



Dathan Ritzenhein rocks Philadelphia with impressive tuneup for Chicago Marathon

Published: Monday, September 17, 2012, 7:10 PM Updated: Monday, September 17, 2012, 7:25 PM



Peter J. Wallner | pwallner@mlive.com

By

GRAND RAPIDS, MI – Dathan Ritzenhein appears ready for an impressive showing at next month's Chicago Marathon.

The 2001 Rockford graduate, in his first race since the Olympics, made his tuneup for the Oct. 7 race an impressive one Sunday with a third-place finish overall at the Rock 'n' Roll Philadelphia Half Marathon.



AP file photo

Ritzenhein finished in 1 hour, 56 seconds in the 13.1-mile race. He finished behind two Kenyans in Stanley Biwott (1:00.01) and Paul Lonyangata (1:00.42).

Ritzenhein later tweeted: "Very pleased with the 60:56 today at #RNR Philly half marathon,. Sets me up great for Chicago Marathon, only three weeks away!"

It was the fastest half-marathon time by an American this year.

"They (the two Kenyans) broke away about 5K and I stayed in third place the rest of the way," **Ritzenhein said in an interview afterward.** "I wanted to run a good, solid race, about a 4:35 or 4:40 pace. And that's what I did.

"Training for the marathon makes it so hard to respond to those fast miles, and I couldn't. The first mile was slow. Then they took off. I ran 4:25 for the second mile, they ran 4:21. They were running fast miles and I couldn't keep up."

Ritzenhein, 29, has returned to marathons after running a personal best of 2:09:55 in the U.S. Olympic Trials in January. He finished fourth, one spot out of an Olympic berth, but he later qualified in the 10,000 where he finished 13th.



[Training Plans](#)
[Personal Trainer](#)
[Log](#)
[RW Challenge](#)
[Forums](#)
[Tools](#)
[Video](#)
[News](#)
[Help](#)

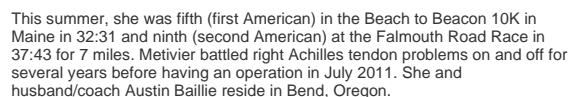
September 17, 2012 1:15 pm

RSS | LIKE | TWEET

By Peter Gambaccini

Photo by Michael Bauer

Renee Metivier Baillie, 30, who won the USA 20K in New Haven on Labor Day in 1:07:08, will run the Bank of America Chicago Marathon on October 7. Metivier Baillie was the 2010 USA indoor 3000-meter champion. She has qualified for the IAAF World Cross Country Championships five times. At the University of Colorado, she was the 2005 NCAA indoor 3000-meter champ and the 2004 NCAA cross country runner-up; she'd also been the runner-up in 2001 while attending Georgia Tech.



In an interview in Bend, you said, "I expect to become indestructible very soon." Are you starting to feel indestructible?
Renee Metivier Baillie: I'm getting there. I wouldn't say I'm indestructible yet. I haven't had any injuries other than my Achilles. It's not injured anymore. It gets tired when I run fast, but not in the [long] distance.

I decided to do the marathon in the two weeks before the 20K, which is when I decided to do the 20K as well. It was a pretty short decision, but since then I've moved up 25 miles per week and I feel nothing wrong. There's no hurt, nothing. I'm feeling on my way to being indestructible now.

Marathoners in long training cycles often claim that they're tired every day. Are you experiencing that?

RMB: I feel fantastic. I am tired, but I'm strong. My [training] cycle is a lot shorter; maybe that's why. I'm only going to have eight weeks of marathon training, and that includes running a 20K in the middle of that. This week is my biggest building up. My energy levels are great. My legs are tired; I'm actually not. And I would attribute that to my years of running under coach Wetmore [Mark Wetmore of Colorado]. Even though I'm a newbie at this type of training and my workouts are so much longer. I did pretty high mileage under coach Wetmore. I did 18-mile long runs.

How many miles will you hit this week?

RMB: I'll have 105 in six days. It was going to be 100 but I'm ahead of schedule. I was going to run a 10-mile easy run this morning but I was like, "I feel good, so run longer." It's surprising. I'm going in the pool on Monday now [her day off from running] for an hour and a half, so it's not like I'm doing nothing that day.

Why did you decide not to run seven days a week?

RMB: I'd say my body made that decision. Everyone that knows me from the past would never ever think I would be capable of taking a day off. Most distance runners don't let themselves take days off, especially on a regular basis. You think you're going to lose something. But I gain so much. But I go the pool, I do Pilates, I do stretching. If I just give my foot one day without the pounding, I have zero problems.

Part of the reason I was taking so long to recover from the [Achilles] surgery and kept having so many setbacks, especially leading up to the Olympics Trials, is because I kept forcing it. I was loading it with as much as I possibly could. The foot is my weakness. I haven't had any other injuries in seven years. I finally had surgery and it needs a little rest. I'm so much stronger, but if I overload it, it stops working. But I'm finding if I can just get there [to the starting line] healthy, I'm going to be good.

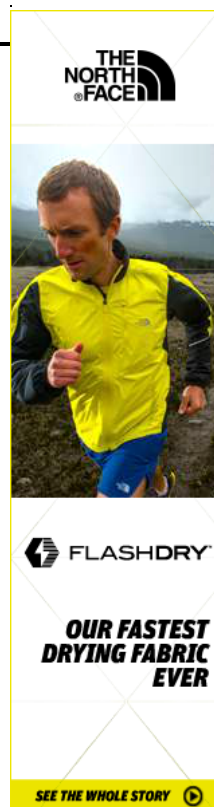
Up until your marathon decision, what were your plans, and what made you move to the marathon?

RMB: I'd already decided to take a step back from the track. My foot, albeit going great, doesn't handle the track as well. It gets really tired, it's the inside of my "outside" leg and it's always turning left. I said, "Let's just take a break, we'll get back to the track next year. Let's focus on the roads, where you're wearing bigger shoes, the paces aren't quite as fast, and you're not always turning left." I did Beach to Beacon and Falmouth and I'd only been training for four weeks at that time. My foot was not sore at all after those races, and they were two weekends in a row.

I got home and decided to do the USA 5K and the 10-mile championships and train for those, but my body was doing so well, it kept wanting to go longer. And I was talking to my agent and was already thinking about debuting in the marathon this spring, and we started jokingly talking about, "What about this fall?" The seed was planted in our brains. A week later, I was like, "I think I'm ready for it." Mentally and physically, it seemed like the next step I should take.

Do you have a target time in mind for Chicago?

RM: I don't and I don't. It is my first one and I have a healthy fear of it. I haven't been known for my race savvy. I've had some brilliant races and then in most of them, I wouldn't say I'm tactically the best athlete. I'm working on that. I am going to try and be a little more conservative. I practiced that in the 20K. I went into that untapered and just said, "Alright, let's sit and try and be as relaxed as possible," because in the marathon, that's what I'm going to have to do. I



started to get antsy at mile 5 and take the lead and I actually had to yell at myself during the race, "Get back behind them. You're not allowed to lead!"

With the marathon, I'm pretty sure I'm going to be fine through 20, so I have a healthy fear of the last 10K. I'm going to try and [negative split it] but my goal is pretty aggressive. I hope to be, at the end, under 2:28. What we've decided to go out for the first half [Pauses] Actually, I don't want to disclose it. You'll see!

You ran well at USA Cross Country this year, but your Trials performance was disappointing [she ran 16:01 in the first round of the 5000].

RMB: I was trying not to limp at the Trials. I overdid it the week before. I had this one workout the week before that I thought was going to be a pinnacle. My foot started to get tired and I didn't listen to it. I was running one of the best workouts of my life, and I should have stopped.

It's hard for a runner to get it into her head that this workout doesn't matter. You measure yourself sometimes based on your workouts, but I'm beginning to realize -- and you think I would have realized it a long time ago -- that it doesn't really matter what you do in practice. No one sees that. No one cares. It's important, yes, but it's what you do when you get to that race [that counts]. I've been leaving it too much at practice. I didn't show [at the Trials] how hard I'd been working because I was in pain. My foot shut down. I had no power out of my right leg. I was very upset afterwards. You want to be able to do everything you can, and if you don't make it, at least you gave it your best shot. I didn't feel like I was able to, and it was hard. But I learned a valuable lesson from that. I'm 30 now, but the lessons still come!

You had some great performances in college and a national indoor track victory, and made all those world cross country teams. But you've dealt with injury setbacks so often. Despite all of that, you never those faith and you're willing to pay almost any price to stay in the sport, right?

RMB: I wouldn't be here if I didn't. I've been dealing with the Achilles for seven years. I've had great races, but it ebbed and flowed through the years. Usually it was better at the beginning of the year after the year-end break, and so I would do well in cross country and indoors, and throughout the year, it would get worse and worse. But I have a great support group that believes in me, and I believe in myself. I don't think I've shown what I'm capable of yet. And that's why I've not given up.

I don't have that much longer. This is my shot. This was my last option, having surgery. I went to Sweden to the best in the world. I was like, "If this doesn't work, I'm probably done." Or I'll move to some other part of life. I have a degree in mathematics. I could be making more money doing something else, but this is what I love. And I'm happier doing this. Even struggling through the years of injuries, I'm still happy. Because I love it. And I don't want to give up. I believe I have places to go.

OldPlodder says:

September 17, 2012 at 8:04 pm



Right on, Renee!

sportspychcoach says:

September 18, 2012 at 6:03 pm



Its clear your recovery from the ankle surgery has given you a new appreciation for training smart - rather than being the toughest dudette out there. Every world class runner will have to reconcile training and recovery. Glad you've figured it out:-)

[The COLOR Run 5k](#)

Join us for the happiest 5k on the planet!
Find a city near you...

www.TheColorRun.com

[NFL Football Apparel](#)

Shop for NFL Football Apparel. Official NFL Football Apparel.

www.FootballFanatics.com

[Colorado Cooking Classes](#)

Affordable. Modern. Sustainable. Escoffier School of Culinary Arts.

www.escoffier.edu

AdChoices

One Question Site Survey

IT TAKES ONLY SECONDS TO ANSWER BELOW

How likely are you to purchase Zeasorb, an antifungal foot treatment, in the next 3 months?

SELECT ONE ANSWER.

☐ Definitely will

☐ Probably will

☐ May or may not

☐ Probably will not

☐ Definitely will not

VOTE AND SEE RESULTS

POWERED BY [VIEW PRIVACY POLICY](#)

[Customer Service](#) |
 [RSS Feeds](#) |
 [International](#) |
 [About Runner's World](#) |
 [Advertising](#) |
 [Privacy Rights/Community Guidelines](#) |
 [Manage Email Preferences](#)
[Rodale](#) |
 [Running Times](#) |
 [Bicycling](#) |
 [Men's Health](#) |
 [Women's Health](#) |
 [Prevention](#) |
 [Organic Gardening](#) |
 [Fitbie.com](#) |
 [Sitemap](#)

© 2012 Rodale Inc.