

Empire Runners Club Hall of Fame 2012

Jon Hermstad

b. 7/27/1948

Jon “Thermo” Hermstad is one of the Empire Runners Club’s international running stars... or perhaps our only actual international running star. Born in Norway, Jon grew up on a dairy and pig farm. Running was a part of life on the farm. Cows and pigs don’t always come when their names are called. The schoolhouse was located five kilometers from home – a distance that needed to be covered on foot or ski.

Running was not Jon’s first success. He tried ski jumping and found it the most thrilling sport in which he ever competed. Later he changed to cross-country skiing, which he did for a couple decades. As a multi-sport athlete, Jon had a stint with biathlon (that’s shooting and skiing, not running and biking), soccer, handball and orienteering. Outdoor activities are a big deal in Norway!



Jon took up competitive running at age 15 without any specific training. He ran mostly on lactic acid, but a year of obligatory military service at age 20 toughened him up.

Jon continued running cross country, relays, track events and trail races. His PRs included a 4:07.6 1500m (track), 15:56.8 5000m (track) and 48:57 15k (road – 5:15 mile pace!).

One of the biggest events for Jon and Norway are the annual Holmenkollen Relays in Oslo, in which 1,500 teams compete. There are 15 members per team running distances ranging from 600m to 3k.

Jon moved to California with his American wife in 1979 but returned to Norway twice before settling down. In 1990 he joined the Empire Runners Club and has been a member ever since.

A regular at many club events, Jon has placed or won his age group in more than a few. His top accomplishments include a 35:30 10K, 2:12 800m and 4:52 mile.

More recently, Jon has competed in several trail runs and half marathons, winning his age group at the Santa Rosa Half Marathon in 2009 and the Humboldt Half Marathon in 2011.