

The Monster Runner Award

The Monster Runner Award is designed to celebrate the runners in our community who excel in race finishes, overcome personal challenges, run personal bests, contribute to a better life for those around them, and go far beyond their comfort zone to find something special within.



September 2009 Monster Runner – Scott Kolpak

This month's Monster Runner, Scott Kolpak, is one of those people you can't help but like – he's a thoughtful, engaging person who inspires by his passion for life. To quote his fiancé, "He's vibrant and full of energy, and mostly, he's gritty." Scott started running in high school (track and cross country) and at 35 years of age, he still manages to get out to run 3-4 times per week. While he's been running pretty consistently for the past 2 ½ years, there was a time in his early 20's when he thought he might not ever be able to run again – when he learned he has fibromyalgia. For the past 12 years, Scott has had to deal with a syndrome that causes increased sensitivity to pain and injury resulting in widespread pain in the muscles and connective tissues of the body. With chronic pain everyday, Scott has learned how to manage the discomfort while leading a quality life. Despite the incessant pain, Scott's future father-in-law says that, "Scott has said yes to life."

Life, in fact, is what occupies a lot of Scott's time – he's a research coordinator in the field of forest genetics at Oregon State University. He grew up in Medford and is a graduate from the U of O (Bachelor's and Masters). As an Oregonian, he's "an apple that's never fallen far from the tree," having worked for the Forest Service for 6 years in Cottage Grove and plans on staying in the Eugene area for as long as he can.

Scott admits that he has a high tolerance for pain (out of necessity), and that his feet get numb quite often while running. None of it however, has stopped him from setting goals and obtaining them, including running a half marathon recently, in addition to other local road races. "If you're struggling," says Scott, "running is one of the best things you can do." When he's not running, Scott applies his craft to his own gardening and landscaping endeavors, producing organic vegetables that could be the envy of the town. He's also into hiking, snowshoeing, skiing and movies. Next summer, Scott and his fiancé, Jennie are planning to get married and then travel – since both are runners, there's no question there'll probably be a local event thrown in there somewhere. Thanks to Scott for sharing his story, and his passion for life!