

THE FACES OF L.A.

It's about you, it's about your friends, it's about all active Angelenos who have stories behind why they train and compete. Know someone who should be featured in *The Faces of L.A.*? E-mail us at faces@LASandF.com and tell us who and why.

Amanda Marks Rondash

Amanda Marks Rondash, 42, of Los Angeles has been competing since she was eight years old, and has been a standout ever since. Her athletic career began as a tennis star but when she got into running, she never looked back. "I think if you love something you will always do it," she says about the sport that brings her physical and emotional strength.

Amanda attended Cal Poly San Luis Obispo where, as a six-time All-American in the 5,000 and 10,000 meters, she contributed to their reign as Division II national champions.

She took a sabbatical from running to raise her children, now ages seven and nine, then joined The Janes elite women's masters running team three years ago where she is a board member who focuses on sponsorship efforts.

Amanda returned to the sport still doing her share of winning races, but that isn't why she runs. "It motivates me in other areas of my life," adding, "it allows me to be a good role model for my kids."

In addition to coaching adults, this fall Amanda will begin sharing her experience with youngsters in her first season as the head cross country coach at The Buckley School in Sherman Oaks.



Chris Frost

Chris Frost, 60, of Malibu, has tested his body's limits on many occasions, but to the question, "what is the hardest thing you have ever done?" he responds with, "I probably haven't done it yet."

That seems unbelievable when you consider he has run through the Sahara Desert, completed the Badwater Ultramarathon eight times, Ironman Hawaii three times, the Furnace Creek 508 ultra cycling event two times (with two unsuccessful attempts), and countless triathlons covering every distance imaginable. He has even represented our country as a member of both the national water skiing team and the USA Ultrarunning team.

He works as hard as he plays. When asked about his occupation Chris says he is a firefighter and also in real estate, but adds, "one is for the income and the other is for passion."

"I am happily fighting wild land fires [on call in Arizona] and enjoying the heck out of it," laughing, he adds, "especially when I make the youngsters look bad. It has kind of become a goal now."

Another goal he has is to complete Badwater, the Catalina Water Ski Race and Ironman Hawaii all in the same year. "Your limits are only gauges for your dreams," he shares, "just never lose sight of your priorities, which in any kind of order need to start with family, friends and belief."



Jason Coronado

Jason Coronado, 30, of Los Angeles attributes his high level of fitness to boot camp. But not the type where you take an hour class and then get on with your day, but the real deal and inspiration for today's hottest fitness craze. He is a lieutenant in the Marine Corps and believes that fitness isn't just a job requirement but a way of life.

"I've learned to take care of myself and love the feeling I get after a tough workout, but it wasn't always that way," says Jason, "I can't imagine going back to the sedentary lifestyle I was leading before enlisting in the Marines."

He had to train hard just to meet the minimum requirements to start boot camp, but says now he is always "competing against himself," consistently training to get the maximum score in the Marine Corps Physical Fitness Test (PFT) which is taken every six months. To get a perfect score you must run three miles in less than 18 minutes, do 20 dead-hang pull-ups, and complete 100 crunches in two minutes. He says the Marines emphasize a functional approach to fitness during training, such as buddy carries and plyometrics, but use the PFT as a gauge on overall fitness.

His favorite distance is the 5K because it's far enough to have to pace yourself, but "short enough where you can give everything you've got." That isn't to say Jason isn't tempted by distance. He hopes to run his first marathon within the next year.



John Platero

You could call it a blessing in disguise. An ACL tear during a pick-up football game when he was 23 was the first of three ACL surgeries; only to leave him without one by the time he was 28. That blessing was an introduction to the world of cycling. "I had always ridden a bike but never raced one," says John Platero, 53, of Thousand Oaks. He formerly focused on bodybuilding, baseball and basketball.

Clearly he was a natural at cycling because that was the beginning of his highly decorated career as an amateur cyclist. Among the highlights are 36 medals – including 21 gold – in state, national and international competitions, and he is a two-time National Senior Champion. His goal and expectation this year is to win gold in the Master's Pan American Games and the overall best cyclist in both road and mountain biking at the Huntsman World Senior Games.

As the Director of Education for the National Council of Certified Personal Trainers, he practices what he preaches. His training regimen is structured and varied to avoid injury and burnout and includes hitting baseballs, kayaking and core workouts. When he isn't working out, he is playing the drums, and has even written a book entitled *Yes You Can! Fitness After 40 – A New Beginning*.

