

## **Featured Runner of the Month – September, 2008**

### **Gene Black**

Editor's note: Gene Black is a five-time WCC Age Group winner and appears to be on his way to an unprecedented sixth WCC Age Group title in 2008.

*Our featured runner this month is the ever popular Gene Black. Gene is a long-time farmer in the Camden, Ohio area and is also a long-time runner. He runs as though he's much younger than his age. Gene graciously took a few minutes out of his busy schedule to share his thoughts on running and how he has managed to remain an active runner over the years.*

*You've been a runner for many years. When did you first begin running? Did anyone in particular inspire you as a runner?*

**GB:** I began running in 1984. No one really inspired me. To be honest, I didn't know anything about running at that time. We saw the Cincinnati Mini Heart advertised on TV. At the time, I weighed 178 lbs. and couldn't tie my shoes without holding my breath. We (Sandy & I) said ... "If we start today, we could do that next year." That was the beginning of it all.

*What type of training do you do (roads or trails)? How many miles do you try to run each week (approximate)? Do you have a favorite place (or time) to train?*

**GB:** I do most of my training on the trails at Hueston Woods State Park. I normally run about 25 miles each week. I try to run 2-3 races each week and fill in the rest with runs at the park. My favorite training runs are the evening runs at Hueston Woods on the trails.

*It is well known that much of your training is simply running in the races. Approximately how many races do you run each year? Do you have one in particular that's a favorite? Of the WCC races, do you have a favorite (or non-favorite) event and why?*

**GB:** I try to run 65-70 races each year.....sometimes more, sometimes less. My overall favorite is the Brunner Farm 5K run near Troy, Ohio, in the spring. It's a great event that is well-managed and always a good experience.

Really.....any trail run is a favorite for me. I really don't have a favorite WCC race. They're all quality events with great people involved in each one.

*Do you remember the first race that you ran in? Over the years, what has been your most memorable race from a positive aspect?*

**GB: The first race that I ran was the Liberty Freedom Run in 1984. My first 50 miler was the most memorable. That's a race where you ask yourself, "Can I really do this?"**

*If you were to give advice to a beginning runner, what might that advice be?*

**GB: Have fun!!!!!! Don't make it seem like a job! Enjoy the friendship of all of your fellow runners. They are great people!!!!!!**

*As a runner, in general, how has this activity benefited you in your everyday life? Have you seen any setbacks (injuries) as a result? Farming is a very physical occupation.....has your running been a benefit or a liability?*

**GB: You just feel better about everything. You can be having a bad day.....just pull on the shoes, run a few miles and you'll be amazed at how much better you feel both physically & mentally. I've managed to stay injury free for as long as I've been running (good fortune, I guess). Running has been a great benefit to me as I've been able to stay in good physical condition and I've met some wonderful people along the way.**

*The WCC thanks you, Gene, for graciously taking the time to share your running insights with us. Your success is an inspiration to all of us runners (and non-runners alike). Continue to stay healthy and inspiring to all of us for many years to come.*

This interview was conducted by Dale Bolser for the WCC.  
©2008 WCC. All rights reserved.