

# Shalane Flanagan

## Versatile Runner



Shalane Flanagan grew up in Marblehead, Massachusetts, the daughter of two elite runners. Her mother once owned the American record at 5000 meters and the world record in the marathon and her father was a world-class marathoner. Growing up, Shalane participated in soccer and swimming as well as cross country and track. She was a three-time high school all-state cross country performer and won state championships in the mile and two mile.

At the University of North Carolina, she won two NCAA cross country titles and a NCAA Indoor 3000 meters title. She made her first Olympic team in the 5000 meters but did not advance from her heat at the 2004 Olympic Games.

After turning professional, Shalane suffered increased pain in her left foot. She visited nine different doctors before one finally discovered that she was born with an extra bone in her foot. The bone was tearing a tendon so the bone was removed and the

tendon repaired. The surgery took her out of the 2006 season, but she came back the following year more determined than ever.

Shalane set the U.S. indoor 3000-meter record (8:33.25) and the outdoor 5000-meter record (14:44.90) in 2007. The following year she ran the 10,000 meters for the first time and set an American record of 30:50.32. At the 2008 Olympic Trials, Shalane ran the 5000 and 10,000 meters, winning the 10,000 meters and placing third in the 5000 meters to make her second Olympic team. Competing at the highest level, Shalane had her finest hour in the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. She finished in third place in the 10,000, shattering her old American record (30:22.22) and winning the only distance medal for the U.S. in the Beijing Olympic Games. She became only the second American woman ever to win an Olympic medal in the 10,000 meters. She was also 10th in the 5000-meter race.

Shalane moved up to the marathon in 2010 debuting at the New York City marathon with a time of 2:28.49, the best finish by an American woman in that race in 20 years. Shalane decided to run the marathon at the 2012 Olympics and won the U.S. Olympic Trials marathon, setting a meet record of 2:25.38 to make her third Olympic team. In London, Shalane ran against one of the strongest marathon fields ever assembled and finished a highly respectable 10th place in only her third marathon.

### Questions for Thought:

1. Shalane has been a versatile runner during her career. How do you go about being more versatile?
2. Shalane had the courage to move up in distance. How do you define courage?
3. Shalane grew up in a running environment. How do you create a successful environment for yourself and others?