Virtual London Marathon: October 3rd 2021! Raising money for FHLTA

As I write this piece for the FHLTA website I’m sort of asking myself why am I doing this?

Sport and keeping active has become a big part of my life and something that I am more grateful to be able to do than probably a lot of people out there. The first 43 years of my life had very little sport in them. The reason: Congenital Heart Disorder (CHD). As CHD goes I had it all and always described by any doctor as very complex. It is for this reason why I had to sit out of most PE lessons, went to dance class as a child but wouldn’t be able to do every dance and often made excuses with school friends that my laces needed tying as I just needed a break from walking for the bus. At university I was never able to watch Neighbors prior to bolting for 2pm lecture, instead I would leave half hour early for that uphill plod to campus, so when aged 43 I received my lifesaving heart transplant, I had a lot of lost years to make up for! Sixteen weeks following transplant I started running. Gareth raised his eyes in the way we all know Dr. Parry does and was bemused as to why all CHD insisted on starting to run! I am proud to say I completed 4 half marathons and numerous 5 and 10k events, as well as running at Transplant Games. My dream goal was to run the London Marathon and I had an FHLTA place but boom, what I thought was a minor groin injury was actually severe arthritis in my hi (which has now been successfully replaced). My running days had to end which really affected me as I just loved the fact that my heart would let me. Not to stop my new found love for sport I turned to swimming, and to this day this is now my passion and the pool is my new happy place. I always still try to push myself in the water still amazed that I can actually do this now. During lockdown when the pools were closed and we were allowed out of our gardens, I started to walk a lot more and when the Virtual London Marathon was advertised I thought yes, not quite the running in London dream I had but its as close as I’m gonna get! I’ll walk a marathon! The slight downside is that I also now have severe arthritis in my right foot so walking is actually quite painful but after seeing a man with no legs walk the marathon for Sports Relief, I just need to man up and I’m going to do everything I can to stay walking for what will probably be in excess of 9 hours! The fact that I will be raising money for my beloved FHLTA will help me on the way, The why? – because I can. Simple.

Louise McLellan