

Marathon Man Tom Zakrzewski (TCNJ/Trenton State College, 1989)

Have you ever just hung out with friends and begun talking about an activity you all should do that you have never done before? That happened with Tom Zakrzewski in November of 2006. “We were at a friend’s wedding in New York City and it was the same weekend as the New York City Marathon. And we started talking about how cool it would be to run the marathon. So a couple of us started training for it,” offers Tom.



However, Tom had faced previous challenges before starting to train for the New York City Marathon. “I was working near Ground Zero when the attacks happened on 9/11. I spent the next few days securing the job sites and field offices in lower Manhattan. I wound up with a very serious lung infection a few days later.” While the infection healed, Tom still was having trouble breathing. In November of 2001 he was diagnosed with asthma and prescribed medications to control his attacks. “Since I’ve been on the medications, I have not had many problems, since I’ve been running regularly I have not had a single attack,” Tom states. His doctor supported his training for the Marathon and is very proud of his achievements thus far, and even jokingly takes credit for his successes.

In November of 2006, Tom began his training for the Marathon by running 3 miles. “Back then I was lucky if I could complete three miles without falling over, but thanks to my wife Erika (a former college track star at Trenton State) and my research I was able to develop training plans and techniques that allowed me to improve over time,” Tom remarks. His training included 4 days per week running, ranging from 20 to 40 miles, and 1 day of cross-training which usually involved riding his mountain bike or playing tennis.

In January of 2007, Tom joined the New York Road Runners Club, a running club that would allow him to train with other runners and compete in road races that would

qualify him for the New York City Marathon. In 2007, Tom entered the Marathon Lottery system, but was unable to get a place in the Marathon. But due to his involvement in the Roadrunners, Tom qualified to run the 2008 Marathon where he finished in 4 hours and 26 minutes. Tom ran the Marathon again in 2010 with his friends from the 2006 wedding that originally started his marathon quest. He finished with a time of 4 hours and 19 minutes; a 7 minute improvement over his previous marathon time.

“I’m not sure what I will do next,” Tom states, “I will probably run some half marathons and other shorter road races. I’ve thought about attempting a triathlon.... My weakness is swimming and I think I might drown, but you never know.” Tom and his wife Erika live on Long Island in New York.

