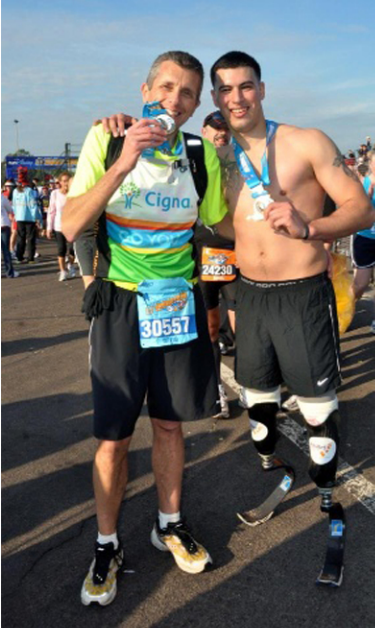


The Long Run

BY BILL COFFIN

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This past weekend, Disney World hosted its 2012 Half-Marathon, a race event sponsored by Cigna. I know of this race because my wife has made it her goal to run in it next year (and given how well she crushed her time in the Philadelphia Rock and Roll Half-Marathon last summer, I have no doubts that she will do well).

So when I tuned in to see how things went in Orlando, I was surprised to see an interesting bit from Cigna itself touting its support of the run. Bully for Cigna, I thought, to be such a prominent health insurer, but also to put its money where its mouth is and to support an event that puts on a pedestal an endeavor that really requires people to push themselves to be their physical, mental and

spiritual best. But that wasn't the part that really caught my eye.

As readers of this blog may recall, I quite enjoy calling out insurers who do good deeds, and this is one of those cases where I think Cigna deserves a rather large round of applause. For not only did Cigna support the Disney race, but its CEO, David Cordani, ran in it (along with numerous other Cigna employees) as part of another initiative that company supports: Achilles International.

Achilles International is a non-profit group that helps athletes with disabilities. And its Freedom Team of Wounded Veterans specifically reaches out to those who have sustained injuries while serving our country so they might continue to compete. The photo running alongside this blog entry shows Cordani standing alongside Lance Corporal Matias Ferreira, a Marine who lost both of his legs while serving in Afghanistan in January 2011. See those curved prostheses where his feet used to be? Yeah, he ran 13.1 miles on those. And he did it *less than a year* after he lost the legs he was born with. That, my friends, is nothing short of incredible. Cigna should be rightfully proud to help people such as Ferreira not only retain his mobility, but to retain the same champion spirit that led him to serve, that led him to survive, and that led him to cross that finish line. Really, it is pretty difficult to understate how awesome this all is.

On a more philosophical note, though (come on, you knew I was going to go there) I am reminded of an article I read from the *Wall Street Journal* a good 15 years or more ago that detailed how a runner who had lost both his legs, was continuing to compete on his artificial legs, and how in the most recent Paralympics, he had managed to set a new time for a run (I think it was the 100M) dash. I remember from the story that the legs used did not seem as advanced as the running prosthetics available today, and I wonder how much faster that runner could have clocked in using today's medical technology. How incredible it is that we can live in a time where one might lose both legs and still credibly ask oneself to what degree they might improve on their 100M dash time.