

COACHES



TODD WEISSE AND JEREMY BUSCH

Inspiring a Rare Kind of Trust

Todd Weisse and Jeremy Busch, co-coaches of Brooklyn's Williamsburg Track Club, believe that the community of runners should be open, with athletes from different clubs training together and sharing information. Busch and Weisse once worked together at the Urban Athletics store on the Upper East Side, and after attending the 2008 U.S. Olympic in Eugene, OR, they were so inspired by the camaraderie among runners and coaches that they founded WBTC last December.

WBTC runners train on Thursdays in Central Park, a concession to those members who live in Manhattan. On Tuesdays, the group works out on the track at McCarren Park in Williamsburg. "Jeremy and I feel that to make runners faster, you have to get them on a track instead of just timing their runs on the road," says Weisse, the WBTC president. "Most of our members had never run on a track. It's the best way to develop your form and efficiency. It's been fun watching our runners improve.

Almost all of them compete now at Icahn Stadium and the Armory."

The WBTC's 35 members range from sprinters to ultramarathoners, from veterans to rookies, from 12-year-old Amy Hosking and 15-year-old Eddie Owens—the NYRR Male Runner of the Year in the Boys' 15-19 division—

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to 66-year-old Rae Baymiller, who holds the world marathon record in the 55-59 age group at 2:52:14.

"Bill Shelton, one of our runners, was a four-time All-American in the 400 meters at Texas A&M, and this year he ran at the National Indoor Masters Championships, his first track meet in 20 years," Weisse says. "We relish the opportunity to coach anybody.

Generally, Jeremy will take the distance runners and I'll take the sprinters."

Busch, 27, competed in cross country and track as a boy in Oregon, but Weisse, 42, didn't start running until he was 32. "A friend asked me to run with her in the New York City Marathon, and when I finished, it was, other than my wedding day, the greatest day of my life," says Weisse, a former soccer player. "I've been hooked on running ever since."

Weisse and Busch have earned coaching certifications from USA Track & Field and the Road Running Club of America. In addition to their WBTC duties, Weisse coaches privately and is a volunteer assistant at Columbia University, and Busch coaches at Packer Collegiate Institute in Brooklyn. Busch became a coach while competing in cross country at Brooklyn's Saint Francis College.

"My love of coaching stems from my love of running; I enjoy running because it's symbolic of freedom," says Busch, who blogs regularly on williamsburgtrackclub.com. "Both Todd and I read every piece of literature about coaching we can get our hands on. From this education, we use common sense and personal attention to get the athlete from one level to the next. There's no magic pill in running. It really takes a lot of smart, hard training mixed with patience."

Today, neither Busch nor Weisse runs competitively. "With the way we approach coaching at WBTC, it's a full-time commitment," Busch says. "Come race day, I need to be on the sidelines offering my athletes encouragement."