

## Runner to an Endurance Rider!

Running and Cycling are two of the best known cardio workouts and great aerobic exercises. Running helps in burning more calories and as a sport is much lighter on your pocket – all you need is a good pair of shoes. If you are barefoot runner, you don't need that either.

I started running long distances in Aug'19 and my first serious run was a 5 km run around Cubbon Park, Bangalore. From Aug'19 to Jun'20, I ran multiple half marathons and 10 km runs. By the end of Jun'20, I had taken part in several half marathon events and had shed some weight along the way. More than couple of pairs of shoes had worn out and knees were longing for some rest. This is the point at which I started thinking about another sport that could compliment my running. Swimming could have been great in terms of cross training but thanks to COVID-19 the pools were shut with no signs of reopening anytime soon. Cycling was the next best thing that I could think of.

My previous experience with cycling was horrific. I had bought a bicycle back in 2011 but could not ride that for more than 3 days. Either I wasn't fit enough, or I wasn't aware of the gear shifting technique or it was just a case of not having good company to ride with. After a lot of deliberation, I decided to give it another shot. A few of my friends were cycling regularly by then and I was sure I could tag along with them this time. My search for a decent bike began in early Jun'20 and on 23<sup>rd</sup> Jun'20 I bought my first bicycle.

When I look back at that day, I think I made the right decision.

Cycling, compared to running, as a sport is lot heavier on your pocket for sure. First, you need a good bike and good bikes are expensive. Thanks to the timely advice from a friend, I invested in a decent bike. The advice was "Even if it is bit of a stretch on your budget, go for a good bike. Your rides should be enjoyable". Once you have a decent bike, you need all the accessories – helmet, lights, spare tubes, padded shorts, t-shirts, jerseys and the list goes on and in no time you will realize that is time for you to upgrade your bike. I have upgraded by bike thrice already in 10 months!

Just like anyone else, I start with 20-25 km rides every day and in no time, I could graduate to riding 50 km a day and to 100 km a day. All my running days were definitely helping me. By August 2020, we had formed a nice group of like-minded coffee-loving cyclists. We named this group VeloKofi later. August 15, 2020 was our group's first long ride. We rode from Bangalore to Mysore, a distance of 140+ km, to mark 74<sup>th</sup> Independence Day. Nov 07, 2020, is another remarkable day for me personally. On 03<sup>rd</sup> November, I registered for my first ever BRM. I had tried registering for a 200 km BRM earlier in November, but the slots were filled and this one happened to be a 300 km BRM. I had never done 300 km before, let alone a timed one. I found two other fellows from the group to join me on this ride. We completed the ride well within 20 hours.

There is no looking back since then. The group has become bigger, and rides have become longer and more regular. In my 10 months of cycling, I have done 13,600 km and have completed Super Randonneuring from Bangalore Randonneurs. Thanks to the great company that I found in VeloKofi.

Running definitely has taken a back seat right now. It is a fantastic sport. Cycling is a more expensive alternative. It however takes you to places that are far away from your home. It has helped me meet more people and explore more places. Chances of fewer injuries and more snacks and coffee are other added benefits. I will get back to running and will at some point in time get in to swimming, but these are only to complement my progress of a good cyclist.

And by the way, cycling apparel are way more cooler!

### **First 5 km Run**



### **Regular 10 kms and Half Marathons**



## First 100 km Ride – The formative days of VeloKofi



## First 600 km and First SR



**And the crazy bunch – VeloKofians**

