



NOTES OF STATISTICAL INTEREST

from the 2008 race

Although the number of individual finishers declined a bit and the women's field was a bit shallow, the 2008 Equinox Marathon was, nonetheless still a tremendous event, with a huge relay field, and a very good men's field. Read on:

Registration Information

Participation in the 2008 race was up, and down, from one year ago, but generally continued the growth trend of recent years.

- Relay participation has gone wild. From 62 teams in 2006 to 89 teams entered in 2007, to 108 entered and 102 finishing in 2008
- There were 41 teams each in the women's open (38 finished) and mixed open classes (38 finished). There were nine each in men's open and mixed masters classes, seven in the master women's and a single team in the master men's class – all of these teams finished.
- Individual marathon participation was down slightly from 2007, from 558 (272 men/286 women) to 527 (261 men/266 women).
- This was the second consecutive year where women entrants outnumbered men.
- The 527 registered was the third-highest total since 1995
- Of the 527 entries, 445 finished in under 10 hours, with a fairly normal "yield" of 84% of entrants finishing. The range for the past 12 years is 83% to 88%
- The 445 finishers was also the third-highest total since 1995
- By far the biggest classes were the 18-30 classes, with 57 women (62 last year) and 66 men (67 last year) entering. Next largest was 45-49 women (44 entries), 30-34 women (39 entries), 35-39 women and 40-44 men (34 entries), and 35-39 men (33 entries)
- The total of relay and individual entrants was 851, 26 more than last year's number.
- Likewise, the total number of participants (relay plus individual) finishing was 755, 15 more than last year's 741. Both those numbers are the largest in the past 14 years.

Where They Came From

This year's women's race had a South Central Alaska accent, with six of the first ten, and ten of the first 20 women from South Central. Only two men in the first 20 were from South Central.

Finish Distribution

The highest finish density occurred between 4:00:00 through 5:00:00, with 124 runners in that hour. From 4:00:00 through 6:00:00, 228 runners finished, an average of 117 per hour.

Fifteen runners – 14 men and one woman, finished under 3:30, compared to 12 (10 men/2 women) in the 2007 race.

Multiple and Consecutive Winners

Both of this year's winners were first time winners, so there was no change in the list of multiple/consecutive winners. For the second year in a row the prior year's runner up won the men's race, and a rookie won the women's race. Harald Ås joined the elite group of Equinox Champions as the 26th member. Equinox rookie Laura Brosius of Fairbanks became the 28th woman to win.

Winning Times

Laura Brosius was the 3rd-fastest female winner, continuing a trend of fast winners over the past 10-12 years. Ås was the 11th-fastest male winner, continuing a recent trend of faster winning men's times over the past 6-8 years, after some slower years in the 1990's. Coincidentally, last year's winners, Shelley Johnson and Matias Saari, were also the 3rd-fastest and 11th-fastest, respectively.

Victory Margins

Brosius destroyed the field, winning by almost 21 minutes (20:50) over runner-up Davya Baker, the 6th-widest victory margin ever for women. Ås' 6:10 margin over Saari was the 15th-widest for men.

Course Records

There were no course records set this year. It has been 24 years since Stan Justice's 1984 men's record of 2:41:30, and six years since Susan Faulkner set the women's record of 3:18:16 in 2002.

Winners' Ages

Laura Brosius, who celebrated her 24th birthday on race day, was the youngest winner since Jane Leblond won at age 24 in 1999. Prior to that, the youngest winner was Sue Chapman in 1985 at age 23. Of the champions whose ages we know, Brosius was the 9th youngest.

Marcie Trent holds down the top of the eldest list, with wins at ages 58, 55 and 52 (with teenagers winning between her victories). The next-oldest winner was Laura McDonough in 2006 at age 45. The youngest winner was Mara Rabinowitz in 1978 at age 12. It seems highly unlikely that either the oldest or youngest record will be broken.

Ås was the youngest winner since 26-year-old Daniel Shaw won in 2002. Of those for whom we know ages, Ås is the eighth-youngest. Bob Murphy in 1994 is the only runner to win the race after turning 40. Chris Haines, later an Olympic cross country skier, is the only teenager known to have won, running 2:59:01 (the first runner to break 3:00) in 1970 at age 19.

Age-Class Records

Three age-class records were established this year, all on the men's side:

- Jim Madonna (70-74) ran a 4:55:36 to break Lou Joline's 6-year-old record by 2:45
- Roger Sayre (50-54) clocked 3:09:44 which bettered Wayde Leder's year-old mark by 4:45
- Fourth-place finisher Mark Lindberg (45-49) took 2:49 off Wayde Leder's 2002 mark by running 3:02:37

Last year, four age-class records were set.

Year-by-Year Age Records

Sixteen new year-by year age records were established, compared to 10 one year ago. Noteworthy records included:

- Madonna (70), Sayre (50) and Lindberg (45) all set records for their ages as well as for their age groups
- Three of the age-records broken were 19 or more years old:
 - Laura Brosius set the age-24 mark (9 year old record held by 3-time champion Jane LeBlond)
 - Heather Best set the age-31 mark (22-year-old record previously held by Lyn Gilbert)
 - Mike Kramer broke the age 40 record of Stan Justice, set in 1989 when he finished 2nd to Bob Murphy

- 1977 Champ Eric Skidmore lopped 42:18 off the age-61 record with a 3:54:13
- Jon Nauman knocked almost one hour (59:39) off the age-69 record, clocking 5:49:50
- Wayde Leder lost two age-group and age records, but established a new one for age 51 with a 3:14:35
- Gracen Loveless of Salcha, age 10, sliced almost 2-and-a-half hours off that record with a 5:04:46
- Elaine Nelson improved the age 62 mark by 36:22 with a 4:52:51
- Monte Jordan lost her age 62 record to Nelson, but ran a 5:18:11 to improve that record by 34:23
- Phyllis Church established a record for age 73 (no previous record) with a 7:06:14 – one of four records she holds (67, 69 [also a 65-69 class record] 71 and 73).

New Men's Records

| Age | Name | Place | Time | Old Record Holder | Year | Years | Place | Time | Diff. |
|-----|----------------|-------|---------|--------------------|------|--------|-------|---------|-------|
| 40 | KRAMER, Mike | 3rd | 3:00:28 | JUSTICE, Stan | 1989 | 19 Yrs | 2nd | 3:03:16 | 2:48 |
| 45 | LINDBERG, Mark | 4th | 3:02:37 | LEDER, Wayde | 2002 | 6 Yrs | 4th | 3:05:26 | 2:49 |
| 50 | SAYRE, Roger | 7th | 3:09:44 | LEDER, Wayde | 2007 | 1 Yrs | 7th | 3:14:29 | 4:45 |
| 51 | LEDER, Wayde | 9th | 3:14:35 | REIFENSTUHL, Steve | 2002 | 6 Yrs | 10th | 3:19:30 | 4:55 |
| 55 | ARNDT, Jeff | 17th | 3:31:19 | DECUR, Jim | 2003 | 5 Yrs | 14th | 3:32:55 | 1:36 |
| 61 | SKIDMORE, Eric | 46th | 3:54:13 | SEMRAU, Fred | 1999 | 9 Yrs | 113th | 4:36:31 | 42:18 |
| 69 | NAUMAN, Jon | 168th | 5:49:50 | GUTHRIE, Dale | 2006 | 2 Yrs | 182nd | 6:49:29 | 59:39 |
| 70 | MADONNA, Jim | 120th | 4:55:36 | JOLINE, Lou | 2002 | 6 Yrs | 120th | 4:58:21 | 2:45 |

New Women's Records

| Age | Name | Place | Time | Old Record Holder | Year | Years | Place | Time | Diff. |
|-----|------------------|-------|---------|--------------------|------|--------|-------|---------|---------|
| 10 | LOVELESS, Gracen | 69th | 5:04:56 | BARSI, Linda | 1999 | 9 Yrs | 130th | 7:30:56 | 2:26:00 |
| 24 | BROSIUS, Laura | 1st | 3:20:40 | LEBLOND, Jane | 1999 | 9 Yrs | 1st | 3:27:12 | 6:32 |
| 31 | BEST, Heather | 3rd | 3:44:08 | GILBERT-GARD, Lyn | 1986 | 22 Yrs | 3rd | 3:44:45 | 0:37 |
| 54 | BARRETT, Mary | 7th | 3:57:04 | McWAYNE, Dorli | 2007 | 1 Yrs | 14th | 3:59:45 | 2:41 |
| 57 | STEVENS, Kathi | 55th | 4:52:50 | PETERSON, Colleen | 2004 | 4 Yrs | 41st | 4:57:07 | 4:17 |
| 62 | NELSON, Elaine | 56th | 4:52:51 | JORDAN, Monte | 2006 | 2 Yrs | 69th | 5:29:13 | 36:22 |
| 64 | JORDAN, Monte | 80th | 5:18:11 | WUTTIG, Barbara | 1999 | 9 Yrs | 76th | 5:52:34 | 34:23 |
| 73 | CHURCH, Phyllis | 171st | 7:06:14 | no previous record | | | | | |

100 Fastest Women's Times

The cutoff time for the top 100 times dropped 23 seconds, from 3:50:04 to 3:49:41. Only three women posted new times on the list this year, and Brosius' 3:20:40 was the only new time in the top 50.

Brosius now is ranked fourth all time, with the third-fastest winning time (Jane LeBlond's runner up 3:19:59) is still the 2nd-fastest time ever. Another rookie, Davya Baker Flaharty, is now ranked 53rd, courtesy of her 3:41:31, and Heather best moved into 68th with a 3:40:08.

Getting bumped from the list were Helen Desinger (3:49:59 – 1980), Dawn Long (3:49:59 – 1988), Karen Williams (3:50:04 – 2004).

100 Fastest Men's Times

The standard for men to be included on the top 100 list improved by only eight seconds, from 3:04:05 to 3:03:57, but that was enough to accommodate five times from the 2008 race.

The first five finishers of this year's race had top-100 times (compared to three in 2007). As bumped Saari's 2007 time from 16th to 17th. Saari's 2:56:22 was good for 39th. Mike Kramer 3rd-place time of 3:00:28 is now 62nd, Mark Lindberg's 3:02:37 earned him 86th place, and Kevin Brinegar's 3:03:49 is now 98th – and not very secure for next year.

Disappearing from the list were Kevin Brinegar's 3:03:59 in 1997 (he won the race), Ken Zaklukiewicz' identical time in 1995, and Daniel Kelliher's 3:04:01 in 1980. The 3:04:05's of Bill Gardner (1995) and Tony Davies (1998) also went away.

25 Fastest Men and Women

Only Brosius made the list of 25 fastest women. She is ranked fourth. Her time bumped 2006 champion Laura McDonough from the list. She had recorded a 3:39:59 in finishing seventh in the ultra-fast 2002 race. Sue Chapman, Bobbi Fyten, and Dolly Lefever have all show tremendous staying power, having resided on the list for more than 20 years.

Ås retained his 7th place position on the list, right behind this year's runner-up, Matias Saari. Equinox founder and legend Nat Goodhue, a two-time champion, is still among the top 25 fastest runners. I believe that he has been on that list every year since the race started in 1963. That's a very impressive streak. Chris Haines, the 1970 and 1973 champ, is the second-longest-tenured member of the list, holding down 23rd spot with his 1973 time of 2:58:19.

Sub 3:45 / Sub 3:00 Clubs

Brosius, Flaharty and Best became the 36th, 37th and 38th members of the women's sub 3:45 club. Best had a nearly 16-minute PR from her 2007 time to join this elite group.

There are no new members of the men's sub-3:00 club from the 2008 race. Saari added his 4th sub-3:00 clocking, and champion Harald Ås recorded his 2nd sub-3:00, becoming only the 8th man to accomplish that. Kramer missed adding a 6th sub-3:00 time to his resume by a mere second per mile (28 seconds).

Stan Justice holds the record of recording sub-3:00 performances in eight consecutive years. Saari is the next most consistent in that category with four consecutive sub-3:00s. Brinegar (1999-2001), Kramer (2004-2006) and Bob Murphy (1978-80) recorded sub-3:00's in three straight years

Benchmark Times/Depth of Field

Eight women ducked under the four-hour mark in 2008, compared to 14 in 2007, and the record of 15 in 2001. The three sub-3:45 times were about average for the past 13 years, since such times became more common (28 sub-3:45 performances through 1996 [an average of less than one per year], 46 sub-3:45's since, an average of about 3.5/year).

Generally speaking this year's women's race was on the slow side of average compared to the other years in the recent past. Only Brosius' time was noteworthy.

The men's race was just about average at the top of the field, with two runners, Ås and Saari, breaking 3:00. The current streak of eleven consecutive years with men breaking 3:00 (20 sub-3:00's in 11 years) is the second-longest such streak in Equinox history, behind only the 12-year stretch from 1978 through 1989 (33 sub-3:00's in 12 years). We might not be in the "glory years," but it's a pretty good stretch.

Fast Top 10 Times

The Women's field was somewhat on the shallow side, with only Laura Brosius' winning time moving into one of the top five rankings for place finish – her 3:20:40 was third-fastest among winners. Laura McDonough equaled Carol Stewart's 10th-ranked 6th place time of 3:55:45, 50+ Mary Barrett of Palmer had the 9th-fastest 7th place time, and Amanda Copus (3:58:03) was 6th-fastest among 8th-place finishers.

The total of four women moving onto this list was the third-fewest of the last 12 years, comparing poorly with last year, when all 10 women in the top 10 moved onto the list.

The men's field was one of the strongest ever, with the most runners moving into the top 10 of the top 10 since the 1986 race. Mike Kramer posted the 10th-fastest 3rd place finish, Mark Lindberg was 8th among 4th-place runners, and Kevin Brinegar had the 6th-fastest 5th place finish. The next five runners also moved onto the list: Simon McLaughlin (7th-fastest 6th place), Roger Sayre (8th-fastest 7th place), Patrick Lane (5th-fastest 8th place), Wayde Leder (6th-fastest 9th place), and Brian Smith (10th-fastest 10th place).

In addition, Harald Ås' winning time was the 11th-fastest ever (1:52 behind the 10th-fastest), and runner-up Matias Saari's time was the 12th-fastest for that position, 1:55 off the list. Taking those times into consideration, the 2008 men's race will have to go down as having the strongest field in more than 20 years. Compare this to 2007, when only two runners (Ås and Brinegar) moved into the men's top 10).

The times that were bumped this year say a lot about the relative glory years of the men's and women's races. The men's times bumped came from 1977, 1981 (2 times), 1984 (2), 1998, 2002 and 2006 – there are still lots of “old” times on the list. Remaining from the 1977 race are Ken Coe's 7th-ranked 4th place time of 3:02:37 and George Morse's now 10th-ranked 3:13:52 for 8th place.

On the women's side the oldest time bumped from the list was from 1997. One time each from the 1999 and 2005 races were bumped as well.

If this top 10 data is used to determine the answer to the question: “What was the best field ever in the Equinox Marathon?” the answers are quite obvious. For women, the 2002 race is the best, based upon the fact that not only are all ten of the first ten runners on the list, but they are ranked generally ahead of the corresponding places for the 1998, 2000, and 2001 events, which also have ten of ten runners on this list. The average rank of 2002 runners among the top 10 for their places is 1.4 (6x1st, 4x2nd)

For the men, the obvious answer is 1983. Twenty-five years after that incredible race, the best times ever for 2nd, 3rd, 7th (and 8th – there was a tie for 7th) 9th and 10th still come from that race, and the times for the winner and for 6th (from a 5th-place tie) are the second-best on the list. The longevity of those times is testimony to the quality of that race. The average rank of 1983 runners among the top 10 for their places is 1.5 (7x1st, 1x2nd, 2x3rd).

See the graph and commentary later in this document.

Who Da Man? / Who Da Woman?

Other than Ås moving up from 37th to 12th, courtesy of his victory, there was little movement of note on the lists.

Brinegar, Kramer and Saari retained positions 3-4-5 on the list, although things tightened up a bit. After the 2007 race their point totals were 59-51-36 respectively. After this year's race, their respective totals are 60-56-43.

New Legends?

No runners not already on this list added to their “body of work” in a way that would recommend expanding the list from the current group. Saari, Kramer and Brinegar padded their resumes with more good results.

I have added Pat Pyne to the list. She should have been on the list prior to this but was not on it due to my oversight. Her record in the 1960's with multiple top 10 finishes speaks for itself.

“Dinner Service”

Andy Holland brought to my attention that only two runners in the Equinox Marathon have achieved a complete “dinner service” – i.e. getting one of each of the five sizes of trophy plates awarded to the first five finishers. Only Pat Pyne and Tina Devine have finished in all of the first five places.

Several of the “Legends” have finished in four of the five top places, including the late Marcy Trent – 10 top five finishes, but no 5th place and Bobby Fyten, Pat Kling and Helen Desinger (no 5th places). More recently, Kristen

Bartecchi and Michelle Mitchell (and Lyn Gilbert) are only missing the “serving platter” that they would earn with a first-place finish. Susan Faulkner needs a runner-up finish to complete her set.

Matias Saari is the closest among currently active runners, with all but a fourth-place to his credit. Allan Doyle, the 1993 champion, is also missing the runner-up plate. Nat Goodhue never had a second-place finish, and Everett Rubel never captured the “big boy.”

Active runners missing two of the plates are Kevin Brinegar (needs 2nd and 4th), Mike Kramer (needs 4th and 5th), Harlow Robinson (1st and 4th), and Wayde Leder (1st and 3rd).

Oldies But Goodies

Laura McDonough recorded her eighth-consecutive sub-4:00 Equinox past the age of 40 – a streak unmatched by any other women. Jane Lanford added a 4:12:38, good for 13th place at age 53. Super-master Dorli McWayne (55 this year) was notable by her absence, and a “getting back into training” Susan Faulkner, 49, ran the whole race for the first time since her 2002 record-setting victory at age 43.

Gail Taylor (4th – age 43), McDonough (6th), Mary Barrett (7th – age 54) and Jane Baldwin (10th – age 48) provided a strong presence for the over-40 crowd in the women’s top 10.

Mark Lindberg and Roger Sayre earned their way onto the “old folks list” this year with their 4th and 7th place finishes with fast times. Lindberg, age 45, has run 3:05:14 and 3:02:37 the past two years. Roger Sayre has run every other year, beginning in 2004, and recorded 3:12:29, 3:10:47, and 3:09:44.

Forty and over runners Kramer, Lindberg and Sayre were joined by 43-year-old Simon McLoughlin (6th) in the men’s top 10.

This list should grow significantly in the next few years as Mike Kramer (40 for this year’s race), Kevin Brinegar (39) and Matias Saari (38) move inexorably closer to the Social Security set.

Streaks and Multiple Finishes

Added to the statistical archive this year is a listing of three Equinox runners who have distinguished themselves by their persistence and consistency in running and finishing the Equinox Marathon. The three runners listed, for whom we have collected data, are Corky Hebard, Bob Baker and Tom Wickwire. Between the three of them they have completed 95 Equinox Marathons.

Corky is the “champ” of the group with 37 finishes – 35 of them consecutive, from 1973 through this year (1992 is excluded as no race was held due to snow).

Baker was slightly ahead of Wickwire and gained one on Tom this year. “Bad Bob” now has 30 under his belt, the last 24 consecutive. Baker claims to have run from 1980 through 1983, but there is no proof of this in the documents we have researched. If you have proof, please contact Bob!

Tom Wickwire doesn’t have as long a consecutive streak as either Corky or Bob, but has finished 28 Equinox Marathons. Tom missed the 2008 race to attend a family wedding.

Tom (1979) and Corky (1981) both have had top-five finishes. Corky has been in the top 10 three times to two for Tom. Corky’s 3:08:58 is the best time among the three, and he also has a 3:10. Tom has two 3:11’s.

Between the three of them they have had 26 top-20 finishes: 11 for Corky (10 in a row from 1978 through 1987, during which time his slowest run was 3:30), nine for Bob and six for Tom. All in all, it’s a remarkable record of stick-to-itiveness and longevity.

If you know of any other such streaks, please bring them to my attention.

Split Times Notes

Women's Race

Laura Brosius' 3:20:40 race was paced very similarly to Julie Udchachon's 2005 race (3:20:24), and somewhat differently from Shelley Johnson's run last year (3:21:07). Brosius was slower than Johnson at every checkpoint to Ullrhavn (the top of the chute on Ester Dome), but faster for every segment after that. Interestingly, her ascent of the Dome is the slowest among all the sub-3:23's for which we have split data.

Last year's top eight in the women's field was pretty well settled by the top of Ester Dome. This year there was more movement up and down the field among the leaders. Amanda Compton started out back in the mid-teens, but paced herself up to a podium position at the finish. Megan Kuklok had a less dramatic move, improving from the low-to-mid-teens for most of the race to 9th at the finish.

On the other hand, Kaci Griffin was in the top six for the first nine miles, eighth on top of the Dome and at the turnaround, but faded badly to finish 26th. Sam Wuttig started out in the low teens, but dropped back to 24th at the finish – but could console herself with a 2-minute PR.

Runner-up Davya Baker was a “steady Eddie” through the race: fourth place at the first few checkpoints, third in the middle of the race, then moving into second over the final third of the race.

Heather Best placed third and improved 16 minutes from 2007. At the St. Patrick's-Ester Dome intersection, more than 1/3 of the way into the race, Best was a mere 48 seconds ahead of her pace last year – on track for an improvement of 2:24. Then she went to town: she lopped four minutes off her Ester Dome ascent, was three minutes faster from Ullrhavn to the Turnaround, 30 seconds faster from the Turnaround back to the top of the Chute, 3 ½ minutes faster from the top of the Chute to Gold Hill Road, and 5 ½ minutes faster from the Gold Hill-Henderson intersection to the finish. Nine of her 16 minutes of improvement came between the top of the Chute and the finish, a section over which she faded a bit last year.

The 2008 women's race was somewhat slower than the 2007 race. Compton's 3:55:34 for 5th this year was 17 minutes slower than Debbie Cropper's time last year; Jane Baldwin's 4:07:52 in 10th was 10 minutes slower than Amanda Copus' time in 2007. Similar differences continued for several places down the finish list.

Men's Race

Compared to the fastest races of recent years for which we have data (Kramer's 2:47:02 and Saari's 2:49:22 in 2005) Harald Ås started his race semi-conservatively. With a very strong individual field and very strong relay runners, it was a relatively easy thing to pace off others while still holding a solid pace. Compared with Saari's winning pace of last year, though, Ås was faster at every checkpoint except the Henderson-Gold Hill intersection. In 2007 Saari plunged down the hill from the top of the Chute to the intersection in 24:17 compared to Ås' 24:52 this year. However, Ås was 29:12 from that point to the finish, compared to Saari's 29:44 last year – and 32:21 this year.

Saari lost contact with Ås between Ullrhavn and the Turnaround. Ås was 1:13 ahead when they headed down the Chute, and he pulled away steadily from there, gaining nearly five more minutes over the last nine miles.

Saari was ahead of his 2007 pace as far as Ullrhavn, but then lost time steadily over every segment from there to the finish.

Kramer ran strong early, as is his habit, but he also fell victim to Ås' relentless pace on the Out-and-Back and on the run-in. By the 19- or 20-mile mark, Kramer looked like he had determined that he would be unable to challenge for the top two positions, and put it on cruise control.

Mark Lindberg started very aggressively, running at the very front of the race to the top of Miller Hill, but from that point on his segment times were ranked 5th, 6th or 7th, and he ended up fourth, with a PR and an 45-49 age group record.

Kevin Brinegar was a steady fifth throughout the race.

Simon McLoughlin, who had some famously “ugly deaths” over the final miles of some of his early Equinox runs, executed what is likely his best pacing job ever, running a steady 6th and 7th throughout the race and running down Roger Sayre over the last five miles to nail down 6th place with a PR by over two minutes, and his third-best placing ever at age 43.

The champion “pacers” who started conservatively and worked their way up through the pack were Wayde Leder (surprise, surprise) who was 20th early and finished 9th, Patrick Lane who started out behind Leder (24th at the first checkpoint) but used the fourth-fastest ascent and fourth-fastest Out-and-Back to move up to 8th at the finish. Tenth-place Brian Smith’s move up through the field peaked at the top of the Chute in 9th place, but then he faded a little at the end.

The guys who flew early and came to earth later included 14th-place Drew Harrington (6th-8th early, 26th-fastest over the last 5 miles), Nathan Stewart, 16th (7th-8th-9th early, 24th-fastest Out-and-Back, 26th fastest run-in), and 25th place Evan Hone (13th-14th-15th early, 27th fastest Out-and-Back, 35th fastest run-in)

This year’s race was somewhat faster than last year’s. Five runners were ahead of last year’s 4th-place time; eight runners were ahead of last year’s 5th-place time, and 13 runners were ahead of last year’s 10th-place time.

Relay Notes

This year was “the year of the relay.” Besides a huge increase in relay participation over the past couple of years – from 62 teams in 2006 to 89 teams in 2007 to 108 entered teams in 2008 – the quality of the teams increased dramatically.

The first two teams (both men’s teams) ran faster than the previous record time. The third place team moved into fifth place, and a fourth team moved into seventh all-time on the list.

When it comes to leg time records, this year also rewrote the book. Jerry Ross, Chris Eversman, Chad Carroll and Patrick Stinson all moved into the top 10 for first leg men’s times. Marius Korthauer took three seconds off the old second-leg record and Todd List also moved into the top 10. Einar Often, the teammate of Eversman and Korthauer, also set a record (by 54 seconds) for the third leg. In addition, Tom Ritchie (teamed with Ross and List), Patrick Conway and Bill McDonnell moved into the top 10 all time.

With all those records, the amazing thing is this: the Ås-Kickers, the winning team, used the fourth-fastest first leg (Chris Eversman) as well as record-setting legs by second leg runner Marius Korthauer and anchor Einar Often to break the record by more than nine minutes. But they were still 84 seconds – three seconds per mile, slower than Stan Justice’ 1984 record.

When informed of this, Einar Often’s first comment was: “On the same course?” The answer, of course, is yes, on the same course.

The impact of this year’s race on the women’s lists was not as great. No women moved into the first leg all-time top 10. Ashley Feaver set a new record for leg 2 by just over a minute, and Dawn Hurley moved into 7th on that list. Molly Krehlik was the only runner to move into the top ten for the third leg.

Take a look. You’ll never run out of things to analyze.