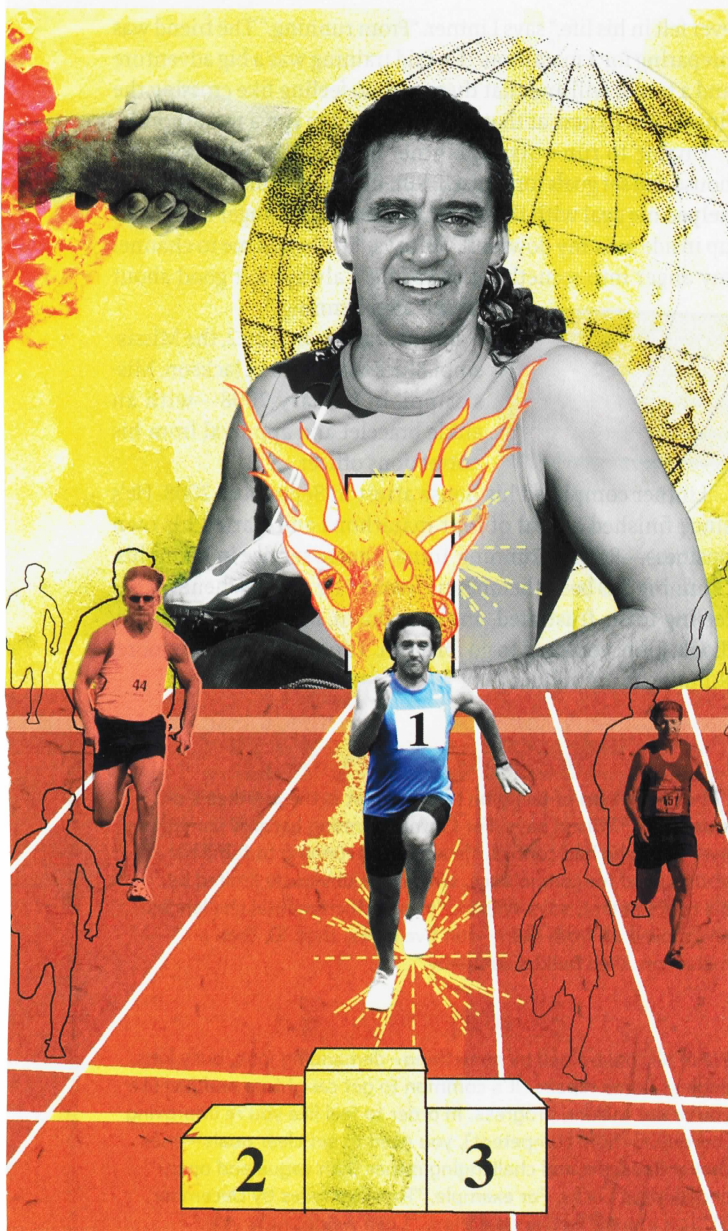


➔ WHAT MOTIVATES HIM ➔

Competition



Steven Sashen 48

Occupation: Creator and CEO, Invisible Shoes

Residence: Boulder, Colorado

Growing up and through early adulthood, Steven Sashen had always been athletic. If it was fun, competitive, and social, he was interested. He competed in gymnastics and experimented with circus arts. After several injuries, he gave up his high-flying pursuits and started looking for another sport to fill the void. A friend told him about masters' racing, and at age 45, he started running.

It took Sashen close to two years to figure out the sport: He tried different training routines and learned the value of recovery and listening to his body. Today, he's half a second away from being an All-American master's sprinter in his age group in the 100-meter dash. In August, he ran a 12.4 in the Rocky Mountain Masters Games in Fort Collins, Colorado. He needs to hit 11.9 to earn a coveted top-25 ranking in his age group. "That carrot is really tasty-looking," he says.

A former stand-up comic, software developer, and now entrepreneur in the running-sandal business, Sashen is a determined individualist, and running suits his personality perfectly. Training and racing satisfy his competitive drive, and he enjoys the camaraderie of other sprinters and the opportunity to meet people from all over the world. "There are a lot of interesting people who are smart and fun," he says. "But let's not leave out that I love being on the track and beating some high school kid and then saying to him, 'Dude, I'm older than your dad.'"

Why Racing Works

Racing fulfills Sashen's need for competence—there's always a time goal to chase or a higher ranking to achieve, says motivational expert Philip M. Wilson, Ph.D., associate professor of physical education and kinesiology at Brock University in Ontario. He has control over his running because he devises his own training plan and executes his own racing strategy, but the group dynamic of the track allows him to feel part of a bigger community.

Make It Work for You

Find a foe. Healthy competition can make you a stronger, more competent runner, says Edwin Locke, Ph.D., emeritus professor of leadership and motivation at the University of Maryland. Make bets, set up weekly races with friends, or participate in training races sponsored by local running clubs. Or if you run alone, set mini-goals like picking off the runner ahead of you. Engaging in friendly rivalries puts you in charge of your performance (autonomy) while fostering a sense of community (relatedness).

Sashen's Motivation Meter

