

Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon: 2012 winner Camille Herron back with a shot to break her own course record

Camille Herron of Oklahoma City has won 13 marathons in 10 states and has a goal to win one in every state. Herron, 32, will attempt to break her own course record and win her second Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon on Sunday.

by Ed Godfrey (<http://newsok.com/ed-godfrey>) (?rel=author) Published: April 23, 2014

Camille Herron of Oklahoma City is one of the top 30 female marathon runners in the country.

She has won 13 marathons in 10 states and has a goal to win one in every state. A three-time U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials qualifier, Herron set the Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon women's course record two years ago by running it in 2 hours, 45 minutes and 13 seconds.



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Camille Herron stands at the 16th mile marker of the Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon at Lake Hefner. Herron holds the women's course record in the marathon and has won 13 marathons in 10 different states. Photo by Sarah Phipps, The Oklahoman **SARAH PHIPPS - SARAH PHIPPS**

She shattered the course record by nine minutes even though she had to stop during the race to get fluids.

"I go so dizzy and nauseous I had to stop," she said.

Herron, 32, will attempt to break her own course record and win her second Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon on Sunday. She skipped last year's race in Oklahoma City to win one in Illinois the day before in her quest to capture a marathon in every state.

"My husband won it twice, so I have to at least win it twice to match him," Herron said of the Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon.

Herron's husband is Oklahoma City University cross country and track coach Conor Holt, who set the men's course record of 2:22:54 in his 2004 victory.

Herron credits her husband, a former University of Oklahoma and professional runner, for helping her become one of the top female marathoners in the country.

"I wouldn't be where I am if it wasn't for him," Herron said. "He was the one who showed me how to train as a professional athlete. He is a huge, huge resource for the community. There is no one else in Oklahoma that knows how to make that sort of leap."

Born in Norman, Herron grew up in several towns in Oklahoma. Her father was a school administrator and the family lived in Mangum, Guthrie, Duncan and Moore.

As a kid, her main sport was basketball. She only started running track in junior high as offseason conditioning.

But she discovered she could run fast. As a freshman at Duncan High, Herron was part of a 4x800 state championship relay team in 1997. She was the state runner-up in the 2-mile run the same year.

In 1998, Herron won state championships as a sophomore in the mile and 2-mile runs and had more than 30 consecutive victories at one point before injuries derailed her high school career.

Herron attended Westmoore High her junior and senior years where stress fractures in her foot and femur kept her off the track, although she earned all-state in cross country her senior season.

Despite her troubles staying healthy, the University of Tulsa recognized Herron's potential and offered her an athletic scholarship.

However, three more stress fractures to her femur during her freshman season ended her collegiate career as a runner.

"I had seven stress fractures in 2 1/2 years. The doctors didn't think I could run competitively and stay healthy," she said. "The doctors basically thought my body couldn't handle the training load."

After that, Herron would continue to run, but just for fun and to stay healthy. She thought her days of racing were over.

"Then I met my husband," she said.

Holt, who received sponsorships with ASICS and PowerBar after graduating from OU in 1996, was rebounding from his own injuries in 2001 when he met Herron at the Norman Jazz Festival.

He approached Herron at the festival because she had the sinewy look of a runner. They hit it off, started dating and became running partners.

By 2004, Holt was competing in the U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials while Herron was still running just for pleasure, until the day she outdistanced him during a workout.

"One day we were going out for a run and I was going further than he was," Herron said. "I didn't think about what I was doing."

"He was confused that I was running further than he was and wanted to look at my training log and see what I was doing. I just kind of got out every day and ran 90 minutes. Turns out I was running 70 miles per week as a recreational runner."

That's when Holt encouraged Herron to start training seriously for marathons. Over the next 2 1/2 years with Holt's coaching, Herron would continue to run farther and faster.

She ran her first race of 26.2 miles in Eugene, Ore., in 2007. She didn't win but had an impressive time of 2:48 in her marathon debut. That same year she qualified for the 2008 U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials. She also qualified in 2012 and has again for the 2016 U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials.

Herron won her first marathon four years ago in Dallas and has a dozen more victories since, including her 13th just two weeks ago in Indiana. The Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon on Sunday will be her fifth marathon this year.

Her personal best time is 2:37:14. Herron says she needs to be about 12 minutes faster to make the U.S. Olympic team.

"Every time I go out there I just push myself as hard as I can," said Herron, who works as a research assistant at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center's bone and immunology lab.

It's a career path she chose while studying how to keep her own body healthy for running. She also writes a running blog that receives more than 30,000 visits each month.

"Everybody wants to know what I eat," she said. "I like cherry cobbler."

Herron has two major running sponsors in Marathonguide.com and PowerBar. After the Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon, she plans to enter the 56-mile Comrades Marathon race in South Africa on June 1.

"It's the Boston of ultra-marathons," she said.

Herron wants to break American and world records for 50 miles and more. She already owns one world record. In 2012, she set a Guinness World Record for the fastest marathon by a woman wearing a superhero costume.

Dressed as Spider-Woman, Herron won the Route 66 Marathon in Tulsa in a time of 2:48:51. When crossing the finish line, she celebrated by shooting Silly String into the crowd.

"I wanted to do it in a legit head-to-toe costume," Herron said. "It did get hot. It got very hot. I had to put it (costume) through the wash three times to get all the grime out of it."

