

Featured Runner of the Month – July, 2008

Bob & Ann Gibbs

Editor's note: Bob Gibbs is a two-time WCC age group winner, winning the title in both 2006 and 2007. Ann Gibbs is also a two-time WCC age group winner, winning her titles in 2005 and 2006. Their daughter Katie won a WCC age group title in 2006.

Our featured runners this month are the husband and wife team of Bob & Ann Gibbs. They come to us from the Connersville, Indiana area and are always inspiring new runners to join in the fun of the WCC series. Bob & Ann graciously took a few moments to share their running insights and how running has enhanced their daily lives.

When did you first realize that you might become a runner?

Ann: I looked at myself in the mirror after popping out 3 kids in 5 years and didn't recognize myself. I ran to the neighbor's driveway the next morning and back. It took me a year to run a mile without stopping and walking. That was 18 ½ years ago.

Bob: 18 years ago, I first started running to get in shape for basketball. A good friend got me to enter my first race. I didn't think I was good enough to compete. I finished fourth in my age. The next race I won my age, got a prize and was hooked. Basketball soon became a thing of the past.

How many miles do you try to run each week? Do you have a favorite place to train?

Ann: I have never been a great trainer. I hope to run 3 or 4 times every week, the mileage really varies. The best training time for me is when I run with the cross-country team in the summer. The kids really motivate me. My favorite place to run is from home. We have several routes in the country of different lengths. The scenery changes day to day: the wildflowers, the animals, the holes in the road, and the ice on the trees. The neighbors all know us and look out for us.

Bob: Ideally, I would like to run 20 – 25 miles weekly. I'm lucky to have a great place to run at home. I really love trail runs with the cross-country team.

What has been your most rewarding achievement thus far as a runner?

Ann: Gosh – every time I cross over a finish line I feel like I've

achieved something. Because I'm a runner, I was asked to be an assistant coach for the Connersville High School Track team. But, my greatest achievement has to be running my first Indy mini-marathon 7 months after I had a stroke.

Bob: If you're talking about awards, my two Turkey Trophies are my pride and joy. Early on, I never dreamed I'd be good enough to win one. Finishing in the top 600 (587) at the Indy Mini was a high point. Last year, 2007, at the Cross Country Sectional all 14 of our kids had personal best times! It was something Coach Smith and I had not seen before. It was neat to be a small part of that event.

What motivates you to run? Do you do any cross training (cycling, etc.)?

Ann: Vanity is my main motivation. I hate flab. I should do cross training but I don't.

Bob: Like most runners my age, I'm trying to out-run father time. I love the sense of accomplishment and the over all great feeling running gives me. I like being able to say, "I'm a runner." Ann and I try to walk 3 miles 5 or 6 times a week at a 14 – 15 minute pace, and we also incorporate some 12 oz. curls into our routine. ☺

What advice would you give to a beginning runner?

Ann: Take it slow. Keep at it until the pain goes away. **STRETCH!** Don't get all freaked out about your times, fast or slow. Just enjoy the run.

Bob: Proceed with caution, start short and slow. You didn't get out of shape overnight and you won't turn things around quickly. Be patient and hang in through the initial discomfort and you will be rewarded.

Do you have a favorite WCC race & why? What is your favorite race outside the WCC series & why?

Ann: My favorite WCC race is the Turkey Chase, closely followed by the Sizzlin' 5K. I love both of those courses. I think it's evil to end a race uphill! My favorite non WCC race is the Indy mini – it's such a spectacle!

Bob: The Turkey Chase has always been my favorite. Great course, unique distance, good competition, well organized, and good door prizes. What's not to love? The Indy mini is quite an enjoyable spectacle.

As an individual, what does running mean to you in your life? (List as many positives and/or negatives as you feel necessary.)

Ann: Running has made a huge difference in my life. I never was involved in any sports in school, so never knew that sense of accomplishment that you feel when you finish a race. I'm so proud when I walk into a race with my family (4 of us run in WCC races, the other is a closet runner. . . we're trying to get her to enter one race with us). I've met so many people that I never would have known that I truly love. Runners are the most positive people on the planet, and being around runners has been such a great thing for not just me, but also for my husband and my kids. I'm so grateful to all of you for being such a positive force in my life, for being so good to my family, and for being my friends.

Bob: Running has given me so much enjoyment. It is part of who I am. I love feeling strong and healthy. It clears my mind and keeps me centered emotionally. I help coach cross-country and distance track and the young runners are keeping me young and motivated. It gives Ann & me a common interest. Runners are a great group to be associated with. The only negative is the inevitable ravages of time and the slowing of pace, because nobody wins the race against our own mortality. Each runner is blessed to be able to participate physically and mentally, in an activity we love so passionately. I'd like to give special thanks to all who work so hard to make the WCC possible.

This interview was conducted by Dale Bolser for the WCC.
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