



Richard Isaacs (r) with David Vecera

Richard Isaacs

I'M A FRONTRUNNER

Marathoner, Triathlete, Researcher and Actor, 43. Member Since 2004

Several years ago, a few friends and I decided to resurrect a Front Runners club in Louisville, Kentucky. The Louisville club went dormant for years, and we wanted to create an outlet for gay people who wanted another option to the bar scene. At most, 16 people came to our runs, but we were a very close club.

Front Runners has become a very important part of my life. In fact, that's how I met my partner David (Vecera). Dave lived in Dayton, Ohio while stationed at Patterson Air Force Base and used to run with the clubs in Columbus and Cincinnati. In 2003, the Cincy Front Runners had a going away party for a friend of mine and I met Dave there. It was an odd experience, because I brought my ex—we had broken up at that point—to the party! Dave and I started talking in the kitchen and we started dating soon after.

In 2004, we moved to DC. Dave retired from the Air Force and was offered a civilian job in DC. At that point in our relationship, it was time to either go with him or end it. I decided to move. I was already familiar with the DC Front Runners because I met Warren Snaider at the New York Gay Games in 1994. Warren and I were riding a shuttle to the track and field event in Harlem and he sat right behind me! I also met a few DC Front

Runners—Jeff D. and Tony Mick—when they ran with the Louisville club, so I felt right at home when I moved to DC.

I've participated in two Gay Games and the Outgames in Montreal. The opening ceremonies at those events made it special. My first Gay Games in New York City was really special. When you're young and gay, you feel so alone...and then you realize that there are lots of other gay people throughout the world when you go to these events.

I love to have fun while I run. The Outgames in Montreal was great. I ran with Chase (Maggiano) for the first 16 miles of the marathon...we were waving to the crowd and yelling back at those who came out to cheer on the runners. After 16 miles, I told Chase to "go on"—he's 22 and I'm 43—and I didn't want to hold him back. A bit later, Rob (Bartolo) caught up, and after a bit, I also told him to go on! Running is really a lot more fun when you share the experience.

I fell into acting. In 1998, a friend asked me to be a supernumerary for the Kentucky Opera. I've never been on stage before, so that was a real intense experience. Then in January 1999, one of the guys in the chorus said that his theater group was doing a stage production of



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"Jeffrey." He asked if I could perform on stage and talk. I didn't even have to audition for my first play!

Since then, I've done 21 shows in 8 years. Community theater has become a real hobby for me. I like playing the different characters and try to find something in the character that I can relate to. I did the first shows because I was asked to; after a while, I wondered if I could get a part if I auditioned. I managed to snag the lead after the fourth show. My next play is Noel Coward's *Hayfever* at Alexandria's Aldersgate Community Theater in March.

It's a challenge to juggle work, running and theater. Right now, I'm training for the San Diego Rock and Roll Marathon in June. There are a few Front Runners going to the race. At the same time, I have to rehearse six days a week for the play. Fortunately, I work out of home, so that helps.

I've been in three marathons and ten triathlons. My least favorite part of the triathlon is cycling and my favorite is running. The running community is more relaxed; you can chat with people when you run. When you train with triathletes, they are so focused and intense. And it's really hard to hold a conversation with somebody when they're biking or swimming! ▼

Interview by Marcel Acosta