

This month's Member of the Month is Bob Sims!

Bob has accomplished so very much since joining Resolute Running. He has set PRs in every single distance, he has made massive gains in strength from our TRX classes, and he has ventured onto the trails for a new challenge. But most importantly, he has become a good friend and an incredibly valued member of our team. Bob says he is "grateful, gratified and satisfied", and we could not be happier for him!

1. How long have you been a runner? When did you feel you had become a "runner"?

I started running in 2011, when I did a couch to 5K using an iPhone app. I was inspired by the Homewood Middle School cross-country team, and especially Coach Eric Swope. He had gotten my son onto the team, and I was amazed by what it meant for my son (now 19), and the passion and message Coach Swope and the other coaches had toward the sport and toward the student athletes. Their messages were pretty simple: work, try hard, and although you may never win a race, getting a little better every day is enough. I had not run nor exercised in any way at all since leaving the military in 1991, where, being paid and needing to stay qualified, I ran a remarkable 2 miles once each year. Once I finished the couch to 5K, I signed up and ran my first race, which was the March 2011 Rumpshaker 5K. I'd never seen anything so exciting. (Below: Coach Eric Swope, right, guides my son, Jacob Bouma-Sims, into place for the 4 x 800 middle school relays.)



2. What made you join Resolute Running?

After Rumpshaker, I lost my mind. I “trained” on my own for any number of races, starting with the Montgomery Half Marathon that same year, leading ultimately to a string of marathons in 2014. Thankfully, I found the BTC’s Saturday Morning Long Run group before a Mercedes full marathon and showed up on a cold fall morning, my reflective vest and other parts of my clothing inside-out. Running with that group, thanks to the supportive words of former BTC Long Run Coordinator Natalie Ferguson, who did not laugh at me about my clothes nor when I replied, “I don’t know” when asked my pace. Six marathons later, I wasn’t getting any faster or wiser, and started feeling sore and scared about injury. I asked Jennifer Andress, “What is this Resolute thing?” She set me up a meeting with Coach Alex Morrow, and we discussed my goals, mainly: run smarter, avoid injury. I told Coach Alex I had found a thing I loved and I didn’t want to be stupid and hurt myself. The Chicago Marathon on Oct. 9 will my 10th marathon and while I hope to do very well, my main goal is to run the disciplined race resulting from Coach Kelly McNair’s awesome plans and coaching. I didn’t count on Resolute Running shaping me so much emotionally and spiritually. But it has.

3. Do you take any classes or other services at Resolute Running? How have they helped your running?

I am a huge TRX fan. I think I have taken every TRX class at least once. I take at least six classes each month. I vary my choices some — I love Power, Flow and Essentials but I’ll alternate them depending on my schedule and where I am in my running plan. The class I recommend to every runner absolutely is the hips class with Coach Ann Thomas. It helped me get my hips in condition to go faster, farther, and be fitter. I also have done one summer nutrition program and have attended some of the injury prevention and mental fitness get-togethers.

4. What have your results been since joining Resolute Running?

I have PR’d at every distance, most joyfully at the marathon, half-marathon and 10K, distances, even the 5K. I hope to continue to lower

those times. My stretch goals include getting into Boston in the next few years, as I get stronger, faster, and frankly, older. (I'll know more about the realism of that after Chicago on Oct. 9.) I'd like to run marathons in as many states as possible, and my strength and training has helped me to add to that list. (Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Georgia, Virginia (D.C.), Kentucky, Florida. I'm also participating in the Southeastern Trail Runs short series, which opened up a whole new kind of running and happiness for me; maybe that's my future. (All of my racing history is on Athlinks at <https://www.athlinks.com/athletes/246589506>)

5. That's wonderful! What is your favorite Resolute Running story or memory?

I ran a 10K last year. The whole team was in the race. A few others and I were paced by fellow Resolute Runner Beth Rose, aiming to finish under an hour. In the last half-mile, right on pace, and struggling, Beth demanded my attention. She offered a simple but critical reminder: "Breathe, Bob. Breathe." It was hilarious a few minutes later, and a lifesaver at the time. I finished at 59:07 and third-place for my age. After the Tuscaloosa half, RR team member Fletcher Roberts and his family hosted a bunch of us for a massive meal at their Lake Tuscaloosa home, including a boat ride to Nick Saban's dock. I also won't forget Coach Alex Morrow and Fletcher running out a mile to check on me and run me home when I struggled in the last leg of the Destin full. It's that kind of team spirit and helping each other that makes such a big difference. I'm not a big joiner, but I appreciate the comfort and support offered on the roads, trails or in the classes (who isn't shy and ashamed the first time you attempt a suspended lunge on a TRX?). It's more than unforgettable. It's remarkable, in my experience. (Below: Beth Young Rose leads Breathless Bob to a 10K PR, with helpful pushing from fellow RR member Meaghan Ryan, in this MRuns photo)



6. What advice do you have for anyone considering Resolute Runner?

You owe it to yourself. Everyone benefits from coaching. I had so many things so wrong. At Resolute Running I have a coach who not only builds my training plans, but also knows me, my strengths and weaknesses and a lot about my hopes. She also knows when I'm full of it. And all of the Resolute Running coaches have a stake in my success, too, whether in their TRX classes or on the roads or at races. And then there's the team: an irreplaceable bunch of contagiously optimistic winners.