

Steve Edwards – 500 Marathon World Record Challenge

Having just smashed the world record for running the fastest ever 10 marathons in 10 consecutive days, this year's Isle Of Man Marathon is scheduled to be Steve's 454th marathon as he aims to become the first person in the world to run 500 marathons in an average finish time of under three and half hours. Steve, a 45 year old athlete who runs for Bourton Roadrunners in Gloucestershire has so far completed 453 marathons with an average finish time of just 3 hours 18 minutes. All being well, he will look to complete his 500th marathon in the Olympic year of 2012 which also coincides with his 50th birthday!

His running career officially started in 1981, when at the age of 19, he ran his first ever road race, the inaugural Coventry Marathon. However it wasn't until 1988 that he started running marathons seriously, such that in 1990, at the age of 28, he became the youngest athlete in the world to run 100 marathons. Two years later, aged just 30, he passed the 200 marathon landmark, again, the youngest athlete ever to do so. It was also in 1992 that he broke the world record for running the most marathons in a one year period, a total of 87, which smashed the previous recognised record of 74 marathons. Chasing this record took him to 13 countries and his finish times averaged an incredible 3 hours 14 minutes, over an hour quicker than the previous record holder.

Marathon running has taken him to over 21 countries in all, not to mention the length and breadth of the British Isles, from the Isles of Scilly to the Outer Hebrides, some 57 counties all told. With a personal best time of 2 hours 51 minutes and over 100 sub 3:10 marathons to his name, he is without doubt, not only the youngest athlete ever to have passed the 300 and 400 marathon landmarks but also the fastest.

Steve has on many occasions, run marathons on consecutive days, sometimes a thousand miles, or even countries apart. However, in May this year, he notched up yet another world record by running the fastest ever 10 marathons in 10 days on a UKA certified marathon course. His combined time of 35 hours 20 minutes smashed the old record by well over two hours as he averaged a 3 hour 32 minute marathon each day for 10 consecutive days.

Over the years, his dedication in supporting and competing in marathon races has not only helped contribute to the sport of running, but also benefited many charities. He is currently raising money for the Spinal Injuries Association and the Brathay Hall Trust. Steve says that out of all the sports he has participated in, running has been the most challenging and therefore the most rewarding. However, while he enjoys the personal challenge of the marathon, he also enjoys the camaraderie and competition with other runners.

Putting Steve's lifetime 500 marathon challenge into context basically equates to running a marathon every 17 days for 24 years. To be on course for achieving it with an average finishing time of just over three and a quarter hours is quite remarkable given the short recovery periods between marathons and the opportunities for injury over such a long period of one's life. Little wonder that no-body so far, has managed to accomplish such a feat.

While he is acutely aware that he isn't getting any younger or that he could become injured at any time, he remains totally focused on his goal. Not only to run another 47 marathons over the next 4 years, but to also maintain an amazingly consistent finishing time that has seen this remarkable athlete average inside 200 minutes for each of his 453 marathons completed so far.

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