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## A builder of champions

By I. Donnell Moore

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Dr. Juan Gonzalez didn't start out to train athletes. He set out to train champions.

That most of the champions he trains are female just kind of happened.

"Females wanted to learn from me, never the guys," said Gonzalez, an exercise physiologist at Schreiner University. "Mothers usually call me because they want to get their girls to get over the hump.

"I started out training runners, but those days are over. Champions don't know they're champions most of the time. But they dream about becoming one. Champions know how to win and champions know how to train. I don't train runners anymore, I train champions."

Gonzalez started out as a high school cross country runner who wanted to help other competitors get to the next level. Barbara Torres was the first athlete that he trained and the results were phenomenal.

"Barbara was a good runner who competed in the 1,600-meter run, but I knew she could do better." Gonzalez said of Torres, who went on to run cross country at Georgetown University and is now a soccer coach in McAllen.

"When we started training she ran a 5:28 in the 1,600 and in three weeks she had improved to a 5:16. It's funny. The girl she beat that year, her mother called me and asked could I train her daughter to do the same thing. Since then, that is how my runners have come to me."

Most heralded coaches display trophies of their accomplishments in their office but not Gonzalez. His wall is filled with photo after photo of athletes he has trained — female of course.

"I have never had a female come to me and say, 'I am the best, make me better,'" Gonzalez said. "Females are more of a challenge to me. ... It just makes me work harder to get them where they need to be."

Gonzalez has been in Kerrville for a short period of time, but has noticed some positive traits about the area.

"Kerrville is the perfect place for a runner to train," Gonzalez said. "It has so

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many different venues to explore. Schreiner, to me, has the perfect exercise science program for an ESS (exercise and sports studies) major and it just seemed to call me here. A good program should offer students a good education as well as good experience. Schreiner does a great job of that."

Gonzalez also said he noticed the lack of equipment in San Antonio and the Hill Country, equipment vital to a runner's success.

"I use a MAX VO2 test to determine the capabilities of every runner," he said. "The test determines how much oxygen you use when running and can essentially tell me what you can do. If I test a team, the MAX VO2 will tell me who will finish 1 through 5. I haven't found one program that utilizes it around this area, including San Antonio."

Among Gonzalez's other "toys" — his term — is a Bod Pod, used to determine body composition, body fat and weight assessment.

"Only by accurately measuring body composition will you learn the amount of fat and lean tissue that makes up your weight," Gonzalez said. "It's the best way to get the whole picture of what's really going on in your body. For example, if you lose lean muscle, that means you've lost speed and that is not good."

One of Gonzalez's athletes is Janel Campbell, a swimmer attempting to rebound from a injury. Gonzalez said he believes her injury to be an adductor type injury, but said he wouldn't know until he has worked with Campbell's physicians and physical therapists.

Janel's father, Marshall Campbell, said it was a adductor injury and they had very few answers before working with Gonzalez.

"He has been extremely great to us," Marshall Campbell said. "It's a blessing he has been here to help us, really a surprise blessing. (Janel) feels much stronger and has been able to increase her repetitions."

Janel Campbell is an avid swimmer, but has not been allowed to do certain strokes for fear that the injury would become aggravated.

"She has been responding well to the treatments and Dr. Gonzalez used the Bod Pod to determine her status," Marshall said. "But we won't know when she will be back at full strength. We hope she will be back to form in less than a year. Working together, we think it might be sooner than that."

With Gonzalez's help, Campbell could be the latest addition to his wall of champions.



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