Match Week memories: Physicians reflect on career-defining period

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The days leading up to Match are filled with a nervous energy for many medical students and other residency applicants, and that is not unique to those participating in the 2022 Match.

A retired physician who went through residency selection before the Match was formalized, an international medical graduate and two U.S. medical school grads shared their memories of the days leading up to the official beginning of their residency training.

Here are some of the recollections these AMA members offered.

Carl Earl Lambert Jr., MD: Assistant professor of family medicine, Rush University Medical College.

Medical school: Rush University Medical College.

Residency: West Suburban Medical Center Family Medicine Residency Program.

Match year: 2011.

How would you advise M4s to spend their Match Week?

Try not to stress or obsess. You’ve worked really hard to get to this point and my hope is that you’ve had wise counsel up to this point. If that’s the case, I encourage you to enjoy the moment and trust the road you’ve taken to get to this point.

What did you do on Match Day?

It was a day full of celebrations, some planned, some spur of the moment. My dad was with me on Match Day, so I spent a good part of the morning introducing him to my favorite professors, mentors
and classmates. I just remember the pride that my dad had that day. He initially had no idea why opening envelopes would cause such a wide range of emotions, but once he saw what it represented, it really made me smile.

Our class had a group meal at one of our favorite restaurants near campus. Later, my girlfriend—now my wife—surprised me with a wonderful dinner and date night.

Subhash Chandra, MD: Medical director, University Settlement Consultation Center, New York City.

Medical school: International medical graduate.

Residency: Psychiatry, State University of New York Downstate Medical Center.

Match year: 2011.

How did you feel on Monday of Match week?

Like many other IMGs, my preparation for the Match Week began three years before this crucial day. It had been an arduous, lengthy and expensive process for me including traveling back and forth from the U.S. to India multiple times.

To increase my odds of matching, I had applied to every program I could, across the United States, only to get a few interviews. So I was bracing myself for the failure with a pumping heart and feeling of doom. Fearfully, I opened my email, only to see “Congratulations! You matched.” I could not believe my eyes, but it was true, I had matched. I was ecstatic for beating the odds and believing in myself.

What advice do you have for students on Match Day?

Be proud of yourself. Thank those who stood by you and believed in you; your teachers, family, friends and spouse. Celebrate your success and don’t let your glorious day wither in the speculation about which program you may have matched with.

Remind yourself that you have been in this marathon of life forever and what matters is that you have reached the finish line. For those who didn’t match, don’t forget, your journey doesn’t end here. It’s just the beginning. You have come this far, and sooner or later you will bask in the glory of your success. Keep believing in yourself.

Louise B. Andrew, MD, JD: Retired physician.
Medical school: Duke University School of Medicine.

Residency Program: Johns Hopkins Emergency Medicine.

Match year: 1976.

What is your enduring Match memory?

I made my residency choice in 1975–76, when the Match was in its infancy. And because I was married to a classmate, we were exempted from it. So we had the tremendous challenge to find two residencies at the same or neighboring institutions, but also the great advantage that residencies had the ability to just select us outside the Match.

In our case, there was only one institution that had residencies in both of our chosen specialties. It was Johns Hopkins. And as we were being interviewed—or just after—the respective residency directors called each other and apparently said, “Don’t let these two get away.” We were either very good, or very lucky.

What advice would you offer to students on Match Day?

Whatever the results are, you will get through. I look at this day as the beginning of a career that cannot be matched.

Kieran E. McAvoy, MD: Internal medicine and geriatrics resident.

Medical school: Medical College of Wisconsin.

Residency: Medical College of Wisconsin Internal Medicine and Geriatrics Residency Program.


What type of emotions did you feel on Monday of Match week?

It was stressful and exciting. I wanted to continue my training at the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW). I trained there. My family is nearby and I wanted to continue to help be a caregiver for my mother. I was also newly engaged and my husband was two years into a job. So I worked out a lot that week, ran and lifted a lot of weights to help cope with the stress.
Match Day is definitely a mixed-emotion day and you are sort of terrified until you open that envelope, but when the day came and I found out I matched at MCW, I was thrilled! My husband was so happy to not switch jobs and I got to stay working with the faculty I look up to.

**What advice would you give students who don’t get the result they were hoping for?**

One of my friends didn’t match, but he then got into a preliminary program and eventually got into a surgery program. Once you open the envelope, you end up where you are supposed to be. It may not be where you thought you were going, but the journey will end up rewarding.