

Kim Gray enjoys the long distances, and excels even when running three marathons in a row

Kim Gray of Arlington is another runner much like T.O. Okazaki and Bill Berenson. She likes hoofing it long distances and probably has logged as many miles as my 16-year-old pickup. During her road travels, she enjoyed good experiences and some not so good, such as in Las Vegas. What happened there didn't stay there.

And Kim doesn't just run a marathon and then rest. How about running three in a row and posting your fastest time (3:33:37) in the last one! Yes, she ran a tripleheader, the Firecracker Triple, in Oregon and after she finished the back-to-back-to back feat, "I woke up on the fourth day wishing I could run another marathon," she said. "Portland is just so beautiful; everything looks like it's HD! The air also seems easier to breathe in." She was the overall female for combined times.

Kim, 37, ran 18 marathons and three ultras in 2011. She opened 2012 by running the Texas Marathon in Kingwood (TX) on Jan. 1 and finished with a 3:35. On Dec. 11, she had run the inaugural BCS Marathon in College Station and crossed the finish line in 3:32:32. "I was skeptical about the inaugural marathon, but I had a great experience. The course has some hills. It was very well organized, the aid stations even had people holding up signs letting you know which table was water and which was Gatorade. The race director stood in the finish line chute congratulations and high-fiving people. Age group winners got a jacket."



That run came just a week after she had finished the Rock 'n' Roll Las Vegas in 3:59:30. And that one wasn't much fun, she said. "Worst race experience ever," she said. "Overcrowding all weekend...everywhere, too many people in Vegas. They started us an hour and a half before the half (started) and then had us merge with them from mile 13 to the finish on a 3-4-lane road. 44,000 people! I couldn't get around all the walkers. People were pushing screaming, fighting and throwing things, and it was the same way after I finished trying to get through the hotel. They also ran out of water after I hit mile 14."

She ran the Fort Worth Marathon on Nov. 13 and finished in 4:26:19. She could be excused for one of her slowest times because she had competed in the Rockledge 50K in Grapevine the day before and finished in 7:22:24. "I somehow got lost on the trails," she said.

Another “awesome” experience came at the Marine Corps Marathon in Arlington, Va., where she ran a 3:41:41. “Lots of runners and a cool flyover.” At the St. George Marathon in Utah on Oct. 1, she ran a 4:02:22. “It’s a beautiful, scenic course with some pretty steep downhill stretches. I had altitude sickness at this race and it was hard to even walk straight. “ She said she thought they were going to pull her off the course a couple of times.”

Other events she ran in 2011: El Scorcho Cinco 50K in Fort Worth (July 17), 5:19:34; Foot Traffic Flat Marathon in Portland (July 4), 3:33:20; Freedom Marathon (July 3) in Gresham, OR, 3:54:06; Stars and Stripes Marathon (July 2) in Beaverton, OR, in 3:47:23; Eugene Marathon (June 1), Eugene, OR) in 3:36:35 (“A really great finish on a beautiful track.”); David Crocket Bear Chase Marathon (April 9) in Groveton (TX) in 4:02:33; (“A great two loop course; a low key race.”); Bataan Death March (March 27), White Sands, NM, in 4:17:32 (“A challenging course, really cool to see people doing it in heavy 30-40-pound backpacks. Beautiful mountains. When I ran it, the winds were brutal ...30 mph almost the entire time”); A2A Marathon (March 20) in Ardmore, OK, in 4:22:31 (“Rolling hills and high winds,”); Grasslands Marathon (March 19), in Decatur in 4:31; Little Rock Marathon (March 6) in Little Rock, Ark., in 3:42:50 (“Love the medal. This course has plenty of different types of hills...the long, steep ones got me.”); the Cowtown Ultra 50K (Feb. 27) in 4:41:32; the Austin Marathon (Feb. 20) in 4:13:19; the Rock ‘n’ Roll Mardi Gras (Feb. 13) in New Orleans in 3:49:01 (“Very flat course. Beautiful parks and golf courses along the course.”); Chevron Houston Marathon (Jan. 30) in 3:59; and the Texas Marathon (Jan. 1) in Kingwood in 3:41:26 (“A beautiful course that is well organized. A Texas-sized medal...3 pounds.”).

Whew! She certainly deserves Special Recognition.