

Mike Fanelli - Track & Field



Mike Fanelli started running 47 years ago and hasn't looked back since. As a twelve year old trouble maker he knew he wasn't going to be a basketball or football player, but running was something useful. The fastest guy had the least chance of getting caught. This rationale coupled with the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City when Tommie Smith broke the world and Olympic records in the 200 meter inspired Fanelli to lace up his running shoes and hit the pavement.

Since then, 59 year old Fanelli (he will be 60 by the USA Masters Games) has raced everything from the 800 meter to the 100 mile. And he has no plans of slowing down. At the Masters Games in July, Fanelli will compete in the 800 meter, 1500 meter, mile, 3,000 meter, 5,000 meter and 10,000 meter. His ultimate goal is to rank in the top 25 in the United States for his age group in each of those events.

For a man who has accomplished so much in the sport (a still standing 10,000 meter record at San Francisco State University, winning the San Francisco Pacific Rim Marathon twice, running a 100 mile ultra marathon and being selected to join the US National Team at the Ultra Marathon World Championships, to only name a few) what motivates him to keep going?

For Fanelli, it's the process of continually setting and meeting new goals. To him, the beauty of running is that it is measurable, quantifiable. And after every race there is a new race to train for, a new goal; another chance to run his personal best. It's truly a lifelong sport.

Fanelli concedes aging is a natural process but that doesn't mean he has to give in to it. Goals at age 59 will look very different than goals at age 16 but that isn't what is important. What's important to him is that he keeps pushing himself to be healthy and fit. That means not only getting the miles in, but doing the ancillary work as well. For Fanelli that includes cryotherapy, ice baths, hot Epson salt baths, lifting weights, core work, a healthy diet and supplements. For a man who has run over 105,000 miles, or four times around the world, he must be doing something right.

After the Games in Greensboro, Fanelli has set his sights on the October World Masters in Perth, Australia. He may even run there as a warmup.