

Greg Athayde

Greg's family emigrated to Winnipeg from Uganda in 1972, the year after the MRA was formed. They lived on Langside Street. He started running to Gordon Bell in Grade 7. He loved daytime TV and to see as much as he could at lunch time and after school, he ran the kilometre each way to and from school. He participated in various school sports but in Grade 9 he caught the notice of the track coach and joined the school's Track Team. He did quite well in Grade 10, although he called himself the "king of the slow heat". That year, he won his first 3000M race in the Gritty Grotto in the basement of the Frank Kennedy Building at U of M. He ran cross-country for Gordon Bell but with only 3 – 4 fast runners, they could not compete with Kelvin or Grant Park. He raced in the provincials where Claude Berube dominated, but he finished in the top ten. In Grade 11, he wasn't able to compete indoors due to health issues and so he went out for the Puma Series in April, chasing Dennis Lang.

Greg attended U of M and ran cross-country and track. Like many of his teammates, Greg launched his spring season with participating in the Puma Series. Greg took to the roads in earnest and participated in many MRA races. He ran his first marathon at age 18 in 1979, the initial Manitoba Marathon. With insufficient training mileage and the youthful exuberance of high school track training, he went out way too fast and was only too willing to accept the offer of a bus ride back to the Stadium from Headingley at mile 16. His next marathon attempt was 22 years later, at age 40, when he ran 2:47:30 in the 2001 Manitoba Marathon. The next year, he lowered that to 2:41:59.

Greg traveled to marathons. In 2004 he ran 3:08 in Boston with the temperature reaching 85 degrees F. He did a 2:53 in Chicago in 2006 at age 45 with the temperature hitting 29 degrees F. He ran Twin Cities in 2011 at age 50 in a time of 3:09, and that was his most recent full marathon. A couple of days later, there was a fire drill at work and descending 17 flights of stairs was a painful reminder of what a marathon does to your quads. At age 58 in 2019, he ran the half marathon in Ottawa in 1:43 while his son ran his first full marathon.

Greg's proudest accomplishment as a road runner was placing 4th in the Manitoba Marathon in 2004 at age 43, running 2:46. He recalls Dmitri Melman passing him on University Crescent to deny him his age class championship. Greg's favourite race was the Selkirk Catfish Classic 5 km. He found it a fun race supported by enthusiastic people.

One harrowing experience was a Manitoba Marathon when Greg had just returned from a trip out West and slept in due to the change in time zones. He arrived at the start 5 minutes after everyone had left and still finished in 1:21.. As he passed people in the first half of the race, people who knew him called out to him, "Why are you so far back?" He was too busy to explain. It was probably not as bad an experience as that first Manitoba Marathon, or the hot Boston run.

In addition to his continuing racing career as a Masters Athlete, Greg has been on the Athletics Manitoba Board since 2020, and the Manitoba Chair of Canadian Master's Athletics since the same year. He also has served on the Manitoba Marathon board since 2021. Greg has coached the grade 4 – 6 running club at Grosvenor school since 2002, inspiring many future athletes to share his love of running.

Greg's best 5 km is 16 minutes on the road and around 15 on the track, best 10 km is 32 minutes, best official half marathon is 1:21 (He has run the first half of the full marathon in 1:18) and marathon best is 2:41:59. Although he has run the Gimli 10 mile road race he does not recall his time. He does recall running 1:52 for 800m on the track and 3:56 for 1500m.

Perhaps you can take the boy out of Africa, but you can't take Africa out of the boy, when it comes to road racing performance!