

**Andrew Cook had one of his biggest disappointments,
but still enjoyed a good running season**



When Andrew Cook toes the starting line, no matter the distance, the other challengers know they had better have their A game. The “game” being, of course, some fast moving feet.

Andrew, the cross country and track coach at Flower Mound High School, has an impressive list of running achievements and he came agonizingly close to earning a second trip to the Olympic Trials in the marathon. That was, he said, “one of most disappointing race of my life. To be ahead of the 2:19 Olympic Trials standard with 3 miles to go and for it to just slip away was crushing for me.” He finished 16th overall with a 2:20:32. If he could have held on, he’d be among the competitors at the Trials in Houston on Saturday (Jan. 14), the day before the Chevron Houston Marathon. The other time he qualified for the Trials was in 2008.

Yet, in a year when there was no dominate runner but some great performances, Andrew’s six overall victories and \$2,250 in prize money earned at DFW races were enough to lift him to the top of the list.

His victories include the St. Paddys Day Dash Down Greenville (\$150); the Colleyville Lions Xsightment 5K (\$200); the Too Hot To Handle 15K; the Waterworks 25K (\$100); the Vampire Run tK (\$100), and the Fort Worth Marathon. He also finished second at the Dallas Rock ‘N’ Roll Half Marathon in 1:07:26 to earn \$1,500 and too fifth at the DRC Half to collect \$200 with a 1:08:28. “That (DRC Half) was painful because the day before, we had regionals in Lubbock” and he had to drive there and back with his high school team. At the Rock ‘N’ Roll Half, Andrew beat Logan Sherman, the Cowtown Marathon winner, in their only head-to-head meeting. Logan also was on the short list of candidates for the Runner of the Year honor.

At the San Francisco Marathon, an event Andrew has won three times, he finished fourth in 2011. He called it “the worst race of the year, by far. I died a miserable death the last five miles.” He finished fourth with a 2:37:39. He won the race in 2006, 2007 and 2009. His winning time of 2:25:57 in ’07 was his fastest at the event.

Andrew, who has been featured along with his talented running wife Melissa as Runners in the Spotlight on this website, said he began running after joining the Lewisville Summer Track Club. His road-racing career started when he was only 10. "I had a great time traveling around the DFW Metroplex every week. Back then there wasn't a whole lot of young kids running, so it was easy to win my age group and collect trophies."

He said he enjoyed "moderate" success in high school, and his running continued to improve at Texas A&M, where he earned All American honors in cross country. He also was a national qualifier in the 10,000 on the track. And, that's where he met Melissa, who was an eight-time All American.

Andrew's track PRs are 14:10 in the 5K and 29:20 in the 10K. In the half, he has a 1:06:14 and in the marathon has a 2:19:47 (in 2007 when he qualified for the 2008 Trials).

He and Melissa have to find time to run between working and being parents to Natalie, now 8, and Nathan. Melissa won the Haltom Stampede 5K in 2011 with a 17:39, just six months after Nathan was born.

. "We had Natalie at a young age, so we have gotten used to training and being parents," Andrew said. "Of course, in college it was much easier when you could just eat, sleep, run and study. Right now, we just try our best to balance our schedules so both of us have the opportunity to train."

He said his biggest highlights since leaving college has been qualifying for the '08 Trials and winning three times at the San Francisco Marathon. "My motivation is that I love to run. It is a part of me," he said.

His goals for 2012 is to break 2 minutes for the 800 and 4:20 for the 1,600. "The boys on the high school team give me a hard time for having such slow track PRs and I'm not getting any younger." He also wants to run under 14:50 in the 5K, win the San Francisco Marathon again "and run a strong marathon in the fall or winter and set a PR."

He's not forgetting about Melissa, either. "And really my most important goal is to help my wife qualify and run well at the Olympic Trials this summer." She'll try qualifying in the 5,000 and 10,000.