

## Andrew Letherby – Competitive Edge Interview Number 13

### Competitive Edge Biographical Information

**Your full name?**

Andrew Letherby

**Date of Birth?**

19/09/1973

**Place of Birth?**

Adelaide

**Sponsors?**

Asics

**Currently Living?**

Boulder, Colorado, USA

**Marital Status (name of your partner if you have one)?**

Married to Meg Letherby since 2001.

**Occupation (if you are unlucky enough to have one)?**

Athlete

**Height?**

165cm

**Weight?**

54kg

**Shoe Size?**

10

**Hair colour?**

Brown

**Favourite shoe colour?**

Anything not fluoro.

**Most loved pair of runners you have ever had (brand and style)?**

Asics DS Trainer, a versatile shoe you can use for anything.

### **Favourite Race?**

Definitely the big city marathons like Boston, New York and Chicago because of their history, hype and crowd support.

### **Your top 3 running experiences/performances?**

1. Winning a bronze medal in the 2002 Commonwealth Games marathon.
2. Finishing 8th in the 2004 Boston Marathon on a hot day.
3. Running in the 2004 World Cross Country Championships-it was great to be a member of such a successful team with Benita Johnson winning the women's race, the men's long course team finishing 5th and many other great performances. It was also an honor to be on what was probably Steve Moneghetti's last Australian team.

### **Personal Bests for your favourite distances?**

5km 13.43

10km 28.25

Half-marathon 62.34

Marathon 2.12.45



*Andrew Letherby at the World Cross Country Champs 2004, leading his Australian team mates, Brett Cartwright and Steve Moneghetti.*

### Competitive Edge Interview

**CE - Andrew, a lot of runners here in Australia probably don't know your name that well due to you basing yourself in the United States. Can you tell us about how long you've been there and why you went?**

AL - I originally travelled to the USA in 1994 on an athletic scholarship at Georgia State University. After graduating and meeting my wife Meg who is American we decided Boulder fits our lifestyle and would be a great place to live. Meg has a job here she enjoys and I have been happy with my running since moving to Boulder in 2001.

**CE - You are now based in Boulder, Colorado, a very popular running location. What is it like to train in such a beautiful place? What about racing in the US, are there more races than you can poke a stick at?**

AL -Boulder is a great place to train because of the scenery, altitude, trails and supportive running community. Past greats like Deek have spent time here, and at any time of the year world-class athletes will be in town training. You definitely feel you are part of something and there are always people to run with. Being based in the USA does mean you can run a race every weekend if you desire. There are some great road races and track meets. On the negative side it means I cannot always travel back to run the great Australian races and compete in the Telstra Series and National Championships which are ultimately more important than road racing.

**CE - And there appear to be a lot of African guys at many of the road races. Does this mean you stand out -do you get good American support? Have you been embraced by the Americans as 'one of their own'?**

AL - At some of the bigger road races you can receive "Go USA" chants or other less politically correct support. If the crowd knows you are Australian you also are usually well supported particularly if you are competing well against the Africans.

**CE - Do you see yourself and your wife returning to Australia in the near future? If you were to return where do you think you would base yourself?**

AL - I miss Australia a lot and my wife and I are considering moving back at some stage. Although I have enjoyed training in Melbourne and Brisbane I have always felt that a smaller town like Canberra with a good running community would suit us better. I have spent some time in Canberra and have enjoyed the running.

**CE - Just recently you have moved under the guidance of Nic Bideau. How and why did this come about? And were you still being coached by Chris Wardlaw in some capacity previous to this?**

AL - Chris Wardlaw coached me from 2000 to 2004 and I improved a lot under his guidance. Training with the pack in Melbourne in 2000 definitely put my running on the right track and I continued to use this formula successfully in Boulder from 2001-2004. Having Troopy here in the summer of 2002 and 03 on the same system also helped raise the level of my running. I feel I would have continued to improve under Rab's (editor's note: Rab's is Chris Wardlaw's nickname) guidance but was ready to try something different. Nic has always been supportive of my running and I noticed the success and professionalism of his athletes like Benita, Hayley and Craig at the 2004 World Cross Country Championships. After learning a bit about their training methods I decided to approach Nic after the 2004 Boston Marathon.

**CE - What has been the biggest difference in your training and racing plans since coming under Bideau's wing?**

AL - Nic's training is very specific to the event you are training for. Some of the track sessions are longer and more demanding and took me a little time to get used to. He also incorporates heart rate monitors into our tempo's and fartlek's. I feel this has helped me run sessions at the correct intensity to achieve the training effect for that particular session and not simply run myself into the ground. It is a great system and I noticed immediate results.

In terms of racing plans, I feel Nic has the ability to plan a schedule that not only helps you achieve your long term goal but also gives you confidence along the way that you are improving as an athlete. For example the opportunity to train and travel along side fantastic athletes like Benita Johnson and Craig Mottram in January was very motivating. You are training with two of the world's best athletes and this gives you the confidence you are doing the right thing and can compete with the best as well.

**CE - Do you train with anyone generally or are you a solo runner. And what does a weekly schedule look like for Andrew Letherby?**

AL - Most of my training is done alone although I do meet up with people for some of the easier runs and occasionally for hard sessions. When Kim Gillard is here we sometimes run together and I also do some training with the New Zealander Mike Aish.

A typical week consists of:

- Monday - 2 easy runs
- Tuesday - Track session
- Wednesday - 90 mins
- Thursday - Heart rate controlled tempo or fartlek
- Friday - 2 easy runs
- Saturday - Hill session
- Sunday - Long run, 2hrs plus

**CE - We've noted that you have been competing, and very successfully, in a number of international cross-country events during the last few months. However, you are not participating in the World Cross Country Championships. Why is this?**

AL - I would love to run in the World Cross Country Championships however the Boston Marathon is my main focus so Nic and I decided travelling overseas that close to Boston was a little bit of a risk.

**CE - So can we assume your major goal is the World Championship Marathon this year? What are your mid to long term ambitions? Commonwealth Games Marathon -a higher position on the podium than your third place in Manchester!!?**

AL - The World Championships Marathon is not in my plans at this stage. The longer-term goal is Commonwealth Games in Melbourne and making the team for this will be the focus before worrying about anything else. It will be a competitive team to make, as athletes like Scott Westcott are running very well plus the Coolrunning Brigade of Marty Dent, Cartwright and Greeny etc. Add in our seasoned marathoners like Troopy, Sisay and Nick Harrison and we have great depth.

**CE - And do you have any track aspirations left, or is the marathon now the all-consuming event for you?**

AL - The marathon is the main focus but I will be looking at improving my track times this summer and over the next few years.

**CE - Do you moonlight as Damian Oliver the jockey?**

AL - No but I have been mistaken for him once. I guess the day he is mistaken for me means I have finally made it.

**CE - And finally Andrew, Is it true you are the fastest hobbit in Middle Earth?**

AL - I am not sure about that but I do know there may be some Ethiopians and Kenyans who also qualify for that title.

**Thanks so much from The Competitive Edge and best of luck for the remainder of your Boston preparation.**

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