

## ■ HEAD OF THE PACK

# Race junkie

*If one race per weekend is good, then two or three must be even better*



SALLY GIANELLI

If you're trying to reach Glen Morgan," a Club Northwest member advised me, "go to the race this weekend."

Which race? I asked.

"All of them!" he responded.

He was only half joking. Glen Morgan is to local road races what the late Sy Mah was to marathons. Mah finished 524 marathons, sometimes running two or three races on the same weekend, earning a spot in the *Guinness Book of World Records*.

Morgan, a 25-year-old Newcastle resident, averages 60 to 70 road races a year, up to 3 races a week, and regularly earns himself spots in published race results.

What distinguishes this Northwest road runner from Mah, the marathoner, is that Mah's race times were slow, and secondary to the pursuit of racing frequency. Morgan's times, by contrast, are fast, even in back-to-back races, and he regularly wins or places well in most of them.

He says his best times have come during periods of consistent racing.

How consistent?

The summer after his college graduation in 1993, from Sound-to-Narrows to New Year's Day 1994, he ran 50+ races. His most notable finishes from then include the Sound-to-Narrows 12K (4th), Seafair Mazda 8K (6th place), Firecracker 5,000 (5th), Waterland Festival 5 Mile Run (1st) and the Alki Beach Fest Run (5th).

"No one knew who I was, because I'd been away in college," laughs Morgan, a 4th generation Seattle-area native. "It (road racing) kept me in good shape—no speedwork, just racing."

He competed for Club Northwest for several months before accepting a computer sales

job offer in Bellingham. There, he did regular speedwork with a group known as the Thin Clad Runners. Now working in Seattle as National Sales Manager of a computer accessories firm, Morgan says his races are his speedwork. Claiming to be "in the worst shape since high school," (in which he posted a 4:25 mile, went to State AAA meet in the 2 mile with a PR of 9:34 and won the South Puget Sound League Cross Country meet!), Morgan admits taking January and February off racing. "Now," he says, "I have a race planned every weekend!"

Prior to "slacking off" during his job transition, Morgan's holiday races included the Candy Cane Dash 5K (3rd in 15:45); the Jingle Bell Run 5K (6th Overall in 16:08) and the Christmas Rush 5K (1st in 16:01).

This spring, a sampling of his races include the Dolphin Dash, a 3 miler (1st in 14:26); the Edgewater 5K (3rd in 15:55), and the Inaugural Lakewood 7K, (1st in 24:12).

"My favorite distance is the 5-to-10K range," Morgan says. "But it's hard to do back-to-back 10Ks!"

How does he race back-

to-back?

"I take each one as a challenge—I do my best in each one," Morgan contends. "It's the competition that's fun. If there's no competition, then I'll see what kind of time I can do."

The thrill of competition began at age 15 when he entered his first road race. Morgan, who attended Thomas Jefferson High School in Kent, says he didn't know much about training then. "I thought if you ran 3 miles a week, that was fine!" he recalls. After joining the school's track and cross country teams in his junior year, he says he learned about training and tapering.

Still, the lure of road racing remained strong, even forbidding, as Morgan discovered

his freshman year at Columbia University in New York City. Road races were plentiful in Central Park, near the University, but off-limits in season to the school's track and cross country teams for which he ran. That year, he says, "I didn't qualify for the NCAA regional competition, so I ran a road race in Central Park the weekend everyone else went to the big meet, and I won it. The Head Athletic Director clipped an article about the race in the *New York Post*. It had my picture on it, with a title like "Columbia Student Wins 5 Mile Race." He goes to my coach and says, "This guy goes to Columbia—you should get him on the team!"

The coach wasn't happy. After that, Morgan says he tried to save his road races for off-season. Competing all 12 seasons at indoor and outdoor track and in cross country, his records from '90-'93 include a cross country PR of 13th place in the Heptagonal Championships, an indoor mile best of 4:14, an indoor 3,000 meter PR of 8:33, and a steeplechase best of 9:14 for 3,000 meters.

Despite ten years of competition, Morgan has never been injured.

"I don't do mega-mileage," he says. "I've never exceeded 80-90 miles a week, even in college. If something felt wrong, I'd never push it; I'd back off."

Did his coach mind?

"He didn't have a choice!" Morgan reflects. "I was always at practice, always performed, never injured... he let me be captain of the team my senior year."

Morgan's training consistency, as well as his resiliency, characterize his running. Although traveling is a job necessity, he tries to get a run in wherever he goes. And when he's not running or working, he's pursuing other activities such as pistol-shooting, kayaking, sailing and most recently, sky diving.

For now, his goal is to lower his Sound to Narrows record of 39:40. A year from now, Morgan contemplates the possibility of picking a goal race or two, and not racing so much. Until then, you can bet on seeing him at the race this weekend—maybe all of them. **NWR**



GLEN MORGAN

## Morgan's weekly training

*Morgan alternates hard and easy efforts 6-7 days a week, with an extra long run every other week. His estimated average mile pace is 6:15, rarely below 6:00 on tempo runs.*

Mon.: 8-9 miles

Tues.: 8-9 miles

Wed.: 8-9 miles

Thurs.: 8-9 miles

Fri.: 8-9 miles

Sat./Sun.: Race or long run, 15-17 miles at 7:00 pace