

## **Arkansas Runner Interview – Shawn Barlow**

**AR:** *Tell us about yourself, where you are originally from, where you grew up, how long you have lived in Benton, and any other places you lived.*

**Shawn:** We moved to Benton from Little Rock when I was 7 years old. I've never lived anywhere else, so Benton will always be my hometown. I went to Hendrix College for four years. I have been employed for the railroad for 25 years.

I am married to my best friend Andrea, and have a wonderful daughter Abby that just graduated from Arkansas State and two great stepsons Jackson and Asher both on the Hornet Football and Soccer teams

**AR:** *How long have you been running and what got you started?*

**Shawn:** I started the day before my 40<sup>th</sup> birthday. I thought a marathon was the most impossible thing for me to do. I had never run before that. I signed up for the Little Rock Marathon, which was 7 months away. I knew nothing about training or preparing for it, I just thought you run. I left out from my house and thought I had run forever, and it was only  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile, and I still had to get back. My first trip to the River Trail to see how far I could go, I wrote my Blue Cross number in sharpie on my arm in case I needed assistance. The woman at the marathon race expo was nice and explained how the start would go and told me about gels and other things she thought I should have known. I would not suggest having a marathon as your first ever race.

**AR:** *What is a typical running week?*

**Shawn:** My typical week consist of 4 miles everyday. I try to vary up the locations so it won't get monotonous.

**AR:** *Do you do any cross training, biking, weights, etc.?*

**Shawn:** I try to mix in trails along with running pavement if that counts as cross training.

**AR:** *Favorite place to run? Why?*

**Shawn:** My favorite place is where others are running, walking, or out and about. My current favorite is running Hot Springs, either the greenway trail or through downtown and over west mountain.

**AR:** *How about training partners? Do you have any or do you train alone?*

**Shawn:** I try to keep up with friends and when they are running. I have some that I train with on weekends, but nothing regularly scheduled. Due to the erratic times I get to run, most of them are solo.

**AR:** *Have you been a member of any running clubs other than the Striders?*

**Shawn:** The Striders are the first club I signed up for. I actually met a member of the Striders at a race in Salt Lake City and he told me about it. I had no idea there was such a thing as running clubs. Since then I have also become a member of AURA.

**AR:** *How long have you been racing?*

**Shawn:** Since March of 2014

**AR:** *About how many races did you do last year? This year?*

**Shawn:** The best I can remember I have run a 50 mile, 2-50k, 3-marathons, a 25k, 15k, and 10k. I really enjoy the longer races.

**AR:** *What has been your longest racing distance?*

**Shawn:** I managed to get 84.25 miles during the Sunset 6/12/24 Endurance Challenge in 2017.

**AR:** *Do you have a favorite racing distance? If so, what?*

**Shawn:** My favorite is the marathon. That is the distance I feel like I push myself physically and still have something left over to enjoy the rest of the day.

**AR:** *What have been your favorite races?*

**Shawn:** I have not been a part of a race that I have disliked, there is always something to love about being out there. Doing the Firecracker 5K with my daughter was special. The Little Rock 10K was memorable, getting to run with Asher and helping coach him to a first place in his age group. I really like the Little Rock Marathon also, it is fun to be running and find your family and friends all around the course cheering you on. Salt Lake City and Pikes Peak marathon had some of the most amazing scenery. New York Marathon was special having the whole family there and having that many spectators cheering you on. I could go on, I really do enjoy them all.

**AR:** *What are your PR's at various distances? :*

**Shawn:** Full Marathon - 3:53:58, Half -1:47:10, 10K - , 5K - 2:55

**AR:** *What have been some of your other most memorable events, moments, or achievements in running?*

**Shawn:** The Chicago Marathon – it was the first trip Andrea and I took together and we really enjoyed all our time in the city, plus the race is amazing. The Wisconsin Marathon & Kalamazoo Marathon – this was my first attempt at doing two in one weekend and my dad got to go with me. My DNF in the Arkansas Traveller. It still haunts me I did not finish. I know physically I made the best decision, but I regret not trying to push just a little further.

**AR:** *Non-running achievement of which you are most proud?*

**Shawn:** I am most proud of my daughter. She is sweet and caring to all and so funny. Plus she is smarter than I will ever be.

**AR:** *How about shoes? Do you have a particular favorite?*

**Shawn:** When I started I was wearing \$29 Nikes I got off the clearance rack. After my second marathon I was noticing my friend was wearing Hokas. I tried on a pair after that and have never run in anything else. They are great for an old, slow guy needing all the cushioning.

**AR:** *How about significant injuries? Have you had any and if so, what ?*

**Shawn:** I had my back lock up on me during the Traveller, and a few toenails fall off, but that has been about it.

**AR:** *Are there any runners you particularly admire or respect, or perhaps who have helped you in some way? Explain.*

**Shawn:** I have a lot of respect for anyone that laces their shoes up and gets out there. I think anyone that completes all the races to become an Iron Runner is incredible. I admire Jayme and Chris' dedication to their training regiment. I think Nicole and Lennon are amazingly fast. I love seeing the pictures of how much fun Alice and Beth have at races. Maurice and Pete show a determination I could only dream of. I feel like I may fall somewhere in the middle of all of them and that is good with me.

**AR:** *How about hobbies and activities other than running?*

**Shawn:** I love to be outdoors hiking, fishing, kayaking, as well as watching everything all the kids are involved in.

**AR:** *Favorite non-running spectator sport?*

**Shawn:** Right now it is Bryant Hornet Football and Soccer. Both boys play on the teams and I is fun to travel around to catch all the games.

**AR:** *Favorite non-running leisure activity?*

**Shawn:** Not really any; between all of the kids activities and our shared hobbies, not much down time.

**AR:** *Running goals for the current year? Long term?*

**Shawn:** I will run and finish a 100 miler sometime. I would like to complete all 24 hours of the Sunset Lake 6/12/24 again. I really don't know of any other goals, just run one day at a time.