Featured Runner of the Month – March, 2009

Judy Pierce

Our featured runner this month is Judy Pierce. Judy has been a very successful WCC runner since she ran her first WCC race in 2006. She placed 3rd Overall Female that year, and she was an age group winner in 2008. Judy has graciously taken some time from her busy schedule to share her thoughts on running and how it enhances her everyday life.

When/how did you become a runner? Did anyone inspire you to start running?

I began walking in 1990 after my second daughter was born to lose some weight I had gained. I enjoyed walking, it was an easy, inexpensive exercise routine for me, and it worked for losing the weight. Then about 4 years ago I decided to start running some. I was doing 6 miles a day, so I would walk 3 miles, then run 3 miles, and was able to work up to running the whole 6 miles.
Then in 2006 I found out about the WCC from Jeff Smith. I thought it would be fun to give it a try, which I did, and now I am hooked. I enjoy running the races and meeting other runners. I enjoy the challenge of racing. I know I will never be a fast runner, but just being able to compete in each race and finish it is enough to satisfy me.

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

I usually try to run at least 30 miles a week. I run 6 miles a day, 5 days a week. I like to take Fridays and Saturdays off. I work two part-time jobs, so sometimes it gets hard to find enough time to run. But then when the weather is nice it's easy to add more miles. I may run 35-40 miles a week if I have the time.
I live in a small town, so I usually run on the streets around town. I also like to run out on country roads to enjoy the sights and sounds of nature. Then if I feel up to a challenge I will run the Jubilee Days 5k course. You won't find me doing it too often, though.

What motivates you to run?

What motivates me to run would have to be my desire to stay healthy and fit. Also the many physical and mental benefits I get from running. I may be having a bad day and not really feel like going out to run, but then afterwards I feel so much better and I am glad that I ran.

Also, for many years of my life I had a weight problem. I was quite overweight as a kid. At one time I weighed almost 200 pounds. I think that's what keeps me motivated the most to run; the fear of being overweight again. For me, running really works to keep my weight down and I feel so much better.

Also, I can't disappoint a lot of people in my town that see me running everyday. I always have people I don't even know telling me that they see me running all the time, and how dedicated I am to run all through the winter. They tell me that they wish they had my dedication.

My daughter, a senior in High School, had another student tell her one time, that I was "her idol" because she had just seen me running on a cold rainy/snow mix day. I always hope that, just maybe, my dedication might just inspire someone else to become active.

Do you have a favorite race overall? What's your favorite WCC race and why?

The Kentucky Derby Mini-Marathon is my favorite race overall. My oldest daughter lives in Louisville, and she talked me into running it last year. It was my first attempt at a mini-marathon. It was a lot of fun, running through the streets of Louisville, so I am doing it again this year, on April 25, three weeks before the first WCC race. My goal was to finish in 2 hours, 30 minutes. I finished in 2: 29:17. So I was happy I was just under my goal.

My favorite WCC race is the Frostbite. I like the festive time of year and it is an enjoyable course to run. I also don't mind running in the cold or the snow. I would rather run in the cold than the hot summer heat.

What's the best and worst thing about running for you?

The best thing about running for me is the overall good feeling I get from running. Just feeling like I have accomplished something makes me ready to face whatever the day may bring. I especially like the days when I am out running and the endorphins kick in and I feel like I could run all day. It's a great feeling.

The worst thing about running is when the bad weather interferes and I can't get out to run. I don't like treadmills . . .too boring. Then another bad thing is not being able to have enough time to run.

What goals(short and long term) do you have as a runner?

My short term goals would be to stay healthy and injury free, and to try to complete all the WCC races again this year, for 4 years straight. I would like to improve in speed, but I just don't think it is in my genetics to improve there. But I am happy just competing and finishing each race, I have received quite a few awards over the years, even though I am not that fast of a runner.
A long term goal, I would like to maybe try running a full marathon someday. Actually I think I am better in endurance, at going the distance, than I am at speed.

What advice would you give to a beginning runner?

You don't have to be real athletic to begin running. Start out setting small goals that are within reason, work your way up slowly. Don't get discouraged and give up too soon. It takes time to reap the rewards, but in the long run, it is well worth the effort. You may have some pain or sore muscles at first, but don't let that stop you, because you will get stronger if you just keep going, just push yourself a little at a time each day to improve and believe in yourself and you will get great results.

This interview was conducted by Dale Bolser for the WCC.