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by Airman 1st Class Marissa Tucker  
4th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

9/8/2009 - SEYMOUR JOHNSON AIR FORC BASE, N.C. -- Out on the running track, younger Airmen are typically expected to run laps around the older, more seasoned Airmen.

That standard is non-existent in the 4th Fighter Wing.

Master Sgt. David Fisher, 4th Component Maintenance Squadron maintenance production analyst, is not the average "PT Stud." At a proud 52 years old, he was selected from hundreds of applicants to compete in the 2009 Air Force Marathon at Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, as part of the Air Combat Command running team.

"I take a lot of pride in staying fit," he said. "It's a great feeling to be able to keep up with, and sometimes pass people nearly half my age."

Sergeant Fisher received notification that he made the team after submitting an application, which included officially documented times from a half marathon he recently completed. He will join 13 other Airmen from across ACC to compete with servicemembers and civilians from around the world.

Sergeant Fisher took his first "fun" run in the desert while deployed in support of Operation Desert Storm in 1991. While in search of something to do after work, the former self proclaimed "non-athlete" decided to join a group of runners.

"After work, we had a lot of downtime," said the married runner and father of five. "I always saw a group of people running around the base and one day, I decided to join them. I had never been very athletic, but running helped relieve stress and seemed to make the time go by a bit quicker."

He carried his new habit with him beyond the deployment, introducing it into his everyday life. Now, almost 20 years later, Sergeant Fisher has gone from casual jogs to training for marathons. The Indiana native first entered into marathons after a dare from a friend. Having never done a marathon before, he wasn't sure if he would complete it or not.

"The first marathon was the Suwon half marathon in Korea, and I wasn't sure how I would do," he said. "When I finished, I didn't feel so bad and it encouraged me to push myself to see how far I could go. The Air Force Marathon will be my first full marathon and I'm training pretty hard for that. I'm excited to see how that will go."

Training hard is an understatement.

Sergeant Fisher joined a local running group which began to train for the Air Force marathon earlier this year. Every Saturday morning, the group trains with a distance run for the week. The group, all avid runners, gradually increases and decreases the number of miles they run to build stamina and increase their run times. Recently, they reached an all-time high of 23 miles.

"If you would have told me 20 years ago I'd be running 23 miles at one time, I would have laughed," he said.

The physical aspect of the running club is not the only benefit. Sergeant Fisher said the camaraderie between the members is a great motivator, because they have the same goals and encourage each other. The group also provides a support system for the members.

"It makes running a lot easier when you have someone to hold you accountable," he said. "When you're by yourself, there's really not too much pressure, but with a buddy, you don't want to let each other down."

Other members of the group note the positive changes they have seen in their performance since joining. Technical Sgt. Carrie Baker, 911th Air Refueling Wing commander support staff non-commissioned officer in charge, said she looks forward to her times with Sergeant Fisher and the group, because they drive her to keep improving by providing kind words, encouragement and lending an ear when needed.

"I love to run, so that's a plus," she said. "The social aspect is one of the things that keeps me motivated to come back. It's really nice to have people to go out with after work or to just talk to, because they all understand the effort and determination it takes to do marathons. Having people to sit around and nurse your wounds with after all that running is fun too."

The entire team will participate in the Air Force Marathon at Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, and even though Sergeant Fisher will join the ACC team, there are no harsh feelings.

"I'm looking forward to completing my first full marathon, but even more, I want to see all my Seymour running buddies at the finish line."

Editors note: This is part one of a two part series about Seymour Johnson Airmen participating in the Air Force Marathon.

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### Photos



Master Sgt. David Fisher, (center) 4th Component Maintenance Squadron maintenance production analyst, demonstrates proper stretching techniques before the Timberwolf 5K challenge at the base fitness center on Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C., August 24, 2009. Sergeant Fisher will run in the Air Force Marathon as a member of the Air Combat Command team. The marathon takes place September 19, 2009 at Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. The base running group Sergeant Fisher is a member of will also participate in the marathon. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Rae Perry)

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