



## **Sweaty She Monday (8/31/09): Stressed Out? Drop the F-Bomb!**

**By Susan Farago**

*Weekly Sweaty She postings can be found on "Sweaty She" on Facebook.com or at [www.susanfarago.com](http://www.susanfarago.com).*

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I have never been a big curse word user until I started doing triathlons and running. Growing up, my Dad would curse every now and then but it was the "minor" curse words like the "D" or "H" or "S" word. And only ONE TIME did my brother and I EVER hear my Mom curse. She said the "D" word. Hey, we deserved it. We were acting like royal pains! But what an impact it had on us! Even now we still remember, "The day Mom said the 'D' word."

But somewhere in my 30's, when I rediscovered sports and being active, I also discovered the power of cursing. I don't curse at people (unless it's some guy I don't know drafting me on the bike) but I curse at situations. For example, it is customary that before I jump into Barton Springs' 68 degree water, even though I'm wearing a wetsuit, I still can't help but blurt out the "F-bomb". I try to disguise it but it still slips out as I dive in and I feel the cold water seeping through the zipper of my wetsuit and giving me the willies up my back. This is why it is good to have to go to the bathroom when you dive into any cold body of water while wearing a wetsuit. Hot and cold help counteract one another – if you know what I mean – and it's known as "turning on your heater".

A more recent incident caused a series of rapid fire "F-bombs" to fly from my mouth. I felt justified - it involved a snake. My friend Laura and I were trail running and we were on a fairly remote section of trail - a narrow single track that was grown over with brushy, tall weeds and it had a steep rocky ledge to the left and a dirt/rock wall to the right. Laura was ahead of me and we were chit chatting when all of a sudden she let out a blood curdling scream, shot about 5 feet straight up, and literally flew over the 2 big rocks that were in the middle of the trail. I stopped short (because you never know what the person in front of you sees on the trail so better to stop and find out what the heck it is than take your chances). There we were – her on one side and me on the other...and a big, fat snake between us.

I looked at her, then the snake, and then her again. "Oh crap" I said, "You're going to make me run past that dang thing aren't you!" At this point she was already digging around for a big branch so she could poke it to see if it was a "John Snake". Our friend John came across a hognose snake and after doing some research, he came to find out that if you poke it, the snake will literally play dead. He actually had an opportunity to test this theory on a live hognose snake and it did indeed work – good thing he correctly identified the snake!

As Laura emerged from the bush carrying the equivalent of a tree limb, I said, "Hold on! Don't poke it until I run past!" Nothing like getting a snake good and riled up before deciding to hurdle over it. This is when I started dropping all the F-bombs. I was trying to psych myself up to get past this dang thing. I literally would have to jump over it since the trail was so narrow and we were sandwiched between a drop off and a rock wall. My imagination went wild. Would the snake lunge at me and grab hold of my leg as I ran past? Would it sink its fangs deep into my flesh, causing me a slow, venomous death? What if it shot up my shorts leg when I straddled over it? Maybe it would

wait until I was just past it and then it would spring up and get me into a boa constrictor-like death grip!!!

I just stood there saying over and over again...F-bomb, F-bomb, F-bomb, F-bomb, F-bomb...

I finally said to myself, "OK, don't think about it, just RUN!" and with that I let out one more F-bomb and flew past the snake. As I landed on the other side of Laura, I spun around just in time to see the snake....do absolutely nothing. Really? Nothing? Maybe it was dead? Laura came swooping in with the big branch and scooped the snake up under its belly and plopped it back down on the ground again. Standing on our tippie toes, we peered over the end of the tree limb. Still nothing. Hmmm. Then just as we started to relax, it moved its head. We both let out a shriek and took off running. F-BOMB!!!!

From that point on everything looked like a snake. And as we ran away, still giggling and completely freaked out, Laura said, "Wow - that was messed up!"

For a more scientific approach to studying the effects of cursing and stress relief which DOESN'T require a snake or cold water, check out this article recently published in Time Magazine:

"Why Swearing Helps Ease Pain: Benefits of Curse Words"

<http://www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,1910691,00.html?artId=1910691?contType=article?chn=sciHealth>

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