province in recent years, and it's still growing.

"The shared runs started in Sherbrooke, but now we see it all over Quebec, in *Gatineau*, *Quebec City*, *Montreal*, *Lévis*, there are several cities

that are doing shared run activities, so during the week they'll come together to push people around for two or three hours," he said.

There are also other organized events for people with reduced mobility, including a shared run challenge taking co-runners up and down *Mont Orford* using a specialized kart, Roulier explained, adding it's important to show everyone that these activities are in fact accessible.

It's also an opportunity for people with reduced mobility to get outside, he continued, as many of them struggled during the province's lockdown periods throughout the pandemic. Asked how many people he will be pushing over the 24-hour challenge, Roulier said roughly 15 people.

He will need to hit 58 laps to eclipse the 200 km mark, and after experiencing the run last year, Roulier noted he will need to conserve his energy this time around. Although there will be a lot of co-runners throughout the weekend, Roulier will be keeping an eye on their body weight.

"I won't be pushing them for the entire time that they're there because last year I noticed people with a bit more weight, well, it becomes a lot harder at a certain point, and I want to keep my energy up. I'm going to push people with a little less weight," he told *The Record*.

With the challenge set for Saturday, folks only have a few days left to



COURTESY OF SÉBASTIEN ROULIER

submit a donation or sign up as a runner. According to Roulier, he has already raised over \$1,200. He hopes to bring in more donations on the day of the event, though, similar to what happened last September.

"This is new this year. Last year, there were people walking around asking for donations for shared runs, but this year we're asking runners to give a \$20 contribution to take part in the event. For co-runners it's free, and people can rent reduced mobility karts," Roulier said.

## This Saturday will be ÉPIQ in Potton



### THE SCOOP

#### MABLE HASTINGS

As you may know, Potton will be hosting on Sept. 24 its first ever edition of the *ÉPIQ Triathlon*, which is a competition where athletes will swim, bike and run, in that order for a total of over 100km. All proceeds of the triathlon will be donated to the *Missisquoi North Volunteer Centre (CABMN)* serving the western sector of the *MRC Memphremagog*.

To ensure the athletes' security (and make sure they don't get lost) on the bike course, organizers are still looking for volunteers. A cheering team in a variety of locations is also sought after as these athletes are giving it their all to support this non-profit organization. Even those who cannot participate as an athlete have a role to play and it is hoped that the community and beyond will

come out with signs and cheers to encourage those taking part along their route.

#### As a volunteer

They would ask you (or you and a friend to keep you company):

- to be available for a 4-hour block between 7 a.m. and 2 p.m. (they'd accept any block you can provide however)

- be willing and able to provide directions to athletes and indicate to traffic that there is a race on-going (you will NOT be expected to direct traffic)

- be available for a short briefing by phone or videoconference in the days before the competition

- be available on your cell phone on the race day to the race director/volunteer coordinator for any last-minute changes

- be flexible, enthusiastic and encouraging

#### What you will receive

- a light snack
- an AWESOME t-shirt
- eternal gratitude by the athletes and organizing committee

- the satisfaction of having contributed to the first edition of what is hoped will become a yearly event to the benefit of the CABMN!

"As athletes we have worked hard to make this happen and we are

looking forward to Saturday and the big event," shared Marc Van Oordt. "While the cheering may seem pointless as a cyclist passes you by it is vital that those who come out to show support understand what that cheer can actually mean when you are giving it your all," he continued. "It makes all the difference and motivates us to keep

going."

Want to help out? Contact Debbie or Gail (CABMN Volunteer Coordination Team) at: [d.harding@cabmn.org](mailto:d.harding@cabmn.org) or Ethan (Youth and Special Programs coordinator) at [e.ball@cabmn.org](mailto:e.ball@cabmn.org) or call the CABMN office at 450-292-3114

It's going to be ÉPIQ!



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