



I'm the one at the front.

10 QUESTIONS (6/05/09)

1) NAME & NICKNAME(S):

Jonathan Matthews

2) AGE (OR AGE GROUP):

Almost 53

3) FAMILY / PETS / LOVED ONES:

I can't help crowing: Super wife/mom/human-being Stephanie (hitched 21 years) multiple times  
Big Sky State Games Women's racewalking champion. Sons Kyle, 14 (5:21 mile PR) and  
Connor, 11 (5:55 mile PR – though he is a better sprinter – 28.23 200 meters, last year).

4) SCHOOLING:

Stanford University, PhD 1994

UCLA BA 1980

North Hollywood High School (Huskies) 1974

5) OCCUPATION(S):

Carroll College

Director of Student Teaching

Educator Licensure Officer

Associate Professor of Education

6) HAS BEEN ADMIRING THE VIG GROUP SINCE 1998, AND CAN'T RUN WITH YOU DUE TO OLD & DEEP RUNNING INJURIES:

I've been a racewalker since 1988. If I could be, I would be a runner. Racewalking is a good second choice. It is essentially technically constrained, grounded running.

7) NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS (RUNNING OR OTHERWISE):

I had running injuries nearly from day one, in high school. I somehow managed a 1:57 880 yards, thanks to brief bouts of training between periods of extended limping. Injuries forced me to become a cyclist (I was on the national team in the mid 1980s) and then a bad crash removed me from this sport. In my mid 30s I took up racewalking and between then and age 43 I managed to get 4 Open American Records, 22 Masters American Records, and many fun trips representing the USA in international competitions. Last year I won both racewalks at the USA Track & Field Masters Track Championships, with a meet record in the 10K in my age group and the fastest time in the 5K and 10K of any age group. Some walking PRs: mile (5:56), 5K (20:01) 10K (41:15), 20k (1:24:50), 50k (4:01:36). I am nowhere near these times today.

8) GOALS (RUNNING OR OTHERWISE):

I want to keep training and occasionally racing. I love to feel that I may be getting fitter. I'd like to score higher than 91% on the age graded tables, the best that I did last year. I'd like to see how close I can get to 98%, the rating I achieved at the end of my elite open career, at age 43.

9) PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE / PERSONAL MOTTO:

To do as well as I can, at whatever I do -- from sitting in still meditation, to doing repeat miles at the track, to loving my family, to agitating for social change.

10) OTHER INTERESTING TIDBITS:

I am pretty sure I would absolutely love being a high school cross country coach. And I think I would be good at it.

Following Sarah Wear's lead, and at her request, here is a poem.

I wrote it about my youngest son, a couple of months ago:

“Like Mike”

In the midday heat,  
twelve-year-old Connor dribbled  
like Pistol Pete  
in the family driveway:  
left hand and right,  
behind the back and between the legs,  
being the focus, the ball, the imagination.

“You've got game, young man,” he heard,  
startled from his concentration.

At the foot of the drive  
was Michael Jordan  
stopped wrong way to traffic,  
convertible top down,

bare arm out,  
his famous smile.

Connor gaped, strangely still.  
Michael unfolded from the car,  
taller than the boy had imagined.

“Gimme the ball,” he said.  
Connor snapped his best pass,  
Michael caught it on the run,  
was above the rim in two,  
and slammed it through.

“Those drills looked pretty good,” he said,  
“but let’s see what you’ve got when you’re manned up.”

He tossed Connor the ball,  
Six-six versus five-six.  
They played one-on-one in suspended time,  
Michael laughing, trash talking,  
Connor not saying much, smiling some,  
striving with everything to impress.

After five minutes? an hour? Michael said,  
“That’s it. I’m beat,”  
took a long swallow of Connor’s water,  
said he liked summer driving,  
was between Yellowstone and Glacier.

“Keep practicing, young man,”  
Michael said as he left,  
“Division One. It’s possible.  
I wouldn’t be surprised.”

Connor nodded and smiled,  
dribbled once between his legs,  
then --ball trapped at his hip--  
watched the car vanish,  
a final pulse of red  
a half mile away,  
the faint throaty roar  
as it turned to the highway.

Midday standing in the summer heat,  
Connor turned a slow circle in his driveway.  
No one, anywhere.  
Body and pavement, incandescent.

He spun the ball in his hands,

took a deep breath,  
and returned to dribbling:  
left hand,  
right hand,  
behind the back,  
between the legs,  
being the focus,  
the ball,  
the imagination.

--Jonathan Matthews  
March 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009