

Featured Runner – May, 2010

Todd Barker

Our next featured runner is local Wayne County runner Todd Barker. Todd is well known in area running circles as one who has a good deal of talent. But you rarely notice, as Todd is a very humble guy. He just goes about his business and gets things done. Todd not only runs local events, but volunteers to staff them as well....offering to provide split times, collect bib tags, operate aid stations or whatever needs to be done.

Todd was a member of the ultra division team from Wayne County that won the Bourbon Chase 200 mile race last fall in Lexington, KY.

Todd graciously took some time out to share his thoughts as a runner and how it enhances his daily life.

How/when did you become a runner? Do you have a mileage goal per week?

I started running because my older brother and his friends were runners. I first started running cross-country in the seventh grade. The following summer, I started running road races around the state. I was thirteen and completed several races including the first ever Liberty Freedom Run in 1978 and my first half marathon in Crawfordsville.

My mileage goal for the week depends on what race is on the schedule. Over the past four years my running has been centered around marathons in the spring and fall. My mileage is usually around 50-60 miles per week during marathon training. Mileage is cut back for a few months in the summer, which also gives me more time to get out on the bike.

Who inspired you to get involved in running?

When I was younger I was inspired to run by family and friends. During college, I kept active competing in duathlons and triathlons with friends. Like so many, after college I wandered from my running ways. Several years and twenty pounds later, I again began running, largely in part from the encouragement of my brother, Mark, along with Bob and Ann Gibbs.

What motivates you to run?

I generally run as stress relief and for the health benefits. I am a firm believer that a fit and healthy person is more productive in life. I think my biggest running motivator is knowing my father passed way too early in life. My daughters never got to know their grandfather. Hopefully running will keep me healthy because I really want to see my grandchildren.

Do you have a favorite run/race and why?

I have been lucky enough to run Boston (marathon) twice. My first Boston was fantastic because of the rich history and the atmosphere the city delivers. I got a chance to share the Boston experience the next year with several of my running friends. From the Runners World party the night before, to the party after the race, it was quite memorable.

What is your most memorable race?

Last year my nine-year-old daughter, Jenna, showed interest in running. Last May, I ran beside Jenna during her first WCC race. Talk about runner's high.

What do you consider the best & worst thing about running?

The best thing about running is the health benefits. To be inspired by so many people, no matter what their ability, during the Saturday morning runs. I am very proud to be a part of such a great running community. The worst thing has to be when the alarm goes off at 4:30 a.m. to meet my crazy running friends.

What are your goals as a runner?

I would love to get through a marathon without cramping up at mile 20. Hopefully around 1:25 for this year's Indy Mini-Marathon. It seems whenever I finish a goal, my buddies throw out another challenge.

What advice would you offer to a beginning runner?

Don't get discouraged. I use to think that a race longer than a 5K was unimaginable. I am amazed how the mind and body adapt to higher miles. Remember that your mind will/can give out way before your body. You don't have to run hard every time out. Enjoy the run.

You participated in the Bourbon Chase last fall. Could you please share some insight on that experience?

The Bourbon was my first long distance relay. I found it to be tougher than a marathon. My legs were sore before I started my last 10 miler. Just think, running 32 miles, no sleep, pouring rain, sharing a van with five sweaty guys for 23 hours; it was fantastic. Even though we did win the ultra division, I am more proud to be part of such a large group that represented our running community during the Bourbon.

Thanks Todd for sharing your thoughts. We look forward to your continued support of running in Wayne County.