



Blake Rushin with Anne Ross (L)

**Blake
Rushin**

I'M A FRONTRUNNER

DCFR Outreach Director. 5K Race Training Coach. Sports Psychologist. 45. Member Since 2000

While growing up in Auburn, Alabama, I started running in high school. Running was a great way to stay in shape for my other sports. I've never stopped running, but I've been a more consistent runner since my thirties.

During a Sallie Mae 10K race, I noticed that the DC Front Runners was a race sponsor. I saw all of the Front Runner t-shirts at the water stop and that really stuck with me. Afterwards, I was talking to some people at dinner about joining a running group, and my friend encouraged me to take a look at Front Runners.

I started running with the club in February 2000. I walked up to the corner of 23/P and thought, "this must be the right place." Of course, Warren (Snaider) walked up and said hi and introduced me to the other members. On my first day, I ran with Joan Nugent who was a very active member for a long time.

While I usually run alone, I really enjoy the chance to run with other people once or twice a week. I'm very appreciative of the people that I've met and the friends that I've made through Front Runners. It's a great mix of runners—some run competitively, others run to keep in shape, but all are supportive. Participating in the race

circuit keeps me motivated to run. And I really enjoy the social part of the club.

Six years ago, I met my partner Anne (Ross). A few months after we started going out, I brought her to a Saturday run. Two years ago, she finished her first race circuit! Anne's really become another Outreach Director for the club and she's always talking up the club to people that she meets.

Recently, I've completed my master's degree in Sports and Exercise Psychology from the University of Virginia and became a certified coach with the Road Runners of America. Beginners are the group that I really want to teach. I get a real thrill out of meeting people who don't think that they can run a half-mile—let alone three—and then find out that they are capable of finishing a 5K race after three months of training. That's the reason why I decided to get the degree and to start the club's 5K training program. I want to motivate people to become more physically active.

Each person in our program has their own reasons for joining and I want to focus on an individualized plan to help them complete a 5K race. The act of doing, participating and starting is such a



FIRST > RACE DCFR 5K Race Training Program

big deal. It really takes guts to start running. We'll start slowly using walk/run to build endurance. Walk/run is also more doable for the beginner and will help them reach their goal of completing a race. Your finish time doesn't matter; we always have to remind ourselves that the fast ones did not get to where they are overnight. And I hope that they'll get hooked on running after they complete the program and make it a part of their everyday lifestyle.

I'd like to encourage our club members to support the new runners. Introduce yourselves at the Saturday run, come out and cheer for the group at the 9/11 Memorial 5K race and become a pace leader for a few group training runs during the program! It'll make a real big difference to our new Front Runners and keep them motivated to run with us after the program! ▼

The DC Front Runners ten-week 5K training program begins on July 7. If you are interested in joining the program or volunteering to serve as a group leader for a few of the training runs, please contact Blake Rushin at train@dcfronrunners.org. Go to www.dcfonrunners.org to download a program brochure.

Interview by Marcel Acosta