

Sundays with Wilkin: Runner Emily McCabe

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Q: You are coming back to the Freihofer's Run for Women for the second straight year. What do you like about the race?

A: I had a lot of fun, not only running it, but I like that they do the school program. Last year, I went to a fifth-grade class in Cobleskill. I really enjoyed talking to the kids; I thought their questions were really good and insightful. And they made me feel like a real celebrity. They asked me for my autograph and that was pretty cool. A group of them were training for the race and I was really impressed that they were training for a 5k race. I don't think I was doing that in fifth grade.

Q: Last year, you were the top U.S. finisher, coming in ninth in a time of 16:12. How big of an accomplishment was that for you?

A: It was a pretty big one. At the time, it was one of my first pro races and I kind of went in without high expectations. I went out and competed and ran the hardest I could and had the best results I could.

Q: What do you think you can do in the race this year?

A: I would really like to be the top American and I would like to finish higher than ninth. I'm looking at the top five. I would like to improve every year so, yes, I want to improve on last year.

Q: So, you came into last year's race a little bit under the radar?

A: I guess a little bit. I was just coming off college eligibility and had not had many races under my belt.

Q: How are things going for you this year?

A: I had run really well since (Freihofer's). I ran at the Pan Am Games and was seventh in the 10k at the U.S. Nationals. Then I had an injury (tendinitis on right side) in the fall and that put a hiccup into my training. That was disappointing. I wasn't able to run for two months and that was hard. But I've felt pretty good for the last month.

Q: You're only 24. What are your ultimate goals in running?

A: I would like to make it to the Olympic trials this summer (10k). And I would like to eventually move up my race distance, probably to marathon and half-marathons.

Q: Before you got into running, you skied a lot as a kid. What was the reason for the change?

A: I grew up a downhill ski racer and skied for the West Mountain team and in high school (Queensbury). There was no indoor track team at Queensbury. Skiing was something I always enjoyed and when I come home for Christmas, it's hard to fit in skiing with all the running workouts. My coaches probably would not want me to ski anyway. But I always enjoy seeing the people who taught me how to ski.

Q: Why do you run?

A: I really enjoy it. I started to realize I had an affinity for running when I was in gym class (in middle school). I could go out and run faster than a lot of the guys in gym class. It came naturally to me. I tried softball and soccer and gymnastics but running was the one sport I did not even train for. I was running well. I tried out for cross country and instantly enjoyed it. I had an amazing coach in middle school, Nancy Micich. She does not get enough credit for what she does. She was amazing and I love running into her when I am home. She was one who got me excited about running. I also had great coaches in high school, Bob Underwood and Kevin Sullivan.

Q: Did you have a running idol you looked up to when you first started running?

A: Well, I always sort of heard of Cheri Goddard when I was growing up. She was running pro at the time I was running in middle school. She was from Saratoga Springs and her mom was a substitute teacher at Queensbury. I would always ask her about Cheri and her mom would bring me articles about her. I have never met her but I would love to, eventually.

Q: How many miles do you usually log during a week?

A: Between 70 and 75, sometimes up to 80. I run a lot. It's time-consuming, but if you have goals and want to run beyond college, it's worth trying.

Q: You have just finished your master's degree at Duke in humanities. Congratulations.

A: Thanks. It's been really great working with the professors at Duke. They not only support me academically but they support me in my running career.

Q: What do you want to do when the running days are over?

A: I want to give back to the community in some way, maybe in public service. I volunteer in the community here in Raleigh (N.C.) and I am a buddy to an 11-year-old girl. I also volunteer on Thursday nights at a center in Durham that provides support to families with small children. I like working with kids.

Q: What do you like to do in your spare time?

A: I like doing things with friends, go out for dinner and lunch. I just started doing pilates and yoga. I also like to go to movies and other sporting events. I went to some Duke basketball games this past season.

Q: How did you get tickets for that?

A: I got tickets for the women's games from my physical therapist. I went to two men's games, against Maryland, which my mom went to, and Cornell (where she was an undergraduate).

Q: Are you a Cameron Crazy?

A: No, but I saw them in action. The games I would go to were after a workout and I was tired. They jump up and down the whole game. They get their own workout. I respect what they do for the school.

Q: Favorite television show?

A: I really like "Law & Order." I have also been watching a lot of CNN and I like "Larry King Live. I watch the "Today" show every morning.

Q: If you could sit down with anyone and talk running, who would it be?

A: As far as sports icons in general, I would like to talk to Lance Armstrong. I have been a huge fan of his and he has run in three marathons. I really admire everything he has done despite all the adversity he has been through.

Q: Favorite place you have run a race?

A: I've been to so many places. After my senior year at Cornell, I went to England with my team and it was really neat. We had a race at Cambridge and a workout on the track at Oxford where Roger Bannister ran his sub-4-minute mile.

Q: How often do you get home?

A: Not very often; that's why I am very excited to be in this race. I will be able to be home for a few days. I haven't been home since Christmas, so I am really excited to see my family.

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