

Keeping Pace with Tracy Thomas ...Sort of

“I’m afraid I won’t be able to keep up.”

That was the message delivered by Tracy Thomas explaining her hesitation about participating in group trail runs. Seems the new kid on the block didn’t want to hold up anyone’s pace and make a bad first impression. Talk about sandbagging. When Tracy finally did turn up for a 23 mile marathon training run, she went out with the fast group, and proceeded to drop them one by one. It was only then that we learned she had arrived early and already run 10 miles before anyone else started. So just who is this person?



Tracy Thomas is a personal trainer and running coach who recently came to Second Wind from California. She owns and operates BodyMechanic Fitness LLC, and her clients run the gamut from competitive runners and triathletes to nonathletes seeking a healthier lifestyle.

Before moving to Illinois in 2004 Tracy managed the corporate fitness center at Southern California Edison, where she evaluated members’ fitness levels, designed custom exercise programs, trained employees in fitness-related aspects of workplace safety, originated and managed fitness events, and managed various fitness center operations. She previously worked as the head trainer at a medical doctor’s wellness facility, where she developed particular expertise with obese and HIV-positive populations.

Tracy’s expertise in the fitness needs of runners and endurance athletes has been developed in part through her own accomplished running career. Tracy began running competitively in high school in Upper Sandusky, Ohio, and also competed on the Long Beach City College cross country and track teams. Her specialty is the marathon and longer distances – she has completed more than 75 marathons, with a personal record of 3:10 in the 2004 Pacific Shoreline Marathon. Tracy was the first masters woman finisher at the 2004 Los Angeles Marathon, where she placed 17th out of 9,000+ female runners and 205th overall out of over 22,000 participants.

Tracy has also run more than 30 ultramarathons – races of distances over 26.2 miles. She twice completed the Angeles Crest 100 Mile Endurance Run, in 1999 and 2000, and finished the 2004 Vermont 100 in 20:56. In 1999, she was the first woman finisher in the Angeles National Forest 100K. As a result of her distance running accomplishments, Tracy been selected every year since 2002 to participate in Active.com’s Active Elite sponsorship program, with corporate sponsorships from Dri-release, ThermaCare, BreatheRight, Egg Beaters and Club Med.

And it’s not just running. In 1997, she biked the 575-mile, 7-day California AIDS Ride, and played varsity basketball in high school and college. Tracy recently received her Masters Degree in Sports Management from California State University, Long Beach. She also holds both the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) Health/Fitness Instructor (H/FI) and the National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA) Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist (CSCS) certifications.

We recently interrupted one of Tracy’s training runs to get to know her a little better:

SW: **When and why did you start running?**

TT: *28 years ago for the health of it and for the challenge.*

SW: Why did you join Second Wind?

TT: *Needed to meet new running buddies.*

SW: How long have you lived in the C-U area? If you're imported, what brought you to our town?

TT: *9 months—my partner, a private equity investment wizard, got the Director of Foundation Investments job at UI...and along I came.*

SW: What is your occupation?

TT: *Self-employed owner of BodyMechanic Fitness. I am a Personal Trainer and Running Coach.*

SW: How often do you run?

TT: *6-7 days a week—occasionally twice a day.*

SW: What is your greatest running related accomplishment?

TT: *Winning the Pacific Shoreline Marathon in 2004 and winning a marathon in Sydney, Australia in 2002. Oh...and winning my first 100K in 1999...I had never run that far.*

SW: Where and when are we most likely to see you running?

TT: *On the trails and ALL over town---usually in the middle of the night and early morning.*

SW: What's the strangest thing you've ever seen while running?

TT: *A naked man.*

SW: What other interests, hobbies, or pastimes do you have?

TT: *Ceramics and pottery.*

SW: Do you have any first impressions of our club that you'd like to share?

TT: *People seem very nice...but then, I'm from Los Angeles...everyone else anywhere seems nice!*

There was so much more we wanted to know, like whether or not it is true that she wears a weighted vest and sweat suit while running inclined treadmill intervals. Alas, Tracy quickly pulled away from our outmatched field reporter. Fortunately, she followed up by email with her upcoming race plans and parting thoughts:

I am doing the Barryman 50-miler May 28, Kettle Moraine 100-miler on June 4-5 and Western States 100-miler on June 25-26. (Where are the HILLS around here?! ☺)

I also would like to add that I am SOOOoooo impressed with SWRC member Kelly Bails! She started/restarted a Beginning Women's Running Group at which I spoke last night (...on proper running form) and I was overwhelmed to see about 40 women there. How cool is that??? That is 40 people whose lives can be changed for the better because of Kelly! They all inspired me to no end! There really are some QUALITY people in this club. Everyone I have met has been so nice!

Want to run like Tracy? She can be reached at bodymechanic@insightbb.com or (217) 714-1388.