

# CASE STUDY

This month we catch up with Canadian ultrarunner **STEPHANIE CASE**, fresh from an 8th place finish in the Racing The Planet Australia

**S**TEPHANIE CASE is not your average ultrarunner. For a start, she's only 28, something that singles her out from 99% of her fellow competitors, many of whom are in their late thirties/early forties - and beyond.

Secondly, her 'day job' is as a human rights lawyer, which means long hours and limited training time - although Case is very good at getting the maximum returns from whatever training time she can manage during the week.

Like other ultrarunners we've met, Case is extremely focused - and competitive: the words 'did not finish' are simply not in her vocabulary. For example, her participation in last year's Racing the Planet 250k challenge in Namibia was threatened by two painful stress fractures.

Despite having to wear a cast on her leg right up until the moment she left for the airport, she pushed past herself to the limit to finish 1st in her age category and well up the field in what is a brutal event. Case is one tough cookie.

Other career highlights include a 3rd place overall in the Racing the Planet Vietnam event, 7th woman in the Ultra Trail du Mont Blanc TDS event and 1st female and 9th overall in the Vermont 100 Mile Endurance Race.

*Running fitness* caught up with the high flier on her return from the Racing the Planet (RTP) Australia event, where she excelled again to finish 2nd woman and 8th overall, in some of the most inhospitable conditions known to man (and woman!).



**RF.** Why chose the Australia race? What is it about RTP events that is so attractive to you?

**SC.** In my opinion, Racing the Planet is the premier endurance race series. RTP races open up remote areas of the world to which one would never otherwise have access, and there are always new event locations to choose from. The level of competition in the RTP races gets stronger every year, while at the same time the events remain open to novice runners who are eager to get into the sport. This combination is unbeatable because it creates a bond between runners of all backgrounds, regardless of experience. The goal of the RTP events is to get every runner across the line and you can really feel that during the race. The sportsmanship and camaraderie among the participants is unreal. My closest friends are ones that I met though RTP events...In fact, this summer I will be a bridesmaid for a former tentmate of mine from an RTP race in Vietnam, who is marrying another competitor she met during the event!

**RF.** How would you say your training had gone prior to the event?

**SC.** I have yet to enter a race feeling completely satisfied with my training, but this time I was a bit more worried than usual. I lost about seven weeks of training to a femoral shaft stress fracture, which meant that I still wasn't running about five weeks before the actual event was to take place! However, with the support of the team at the Bowskill Sports Injury Clinic, the encouragement from my coach Ray Zahab (world record holder and ultrarunning legend), and the facilities available to me at The Third Space gym, I was able to keep cross-training though my injuries and stay focused on the race. I find it hard not to get discouraged, but I try to remind myself that 110% is all you can give!

**RF.** You had an epic journey. Did you ever think you wouldn't make it? And did it make you more determined when you got there?

**SC.** Six days of travelling for six days of running might seem crazy to some, but with all of the sacrifices I had made in my training over the past few months I couldn't bear the thought of missing the race. I knew there had to be a way to get there - it was just a question of how. If I needed to take a 14-hour cab ride from Paris to Madrid, then so be it! I must admit, however, there were certainly a few tears along the way. As stressful as the journey was, it helped to deflect some of the pressure I was feeling about the race. The journey actually helped me feel more relaxed, rather than determined, as I was just so grateful to be able to participate at all by the time I got to Australia!