

## Fitness & Sports

### Sports line

#### CAFB Athletes of the Year named

By Staff Sgt.  
**Michael Duhe**  
437 AW Public Affairs

Chris Yevchak and Jill Pollock have been selected as the male and female Athlete of the Year.

Yevchak, a C-17 crew chief with the 437<sup>th</sup> Aircraft Generation Squadron, participated in basketball, softball, flag football and volleyball in 1999. The senior airman was also selected to attend the 1999 Air Force Men's Basketball Camp.

In the intramural basketball league, Yevchak was the leading scorer, averaging 34.3 points per game. He scored more than 40 points in five games and 50 points in one game. His team finished fourth overall.

"I feel honored," Yevchak said. "There are a lot of good athletes on base and to be named top athlete is great."

Pollock, a senior airman, is a survival equipment specialist with the 437<sup>th</sup> Equipment Maintenance Squadron. She has coached and played on her squadron's intramural soccer team for the past two years. She also participates in off base women's spring and fall leagues and a downtown co-ed soccer league.

Pollock is a key member of the 437<sup>th</sup> EMS golf team, helping lead the way to the squadron's second-place finish last season.

She also volunteered her time coaching the NFL-sponsored flag football camp for youths.

Pollock was also an assistant coach for a 13-14-year-old basketball team and 5-6-year-old soccer team.

"I was really surprised to hear that I won," she said.

#### Intramural standings

##### Volleyball

- 1st CTCS
- CS/SVS
- 437th AW
- Navy Hosp.
- SUP
- AGS
- SFS
- 373 TRS
- 15 AS
- LGT
- CES
- EMS
- Med Group

## Runner to represent CAFB at Boston Marathon

By Staff Sgt.  
**Michael Duhe**  
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John Planty intends to go the distance for Charleston AFB.

Planty, a staff sergeant and C-17 crew chief instructor with the 373<sup>rd</sup> Training Squadron (Det. 5) will represent the base at Monday's Boston Marathon, a 26.2-mile event. He will be among a throng of 15,000 runners taking part in the race.

Last year, 10,000 runners competed in the Boston Marathon, including Planty. This year's race has been opened to 15,000 runners. The sheer number of competitors will again present a challenge for runners, according to Planty.

"I did well last year, but it was tougher than I anticipated because of the crowd size," he said. "It's hard to run your pace if you're stuck in a crowd."

The Boston Marathon is the only race requiring a qualifying time to participate. To qualify for the event, Planty ran the Wine Glass Marathon in New York last October. His finishing time of three hours, eight minutes and 45 seconds for the 26.2-mile course earned him a spot in the Boston Marathon.

To prepare for the Boston Marathon, Planty has been running between 60-70 miles a week, including speed work and long runs. He trains at several locations - the jogging path on base (McComb's Way), the fitness center and on a treadmill at home.

"McComb's Way is a good, easy run - it's marked out in quarters so I can run a little speed work on it," he pointed out.

Planty recently faced some "minor glitches" in his running schedule involving a hip injury from last year's Disney Marathon. However, with the help of the staff at the Health and Wellness Center's physical therapy section, he's now at 100 percent.

"Now I'm running faster than ever," he said. "I'm feeling strong and I'm hoping to run under three



Courtesy photo

John Planty maintains a quick pace during last year's Disney Marathon. Planty hopes to finish the 26.2-mile Boston Marathon in under three hours.

hours in Boston."

Planty explained the training schedule for long distance runners.

"You train to a point they call a peak, then you taper down and rest," he said.

"Right now, I'm in the taper phase, which most runners don't like because you're inactive. The chances of injury are great. You feel fantastic, but it's hard to feel positive because you're not doing too much."

Planty chose not to participate in the recent Cooper River Bridge Run because he didn't want a possible let down to affect his mental and physical outlook going into the Boston Marathon.

Running a marathon is both a physical and mental challenge and is much easier if you're in the right frame of mind, Planty said.

"Running a marathon is, I'd say, 75-80 percent mental," he explained. "You could run a marathon if you're mentally strong."

Planty often runs in marathons to help raise funds for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of

America. For the past two years, he has also coached less experienced runners wanting to do the same.

"In the two years I've coached, I took over 400 runners to marathons," he said. "These are people who are in shape, but not big runners. I took them from running a few miles a week to running a marathon. They were not super-competitive, but they completed a marathon. A lot of that involves motivating and mental imaging. A lot of it's mental, especially after you've done a few marathons. But you really have to be mentally focused."

Planty's strategy while running is to take the marathon in "bites."

"If you were to eat 26 miles in one bite, that would be a tough thing to swallow," he said. "I break it up into sections. In my mind, I'll run two five-mile legs, then a ten-mile leg. Once I complete the ten-mile leg, then I only have a 10K, which is 6.2 miles. So, it's small bites."

To stay motivated, Planty

attended the women's Olympic trials recently held in Columbia. "When you see someone finish a race, you can see the exertion they went through and appreciate their focus," he said. "It was very motivating and I had a great time."

Planty first got involved in running four years ago, after deciding to stop smoking and get in shape. He began running and met several marathon runners, who helped him with his training plan. Planty soon ran his first marathon and it "snowballed" from there.

"I got hooked," he recalled. "Running is an addiction. If you enjoy doing it, you're hooked."

His love for running has grown to six or seven marathons a year. In October of 1998 he placed third in the New York State Championships. Recently, he was part of a relay team in the Myrtle Beach Marathon/Relay Race that won first place in the leukemia runners division.

Running for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of America is especially gratifying for Planty. Last year, Planty and other runners nationwide helped raise \$52 million for research and treatment of these diseases.

"There are a lot of runners in the Charleston area who run for the society, but not a whole lot of Air Force people," he said. "I wish more Air Force people would get involved. It's a great way to change your life in a positive way."

Planty is thankful for the support given by his unit and co-workers. He's influenced a few of them to begin a running program.

"John is the most physically fit person I know," said Frederick Malle, a co-worker. "As a matter of fact, he's teaching me about running. He knows what he's talking about. He got me started in running, and if I can do it, anybody can."

Planty said he's happy to help anyone who wants to find out more about running, begin training for long-distance running or who wants to run for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of America. He can be reached at 963-6114.