



Viano family's First to the Finish franchise continues to thrive, opens new location

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EDWARDSVILLE - **First to the Finish** is operating in strong fashion at a new location - 2341 Plum St. in **Edwardsville**.

First to the Finish also moved its corporate headquarters inside the building that houses the new retail store.

Austin Viano and his sister, **Kelsee**, have joined the First to the Finish corporate team in Edwardsville. The two are the children of former running great **Mike Viano**.

Mike Viano started the business 30 years ago in 1987 and Austin Viano said its been amazing to see the progression of the business.

“From what I hear from stories, dad started selling Converse shoes out of his car at races, then out of his basement and eventually a store front in **Carlinville**. He built a warehouse there,” Austin Viano said. “Today, it is even more special to have my sister, Kelsee, in the business.”

Mike Viano ran semiprofessional until he was 31.

“He was a big marathon runner,” Austin Viano said of his father. He was a teacher at the time and running and selling shoes on the side when he started the business. He ran the business for about seven years while he was teaching and he quit his teaching job to establish his flagship store.

First to the Finish has a retail location at 1325 N. Broad St. in Carlinville, where the business began. The business also has a location at 1457 Bass Pro Drive in **St. Charles, Mo.**, and at 315 Lincoln Ave., Suite 200, **Charleston**.

First to the Finish offers a wide variety of items at its stores from cross-country, distance, middle distance, sprint, throwing shoes and long jump spikes. The business has a wide range of men’s and women’s running apparel, bags, backpacks, socks, team singlets, team shorts, team sublimated uniforms, team warmups, jackets, pants, team speed suits and even wrestling apparel.

From an equipment standpoint, First to the Finish has replacement spikes and wrenches, runners watches, Carbon Mystic Poles, Pacer Mystic Poles, Skypole Poles, Skypole EZ Plant Poles and Throws Value Packs.

“We are hoping to add on to the bike path connection to Goshen Trail,” Austin said.

The corporate and retail offices are now housed in the new First to the Finish facility and a business called **The Bike Surgeon** is also being added to the equation.

“We added some treadmills so people can go in and try shoes out,” Austin Viano said. “We have a video camera that records you running to make sure what kind of shoe you need, whether it is neutral or you need some type of stability or cushioned shoe. It is a little extra service for people when they pick between all the shoes on the wall. We also have added a couple brands, including Adidas and Mizuno.”

First to the Finish is presently offering a holiday sale. Austin Viano encourages people to come out before and after Christmas to see what the new store has to offer.

Austin Viano is extremely proud of his father. Austin and his sister both ran in college. Mike was an outstanding high school runner in Gillespie and eventually at **Eastern Illinois University**.

“It’s amazing to look and see how he built the business,” Austin said. “It blows my mind how he raised us as kids and still built a successful business. He never missed a track meet or cross-country meet with his kids. That is kind of rare these days.”

The new Edwardsville location is open from **9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday**. The hours are **9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday** and **noon to 5 p.m. Sunday**.

For more information, contact **1 (800) 747-9013**.



