

Running For Two

Runner Birte Fretwell shares her experience running a half marathon while four months pregnant.

By Kat Overman, Evan Heisler, and Savannah Mitchell

She smiles as she runs through the finish line. She is a streak of blue and neon pink from her bright shorts and dark shirt. When she slows down, spectators can see that the paper attached to her tank top reads 848. She joyfully accepts her participation medal.

Anybody would have trouble running a half marathon, but Birte Fretwell had an especially hard time. Fretwell is four months pregnant and she finished her half of the Run Hard relay marathon with her husband, Jeff Fretwell, in only an hour and forty five minutes..

“Running clears my mind,” remarks Fretwell. “It’s just the peace I have while I’m running long distances.”

Fretwell has been running with friends for years now and her pregnancy is not going to stop her. She still works out seven days a week.

“I use my breathing to keep me focused,” says Fretwell. “The first three miles are really about finding your breath and getting into the pace.”

Though she now has a passion for her hobby, she was not always involved in it.

“I had friends who liked to run so I started,” Fretwell says. “I would have never imagined I could run 13 miles.”

Jeff Fretwell, her husband, is extremely proud of his loving wife.

“She was my motivation for running the race,” he says, smiling.

While a good attitude is key to running 13.1 miles, it isn’t quite enough. Her rigorous training schedule has no time for breaks or cheat days.

“She runs races on weekends, swims on Monday and Friday, runs for practice on Tuesday and Thursday, and is involved with Fe-

males In Action (FiA) on Wednesdays,” says Jeff.

FiA is an organization that strives to bring women together to help boost not only their physical health, but their mind and heart as well. FiA has branches in multiple states and aims to reach women who want a place to go and have a family of supporting women.

“I usually run an hour and a half, so this is not my best time,” admits Fretwell. “However, I am four months pregnant. Adding 15 minutes to my time is okay.”

She wants to reach out to other female athletes who don’t feel they can compete because they are pregnant.

“If you have been doing exercises that you want to continue while you’re pregnant, that’s fine. If your body is used to it, you can accomplish anything,” she says.

Fretwell works hard to keep herself healthy and happy.

“I also want to check out the competition I’m running against,” Fretwell says.

Fretwell is a fairly competitive person. She works hard and she is proud of all her race times.

“You name it, we do it,” says Jeff. “We hike, we run, we do triathlons, we play tennis and soccer.”

The Fretwells are extremely dedicated to running, but everybody needs time for fun.

“Our favorite thing to do together other than running is travel,” says Jeff. “We’ve travelled to Africa, Germany, and Alaska to name a few. I’ve actually been to all 50 states.”

The Fretwells enjoy a chance to get away from their busy lives. They love to travel all over the world.

“I’ve run it a couple of times and I already know it’s going to suck,” says Fretwell.

“If you know you’re going to be running an hour and forty-five minutes, you’ll be prepared for it.”



Fretwell is an experienced runner and knows what to expect from this race.

“When I got up the hill on one street, around mile eleven, it got pretty rough because it was hotter and I was getting hungry. I was thinking, okay, let’s get this over with.”

But when you’re at the end of a journey you have to look back at how you got there.

“Honestly? I think the best part really is the whole race,” says Fretwell. “Then, towards the end, you’re almost done and you’re like- let’s do this!”