

# SUMMER'S SEASON

Broadcaster and Olympian Summer Sanders lives for outdoor adventure



**W**hen did you first start running?

Probably at a consistent level, when I retired from swimming the first time--so, December of 1993. But I started incorporating it in with my swimming towards the end of my career.

**Did you find it was helping you with your swimming?**

Yeah, I think it helped with my overall conditioning. I also had noticed I had started to lag a little bit in my eating and my nutrition, and you can't lose weight swimming so it was a very good way to shed those few extra pounds that I needed and feel leaner. And the first thing was that it broke up the monotony of swimming--just the up and back and looking at a black line. It was just really fun for me to get out and go for a run and listen to music.

**Do you feel like running helped your swimming overall, conditioning wise?**

Yeah. Two things, the number one was that I felt like my body was in better shape. I just felt like my body enjoyed the change. And as I was getting older, my body enjoyed the pounding...my bones and muscles enjoyed the pounding as opposed to just floating in the water. But it also helped me mentally, just state of mind and clearing my head. You got to feel your motion and the power that you created more than swimming.

**Really?**

Well, maybe for me it was just in a different way. I could feel myself moving through the water, but I couldn't really see how fast I was moving through the water or across the water or how fast I could do that 100. But when I was running I knew how fast I was running from point A to point B and I could feel it a bit more which was fun.

**Did you find yourself improving dramatically as well in your running? Was that inspiring for you?**

I definitely knew my good days vs. my bad days, more so in running than in swimming. So when I had a good day in running it was awesome--especially I noticed if I went to Colorado Springs for training at high altitudes and then I came back to Stanford University, I noticed it more in my running than my swimming--from high altitude training. I used to feel like, "Oh man, I'm so fast" I'd run around the Stanford Campus--we had Campus Drive which was probably a four mile loop--and oh, man, I was cruising along Campus Drive.

**You didn't notice the effect of the altitude training as much with swimming?**

I don't think it's: You don't notice it or you do. I think it's just a different feel. And so for seventeen years I had noticed it one way. So to try a new sport and experience it in a new sport with different muscles and a different environment was really fun for me. And I think that's why I noticed it so much more. I just felt like I saw the results of picking it up...I knew I was going faster. With swimming I do know that I'm going faster, but visually I don't know.

**I'm curious, because you were a champion swimmer. Was it hard for you to start a new sport and not be A-level right away? Or was that kind of part of the fun, part of the challenge?**

Here's the deal with my running. I don't compete. I've competed in two



## SUMMER HOLIDAY

The gear that Summer Sanders can't wait to give and receive this season

### Saucony Pro-Grid IV Triumph

Within the Triumph, Saucony has poured generous amounts of foam cushioning into both the forefoot and rearfoot sections of the shoe, fully integrated with its successful GRID system. The arch lock meshes well with Saucony's trademark last. Super comfortable, the Triumph is a good pick for neutral runners performing a high-mileage workload on the road. \$120, [www.saucony.com](http://www.saucony.com)



# Here's the deal with my running.

## Black Diamond Icon Headlamp

With four super-bright LEDs, the Black Diamond Icon Headlamp is plenty powerful to light up the trail ahead—for up to 80 meters. Multiple brightness settings and a battery-power meter help you monitor and preserve battery power. Use the economical setting and you're set for up to 200 hours of burn time. \$60, [www.blackdiamondequipment.com](http://www.blackdiamondequipment.com)

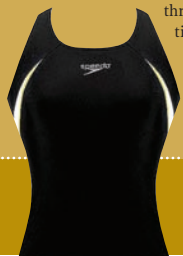


## Do you usually run at night or the morning?

**Summer:** Actually, there's no "usual." The one thing that I've changed since I've stopped swimming and stopped being the athlete, so to speak, is that I've learned to listen to my body a lot more. So if I come in from a trip and I'm tired, I don't force myself to get up and do that morning run. I'll do it in the early evening.

## What do you wear clothes-wise?

**Summer:** I throw on whatever, depending on the weather. But oddly enough, and you're going to think I'm crazy, I wear Speedo. They're just not swim suits anymore. I throw on a t-shirt, tights if it's cold out and shorts if it's not.



marathons, but I didn't really compete. I wasn't out to break records or try to be among the top X number of finishers. I only did it because I love it. My first marathon was just because my friend wasn't going to use her number—which I know is totally illegal. She called me up the night before and said, "Would you like to use it?" And so, I hadn't trained for it at all. I had only done my six mile loops. So I said, "Yeah, absolutely." And I had the best time. I smiled throughout the whole thing. The last three miles I was hurting really bad, but I was still soaking it all up and enjoying every moment and looking at all the people cheering and everything. And I did a 3:35. Three years later for my 30th birthday, I decided to try and train for it. So for my training I used the Intermediate Guide that you guys have in Runner's World. I tried to stay on that as best I could, but I really couldn't because I was traveling so much and working. And I was traveling overseas quite a bit. So, I had to modify it. But then I did a 3:17 and for me that's all running is: it's my own personal best.

## Did you feel better in that marathon? Did you still hit the wall?

It was a better physical experience. It still hurt. I mean, I think every marathon hurts. But that's just my physical makeup. Maybe there are people out there that don't experience the same physical pain that I do. But it was definitely better. I had a faster pace; I still fell off on the back half—the second half of the marathon I was much slower. But I still enjoyed every second of it. It was awesome.

## So unlike swimming, you don't have any competitive feelings when you run?

The first marathon was just, hey, can I do it. And I said, you know, if you can do it under four hours that'd be great. So that was just like, Hey, let's just have fun and go do it.



The second one was, let's just see how fast you can go, because I really did not want to do another one for a long time. I just don't think my body handles it all that well, my hips and stuff. So I said let's just go for it.

## Was it a relief for you to be able to approach a sport that way?

Yeah, with swimming I had goal times posted on every mirror in my house growing up. So it was all time oriented for swimming. I was constantly aware of what my splits needed to be, how fast I should start out the second half and when I should start picking it up and being conscious of it. That's not the way I approach my running at all. My running's just for fun.

## When you talked about wanted to lose a few extra pounds with running, were you successful with that?

Yeah, I think so, I think it was a combination of things. Watching what I ate a little bit more. Not drinking so much beer. When I got done with '92 it was like, beer fest and having fun and enjoying myself. So I got back to a much more normal schedule to say the least. And just started incorporating different things. And I also think state of mind is your mental health, too.

**I don't compete. I've competed in two marathons, but I didn't really compete. I wasn't out to break records or try to be among the top X number of finishers. I only did it because I love it.**

## So where do you run now?

I run wherever I am. Last week I ran in New Orleans, Charlotte, NC, Sacramento, Calif., and Park City, Utah. Next week I'll run in Park City, Utah, New York, Barbados, and back to New York. I get to run all over the place. I think it's the best way to get to know a city.

## Do you run in any weather?

Yeah. Obviously, not if it's a torrential downpour. I think rain is my least favorite. But if it's just barely sprinkling I'm fine with that—and I've done that several times in New York. If it's snowing, it's usually not that bad, but if it's super cold I'm pretty miserable. I'll test the weather outside and then I'll run on the treadmill.

## What helps you during hard runs?

My feeling is—and it's the same thing I used to do in swimming—is that going slower is just as hard as picking it up a little bit. So whenever I feel myself really fading, I just pick it up a little bit more. And I always feel the slower you go the longer it's going to take you to get up that hill. Just keep a consistent pace. And most times I just try to take my mind off it. I'll think about anything else except for the hill—unless there's somebody next to me, and then I'll start racing them. Which happens often in New York. I end up racing the boys up the hill.

## Which sport do you think is more challenging to do? Running or swimming?

You know it's interesting, running and swimming are very similar, yet very

different. Similarly, it's the cardiovascular endurance that both swimmers and runners have. So I think that's what helps me going up that hill when it's the sixth mile—the endurance training I've had for so many years through swimming. But you're using such different muscles. And it's funny because Jenny Johnson used to talk to me about it all the time. She'd say, "I don't know how you can run. I get out there and I start running and I can feel my weight with every step." And you just learn to adjust. It's as if your weight adjusts and you don't feel that as much any more. But you put a runner in the pool and they have a hard time balancing their weight in the water and figuring out how to swim faster easier. It's totally different. I love them both. I think they complement each other incredibly.

## What are you working on?

Inside Stuff, U.S. Olympic Gold (profile Olympic athletes) and I have a new show on Fox called The Sports List, and that's in L.A. so I'll be able to get to do one of my favorite runs in L.A. which is along San Vicente and then Ocean Driven in Santa Monica.

## What's The Sports List?

It's a list of different themes related to sports. Our pilot was the Top Fifteen Biggest Blow Ups in Sports. Then there's the Top Fifteen Biggest Rivalries in Sports. The Hottest Athletes both Male and Female. The lists just go on and on. Everyone loves to dispute a list, and have a conversation about it. It's like the USA Today list.

## Do you listen to music when you run?

**Summer:** Yeah, I have an IPOD and I sing. I'll be singing in the morning if I'm really into the song There some days when I really, really look forward to listening to music on my IPOD while I'm running. And then there are other days when it doesn't really bother me. To be honest there are some times I don't feel comfortable not hearing the traffic around me. If I'm in a new city and I'm by myself, I like to be alert and aware. But if I'm in New York and I'm running through Central Park, I'm feeling the music and it's awesome.



## What do you like to listen to when you run?

**Summer:** Very interesting. I'm a mellow Ben Harper—Jack Johnson—Gavin DeGraw-type-of-start-out music; even Coldplay and stuff. But when I'm going up the hill, it's Eminem, 50 Cent or something like that.

