

T & F N INTERVIEW

INGRID KRISTIANSEN

Talk to Ingrid Kristiansen: you hear in her words the same strength—the same intensity and dedication—that is so apparent in her every performance.

Watch Kristiansen run: her face is often tensed, her shoulders cocked, always pushing, always pushing ahead. You see in her movement the same integrity, the same desire, the same sense of purpose that is so apparent in her conversation.

This woman, WR holder in the 5000, 10,000 and marathon, is Emil Zatopek's equal in more ways than one.

We recently talked to her at her adopted home in Colorado after watching her stride to another impressive win, at Boston:

T&FN: Let's talk about Boston. What were your aims this year?

Kristiansen: Of course, going in, it was 2:20. Every year I go for 2:20.

T&FN: Was there any special importance placed on racing against Joan Samuelson?

Kristiansen: She's a great runner, but it's been 4 or 5 years since she was really good. It's more history. There were other girls in the race.

T&FN: Were you trying to reestablish your reputation?

Kristiansen: No, I don't think so. The sport is tough. You have no playback. It's not easy. You have to train and train and train some more. You have to keep on going if you want to be on top. I went to Boston hoping to beat the best. That's what this is about.

T&FN: Tell me about your preparation. You ran a number of road races: all part of the plan?

Kristiansen: Part of the plan, of course. I train a lot—140M per week. For weeks. Most of it, the distance is really slow, between 4:15-4:20 per kilometer [6:50-6:55 per mile].

I do "test" training. If I want to run a marathon under 2:20, I must run 5:15-5:18 miles. I have to practice that. So three or four times a week I do 10-30K on a treadmill at that pace. I never go on the track to train for the marathon.

T&FN: That amount of treadmill work would drive me to suicide!

Kristiansen: [laughs] It's good mental training, especially for the women's



Distinctive garb: the beloved Kristiansen mugs with the behatted Samuelson at Boston.

aces. Because the best runners go to different races, so you have to be prepared to go far fast by yourself.

Half of marathon racing is to keep on going when you're tired. That's why it's so tough for track racers to go beyond 30K [c18.5M]. It's a different sport,

to keep going when you're that tired.

T&FN: Are marathons and track races of equal importance to you? Do you favor one over the other?

Kristiansen: I enjoy both. I look at my seasons. Winter, I train for a spring

marathon. Then I rest for two weeks. Then I train for track season. Then I rest a little bit. Then I start long runs again for a fall marathon.

I like always changing. It helps my training to be more interesting, and therefore I am able to train better.

T&FN: Back to Boston. Tell me about the race itself. You finished 26th overall. That in itself is pretty amazing.

Kristiansen: I was really prepared. I think it's a great race. I hoped that Joanie would be in better shape. I hoped maybe Rosa [Mota] would be there. I hoped for better weather. It was too warm for a great race.

T&FN: I saw you race at the Red Lobster 10K in Orlando in March. Liz McColgan was in a class by herself. Do those kind of days bother you as a competitor?

Kristiansen: I was really disappointed to be beaten by a full minute. But I was training for the marathon. I was not ready in February: this summer I will be ready and I hope to race her then. She's a woman who really wants to go for it. I like that about her.

It would be good if more of the better women could compete against each other more often. There can only be one winner, but it's much nicer with others to compete against, not just always yourself alone.

T&FN: What are your goals, besides 2:19:59?

Kristiansen: I go for a new goal now, sub-30:00 on the track. I am training for that now. I think it's possible. It's just a half-second per lap. So, I'm training for that. Maybe Bislett. Maybe the middle of August. We'll see.

I am a person who wants a goal far ahead of me. To train as hard as I'm doing, you need a big goal.

T&FN: Anything else?

Kristiansen: Of course I would like an Olympic gold medal. And to win the New York City Marathon. I'm not sure about after 1992. I may take a year off.

T&FN: Anything about the sport that you find bothersome right now?

Kristiansen: I am very disappointed that I almost never get to run against the best girls. I don't think that's good for the sport. We almost always seem to each of us be at different races.

For several years I wasn't invited to the New York City Marathon. Last year they did invite me, but I was injured, so I couldn't compete.

In order for the sport to grow, I

think we should do all we can to get the best together. That's the most fun. That makes all the hard work worthwhile.

T&FN: What has been your most disheartening loss?

Kristiansen: Finishing 4th in the Olympic Marathon in 1984, because in that race I didn't use my head. I do another person's race and I lose the

"Half of marathon racing is to keep on going when you're tired."

whole thing. . . [sighs] But that's a long time ago.

T&FN: What was the impact of your DNF in the Olympic 10K?

Kristiansen: I was really disappointed. But it's history now and I don't think about it much. I have to look ahead to new races.

T&FN: Did it take you long to recover from that disappointment?

Kristiansen: No, not too long. Two or three days. I did have to take a rest for 7 weeks for injury, but I believe you can't use your energy to think about what might have been. I looked forward to beating my competitors in the next 10K.

T&FN: How would you sum up your career at this point?

Kristiansen: Ahhhhh. . . I've been happy with most races. I have improved most years. If I had to do the life all over again, I would do it.

T&FN: What do you think your greatest strength as an athlete is?

Kristiansen: I don't know, maybe... one of the things. . . I don't look behind. I try to look ahead, always ahead to new things. If I run a great race, I put it behind me the next day.

Here, it's tougher than in Norway. In Norway nobody tells me I'm a great runner. They keep your feet on the ground. Here, in the U.S., I have to be careful not to think of myself as someone special.

T&FN: How do you prepare mentally for a race?

Kristiansen: For big races, like the Boston Marathon, when I'm training hard, I think about the race. I visualize the event. The same for a track race. I visualize what I hope will happen, how

I hope I'll feel. I might run the entire race in my head 20 times before I actually compete.

T&FN: Why did you relocate to Boulder?

Kristiansen: I like Boulder. It's not too big; it's relaxing. Of course, you miss home, but it's a nice place to train. My husband is getting a Master's in business and, even though we've only been here a little while, we have so many friends. It is also important to us to learn about America, and Americans, and the American style of life.

T&FN: What about the altitude?

Kristiansen: Oh yes, of course. One of the reasons we chose Boulder was the high altitude. I've been training for 20 years, and to move ahead you have to look for ways to do more. I think the altitude adds 10-15% more work without actually doing more training.

T&FN: I'm curious about something. It was warm at Boston, yet I noticed that you were wearing gloves. Any special reason?

Kristiansen: I always race in gloves. I wear contact lenses, and I use the cotton gloves to take away the sweat. Also, sometimes when it's hot, you can wear the gloves and cool your hands.

T&FN: Your little boy, Gaute, is

Samuelson Not Healthy

While Ingrid Kristiansen is back on the fast track, nagging injuries have forced American rival Joan Samuelson to forego competition for at least a year and let her body heal itself naturally.

"I've been spending as much time in physical therapy as in running," said the 31-year-old New Englander following her 9th in Boston—an effort slowed by the flareup of a persistent injury.

"There is a biomechanical problem in my right hip," explained the 1984 Olympic champion. "It often crops up around the 16th mile of a marathon but it came on earlier this time."

She feels her problems originated when she tried to return to hard training too fast after her 1986 pregnancy: hip, knee and hamstring ailments followed. She has never been able to get back into her natural stride rhythm.

"I've got to let Mother Nature do the healing," Samuelson continued. "It might take a year, or five years. I'll take a break, cut my training and see if it clears up on its own."

"I'll be back, but not in a marathon before Boston next year."

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KRISTIANSSEN—continued:

going to be 6 years old. It seems that when you returned to competition after childbirth you were much stronger. So much so that other women were talking about getting pregnant just to improve their performances.

Kristiansen: I think you do get stronger, but you also have a child that you have to take care of. You don't get as much sleep. You have to change your lifestyle. It's not so easy.

But at the same time, now, my life has more than running. There's more to give my life meaning. I just think about running when I'm training and competing. The rest of my time, I think about being a mother, and a wife, and...

T&FN: And what's ahead?

Kristiansen: If I feel happy with my running, I will continue to compete. I'll really go for it, probably the last time, in 1992...

Maybe I could coach somebody one time.

T&FN: Joan Samuelson said at Boston, "Anyone who doesn't think that Ingrid Kristiansen is the best runner in the world is only kidding themselves." How do you feel when you hear that?

Kristiansen: I feel it was really nice of her to say. [laughs] I'm not sure she's right. I like Joanie because she is a really nice person, a nice personality. We have similar interests. We're both mothers and we both like to stay home.

You have to keep on training. I would like to show that I am one of the best. □

Ingrid Kristiansen (née Christensen) was born March 21, 1956, in Trondheim, Norway, and is 5-6 1/2/110. Currently holds the World Records at 5000, 10,000 and the marathon.

Her PRs: 800—2:09.7 '81; 1500—4:10.16 '85; 3000—8:34.10 '86; 5000—14:37.33 '86; 10,000—30:13.74 '86; Marathon—2:21:06 '85.

Major meet finishes: 3000: '78—10)EC; '80—3)WC; '82—8)EC, 10,000: '86—1)EC; '87—1)WC; '88—dnf)OG. Marathon: '82—3)EC; '84—4)OG.

Her progression (with World Ranking in parentheses; has also ranked No. 1 in the 5000 twice):

Year	Age	3000	10,000	Marathon
'77	21	9:09.7	—	2:45:15 (7)
'78	22	9:01.3	—	—
'79	23	9:07.92	—	—
'80	24	8:58.8	—	2:34:25' (6)
'81	25	8:57.7	—	2:30:09' (7)
'82	26	8:51.79	—	2:33:36' (7)
'83	27	maternity	—	2:33:27
'84	28	8:39.56	—	2:24:26' (4)
'85	29	8:40.34	30:59.42 (1)	2:21:06' (2)
'86	30	8:34.10 (1)	30:13.74 (1)	2:24:55' (2)
'87	31	8:53.19	31:05.85 (1)	2:22:48' (2)
'88	32	8:43.59	31:31.37 (5)	2:25:41' (4)
'89	33	—	—	2:24:35'

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