

# *Dares to be bare(footed)*

By Charles Clines

(More on barefoot running, [www.runningbarefoot.org](http://www.runningbarefoot.org))



Kevin Blacquiere dares to go where few runners will go -- on the streets without shoes. As other barefoot runners, Blacquiere touts the running-without-shoes style with correcting his running form and lessening the stress on his joints. One of the few downsides, he



says, is running on old, grainy asphalt and other rough streets. A small price to pay considering the benefits, he says.



Blacquiere ran through high school and college in Michigan (Hillsdale) and stayed competitive after graduation by running with some of his school friends. By then, though, he said the shoes he was running in ``were horribly beat up and full of holes."

One of his teammates said after examining the ragged shoes, ``You're probably going to be one of those guys who run barefoot. I said, `Hmm, that's interesting.' So, I started toying around with it. I kept running and training."

He said at first he had a lot of pain, but ``As I corrected my form, all the pain went away and it strengthened the right muscles, and I've been doing it for the last two or three years."

Blacquiere said shoes ``just force you to come down on your heel first. And all the impact goes right into your joint and bones. That's why a lot of people have shin problems, knee and back problems. Running barefoot forces you up on your toes, so your forefoot lands first and your heel touches but doesn't take the impact...so all the impact stays in the muscles."

This, he says, ``forces you to run correctly or get hurt. It's up to you to change."

He said it took him a solid two-three months to be comfortable with running without shoes. He didn't run every day when he started because he needed days for his feet to recover. At first, he said ``I ran (without shoes) two or three times, at the most, a week."

Blacquiere ran the Cowtown Half Marathon in February and said he was feeling great through the first eight miles, running about a 6:20-per-mile pace, but the road surface changed and ``with all that cobblestone and construction, man, that hurt my feet. Plus, it was raining and 52 degrees and that didn't help either."

Blacquiere, who moved from Michigan about seven months ago, said he thought he had decent form when running in high school and college. He said he has a 4:06 mile on indoor track, and has been in the low 15s and 14-minute range in the 5K. Blacquiere said he might be doing more road races if he can improve his condition. ``I'm not in very good shape right now. I'm running only about 10 miles a week. ``I ran about an 18:50 today," he said. ``I'm pretty disappointed with that."

Yet, his time will beat many the runners at area road races, even without having expensive running shoes to get him to the finish line.