

A lucky 7 in Striderland for 2015

Obsie Birru runs really fast!

Johnston prep and Grandview grad Obsie tackled the Twin Cities Marathon, easily, scoring a 2:36:53. This is the 6th best on the all-time Iowa women's marathon list and is an "A" standard Olympic Trials time. Birru joins over 40 "A" very fast US women toeing the line at the trials in Los Angeles, February 13, 2016. Obsie's season on the track or road races included a 35:47 10K. A record 6 Iowa women will be running in the trials. The other 5 are Danna Herrick, Lisa Uhl, Yelena Nanaziah, Erin Moeller and Susie Duke (these 5 made the 2:45 "B" standard).

Record speedy runners at Dam to Dam Half-Marathon

Iowa's Distance Classic had 26 athletes record top times, 1:08:50 from men and 1:23:40 for women. 12 men and 14 women beat the time standards, including Lisa Uhl winning the women's race. The previous record was 11 men in 2012 and 12 women in 2003, both during the 20k era. The last 2 years at Dam to Dam, only US or Iowa runners were eligible for prize money - - making for an exciting race and honoring the local runners.

Runablaze Iowa celebrates it's 10th year

Started as a women's only team, it now represents both genders and the best Iowa runners. The 2006 team competed at the USATF club xc championship as did the 2015 team, 10 years later. Coincidentally both championships were held at the famed San Francisco Golden Gate Park. The team includes Iowa prep champions that went on to collegiate All-American status.

Heartland Cross Country Classic - - 10th years old too

High School xc is decades old in Iowa. The boys have competed for 86 years and girls 50 years. But the Roosevelt hosted meet at the ISU xc course, while a newcomer, is the top high school invitational in the state. Often it is as competitive as the state meet with top teams from surrounding states winning. State champ Ryan Schweizer of Dowling Catholic lead his team to 3rd at Heartland. Six weeks later they won the state team title.

HyVee Road Races end after 3 years at Drake Relays

The road races at the Relays 1989-1992 offered big time prize money, eventually sputtering. A couple decades later HyVee took up the banner, presenting a big time race, but it too lost inertia. The race on the roads in 2016 is reverting to the 19 year (1994-2012) tree-lined and park like course through the western DM neighborhoods - a runner favorite. The road races are entering their 48th year. Let's hope it continues as a race for the everyday runner.

Truth in Race Entry Fees

It's no doubt that race entry fees the last decade have grown fast, exponentially. Runners have accepted the \$50 fee for longer distance races, seemingly without "protest". Race organizers have gotten even more creative offering the introductory fee many months prior to the race, before most runners have even considered lacing up their shoes. Race fee deadline and increases were developed to slow down procrastinators. Now it's a PR move allowing races to charge runners even more closer to race day (like \$75).

What's the future of Iowa racing on the roads?

No predictions - who would have guessed there would be races where runners wear elaborate costumes, drinking alcohol being more important than running, music groups every mile, medals for all and the list goes on. Road races are no longer hidden from the public like 40 years ago. They have evolved, mostly for the good! But when races seem more intent on the bottom line, they lack long-term appeal. Regardless, passionate race organizers still exist, it often shows in the races they direct.