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Interview with Steve & Sara Slattery

by RunColo

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Steve and Sara Slattery were All American runners at the University of Colorado. They recently have moved back to Boulder, Colorado and took some time to answer a few questions from RunColo.

Thank you for participating in the RunColo Interview Series and it's good to have you both back in Colorado. Ok, so you moved from Boulder to Mammoth to Phoenix and now back to Boulder, is that correct? So what brings you back to Boulder?

Steve: Yeah we were in Mammoth Lakes then in February 2009 we decided to leave because things just weren't going well. We went to Arizona and trained in Phoenix at an undisclosed location at altitude last spring. We were not sure if we wanted to stay in Arizona and be closer to Sara's family or move back to Boulder. Boulder just seemed like the best place for us to train.

Either of you working with a coach right now and what are some of your favorite running spots in the area? Do you train alone or do you have people that you will run with?

Steve: We are part of Steve Jones' group Boulder Harriers. We train with the other members of the group and also meet with friends in Boulder on easy days. My favorite place to run is probably the Mesa trail I could run up there all day. But once track season comes around I like to run flat places like the Bobolink trail and the track.

Sara: As Steve said, Steve Jones is coaching Steve and I and we are a part of the Boulder Harriers group. The group consists of Jorge Torres, Jason Hartman, Lee Troop, Josh Glaab, Kathy Butler (who is currently pregnant) and Fiona Docherty. Fiona and I do all our workouts together and I meet a lot of other friends for easy runs and long runs. But, I also enjoy running by myself, especially on the trails in Boulder. It can be very peaceful and refreshing sometimes. My favorite place to run in Boulder is Doudy Draw. It is such a beautiful trail the run just flies by every time I go there.

What's it like financially as a professional runner? Have you had to seek out additional income streams or are the sponsorships enough?

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Steve/Sara: The financial side of running is tough, if you are not running well it is a struggle, but if you are running fast the money comes. If you are winning races and setting records you don't have to worry about it, but if you are injured or not performing well you don't get much support.

Can you discuss your diet? Do you eat healthy all the time, or will you crack a beer and eat some pizza on occasion? Is there a certain training weight that you like to maintain and then a racing weight? Also, can you give us a few of your favorite local eateries?

Steve: I am basically a fat man stuck in a skinny man's body; if I did not run I would be in trouble. At CU I was famous for eating 80 ounces of steak at the Trail Dust Steakhouse. I like to have a few beers with friends in the fall and watch football, but when I get serious, usually after new years I hardly ever have a drink until the season is over in September. My favorite place to eat in Boulder is the Darkhorse I go there every Tuesday for a burger and wings with a bunch of friends. I have done this since I was a freshman in college and I still can't get enough. I like regular American food, BBQ, wings, and burgers. I like pizza, but Colorado does not have good pizza, Cosmos is the only thing close. We eat a well balanced diet most of the time; we eat healthy for breakfast and lunch and cook dinner at home at least five days a week.

Sara: I try to eat healthy 80-90% of the time. I really enjoy cooking and trying new recipes. Steve and I are big carnivores and try to eat lean sources of meat. We eat at home most nights of the week and I usually make a lot of chicken, fish and lean red meat. However, I have a big sweet tooth and love ice cream, chocolate, and have a terrible weakness for Reece's peanut butter cups (you can probably always find a bag in my pantry). As far as my weight goes, I am usually a few pounds heavier during the base season and think it really helps me handle the longer training. When the track season progresses and I start doing more speed work I usually get leaner without really trying. There are a lot of great restaurants in Boulder. Since college, we have been meeting our friends Tuesday nights at the Dark Horse for great burgers and a fun atmosphere. Some of my other favorites are The Lazy Dog for BBQ, Illegal Pete's for great burritos, Rincon Del Sol for authentic Mexican food, The Sink for Colorado style pizza and Glacier Ice Cream for the best homemade ice cream I have ever had.

Jenny Barringer just left Mark Wetmore. LetsRun said that she joined a long list of Colorado runners who found success under him as a collegiate, but left him when they became professional. What are your thoughts on the coaching changes and on Wetmore's coaching?

Steve: I am not sure why Jenny left, but I think Coach Wetmore Sir is an amazing coach and I would not be the runner I am today if he did not bring me to the University of Colorado. I think he is one of the best coaches out there and any high school kid serious about running has to look at CU.

Sara: Like Steve I do not know why Jenny and Mark parted ways. I know that Mark cares a lot about the athletes that he has coached and who he coaches. I feel I owe a lot of my development and success to Coach Wetmore. He has an incredible ability to bring out the best in his athletes.

The LetsRun Message Board can be a harsh place; do elite runners as yourself ever check it out to see what others are saying about your running?

Steve: Letsrun.com helps the sport by getting people interested in running, and is a good place to check for results. But I don't post on message boards and don't know of any guys that I run against who do.

Sara: Letsrun.com is a great resource for running. I am just not into message boards, I look for results and read interviews, but that is about it.

You both have a degree in Economics; please give me your favorite economist? Also, was that just a coincidence that you two had the same degree?

Steve: My favorite economist is Milton Friedman, I am a big fan of free markets and it is mind blowing to think of where our country might be today if we used his ideas on the Federal Reserve and nominal interest rates. But that is what is tough about econ we can make predictions and draw charts, but we don't really know what would happen unless we try it. I am not sure why we are both econ majors, I think Sara wanted to stalk me.

Sara: I can't really say I have a favorite economist. However, one of my favorite books is Freakonomics written by Steve Levitts and Steve Dubner. These authors did a great job applying economics and statistics to everyday events and make it really interesting. Well, I guess the secrets out....I was stalking Steve and it worked!! He married me. No...seriously, I had a lot of college credits coming in as a freshman from my high school. I wanted to be a business major, but I would have lost most of them if I went to the business school. I decided to major in Economics since it was part of the Arts and Science School and I would not lose any of my

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credits. I ended up getting a minor in Business. This allowed me to graduate early and get my Masters in 5 years while still on scholarship. So, I guess I already had an economic mind, before I decided to major in Economics.

What are your thoughts on running the marathon one day?

Steve: Well, my coach started as a steepler and ended up a pretty good marathoner. I am a little faster than him in the steeple, so I might end up pretty good if I transition to the marathon as well as he did.

Sara: I have had a long term plan to run the marathon. But, before I run the marathon I want to run faster in my shorter events on the track. I feel I have a lot of improvement left on the track from the 1500 to the 10K, and I know that this development will help me when I do run a marathon. I may have been closer to running a marathon if everything went to plan the last few years, but I had a few bumps in the road and feel I need to take the right steps in my progression before I run a one.

What will you do professionally after your running careers end?

Steve: That is tough, I am very interested in Economics and with all the travel I have done from running, I could see myself doing something in international finance. Hopefully I can find the right opportunity to use my unique experiences. I can also see myself owning my own business someday, I like being the boss.

Sara: I definitely want to be involved in the business side of athletics. In college, I interned at Nike for their running sports marketing department. I got a lot of experience and a good taste of what the business side of our sport is like. Right now I am working a few hours a week for the Athlete Alumni Club (The C-Club) at the University of Colorado. The C-Club supports former athlete alumni from CU and puts on events including reunions, social and charity events and pre-game tailgate parties. I am only working 10-12hrs a week which is great with my training and I am really enjoying the experience I am gaining. I think it will help me in the future if I want to be involved in the business side of running, when I am done competing.

Steve, being from New Jersey, have you had a chance to catch MTV's Jersey Shore?

Steve: Since I am from Jersey and half Italian I think the show is great. My only problem is that they are not really from Jersey. Jersey people would be crazier and more entertaining than those New Yorkers were. We should do another season I can get Lindsey Gallo and Marty Liquori and a few other real Jersey Italians and give you a better show. Plus have you seen me with my shirt off, I have great abs, and I am usually tan from running outside so I don't need to fake bake.

Sara: If you have ever been to Seaside Heights in New Jersey you wouldn't find that show very shocking. That is a typical weekend there.

Sara, any chance you will be running BolderBoulder this year?

Sara: The Bolder Boulder is a special race to me, but it is tough because there are a lot of important races during that time. I am going to have to talk with my coach and agent to discuss if it is a race that will fit into my schedule this year.

What does 2010 hold for each of you?

Steve: 2010 is going to be a good year I have been hiding out training for months, building myself back up from the crap I was last year. Training is going well and I still have a long way to go. When I come back to racing on the track this spring I think you will see me run as good as or better than I ever have.

Sara: I feel 2010 is going to be a great year. I am having a lot of fun training and I am getting antsy to compete.

1 Comment



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Great interview, really appreciate the unique questions and candid responses. Both Steve and Sara seem like great people and I hope they have great years. They also hit on some good restaurants, but they need to get down to the Rocky Flats Lounge and check out the Friday night fish fry too.

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