

Lonnie and Michelle Somers, Owners, HAL Sports

Lonnie and Michelle met in the mid-90s while working one summer at Disney World. Both enrolled in college at the time and studying accounting, they independently decided to take on a summer experience outside the academic walls. Aside from bringing them to meet each other and eventually get married, that adventure working for The Walt Disney Company taught them one thing: **exceptional service is the only option**. And it's the main philosophy they've carried through into their sporting event management business today.

For a short while, they worked as accountants, both employed by large corporations, and later Lonnie launched into venture capital/investment banking. But some major life events quickly shifted their focus.

During their pregnancy with identical twin daughters, at 20 weeks gestation, they were diagnosed with a fetal syndrome called Twin-to-Twin Transfusion Syndrome (TTTS). They were told that there was no chance the twins would survive and that their only options were to terminate the pregnancy or let them die in-utero. They searched the internet for any help and any hope. A week later, they were in Florida having minimally invasive surgery in the womb to save their daughters. Today they have two beautiful 20-year-olds fulfilling their lives daily.

From that, they started a charity 5K in 2004 to benefit the TTTS Foundation and it ultimately grew into the largest timed 5K in Colorado and 48th largest in the USA. Further, they founded an international non-profit, the Fetal Health Foundation.

Through all of this, they got more involved in running/walking events. Lonnie started announcing/hosting at events for free before honing his craft and getting hired to announce for long-standing local events as well as nationally well-known premier events.

As they gained more experience in the industry, an opportunity presented itself to purchase some assets of a timing company that had roots in Colorado. Thus, HAL Sports was born! HAL stands for Healthy Active Living.

Lonnie and Michelle's unique blend of financial savvy, expert event management skills, and a deep love for the sport of running was the perfect combination to create a successful and unwavering partner to the industry.

Quickly the business grew from about 25 events per year to more than 80 events all over the USA (some with more than 40,000 participants). It is very rewarding for Lonnie and Michelle to have a career in which they create the foundation for people to give back and make a difference while also bettering themselves.

“At our events, we often remind participants that the finish line they cross today isn't the end. It is the beginning of what is possible,” Lonnie said. “Our core values are certainly what set us apart: safety, integrity, and experience and are ingrained in all we do for our clients and thereby their stakeholders such as the participants, sponsors, and volunteers.”

Michelle added, “No matter what ‘role’ we are hired for, we never allow a client to suffer by taking the stance that ‘Hey, that isn't our job, so it's not our problem.’ That isn't how we operate. We realize things happen and we ensure things run smoothly for the clients' events.”

This has certainly been the secret to their success. HAL Sports' clients come from word of mouth, and they remain clients because HAL consistently lives up to their reputation.

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