



NOTES OF STATISTICAL INTEREST

from the 2009 race

New Event

It's been 20 years since the Equinox Marathon added a relay, which has grown to well over 100 teams. This year saw another major change in the race with the addition of an ultramarathon of 50Km.

Registration Information

The overall trend for the total number of participants in the race is one of slow growth over the past three years. This year's total number of participants is 899, up from 851 in 2008 and 825 in 2007. Participation in the marathon shrank for the second consecutive year, from 558 in 2007 to 527 last year and 473 this year. However, this year the total number of entries in the marathon and ultramarathon combined (473+54) equaled last year's total for the marathon. Looks like a zero-sum game, at least in the short term.

There were 54 entrants in the ultramarathon – 30 men and 24 women. The women had a remarkable 100% finish rate, while 23 of the men finished – a little better than 75%.

The relay continues to grow, from 108 teams last year to 124 teams this year. The relay has doubled in size in three years: 2006=62, 2007=89, 2008=108, 2009=124. The numbers in the relay held steady from 2001 through 2006, with between 55 and 64 teams each year, before this recent surge in field size, which coincides, not coincidentally, with the Team in Training participation, much of which is in the relay.

Where they Came From

There were four foreign participants in the race – marathoners from Austria, Great Britain and Japan, and a relay runner from Germany.

Thirty out-of-state runners participated, including 15 marathoners (2xCA, GA, IA, MA, ME, MN, NC, NY, OH, TX, 3xWA, WY), six ultramarathoners (2xCA, NY, OR, 2xWA), and nine relay runners (3xCA, CO, NC, OR, 3xWA).

One hundred five Anchorage runners made the 600Km trek north: 59 marathoners, 7 ultramarathoners, and 39 relay runners. Add in two marathoners and two relayers from Chugiak, three marathoners, an ultramarathoner and three relayers from Eagle River, a marathoner from Elmendorf and one marathoner and one relay runner from Girdwood and that makes 119 runners from the "muni" in the Equinox, about 13% of participants.

The biggest crowd came from Fairbanks – 551 participants. Other well-represented communities: Ft. Wainwright 39, Ester 8, North Pole , Eielson AFB 16, North Pole 53, Palmer 11, Wasilla 6, Kotzebue 6.

Finish Distribution

There was a bigger-than-normal spike in the 4:30-4:59 range, with 68 finishers to make it the busiest 30-minute period at the finish. The 30-minute segments on either side were considerably lower (45 in the previous 30 minutes; 48 in the following 30 minutes). There was a moderate surge with 57 finishers in the 5:30-5:59 range.

Multiple and Consecutive Winners

Both the multiple and consecutive winners list changed this year. Laura Brosius added her name to both lists, with her second consecutive win being her second win overall. Matias Saari added a second win to his palmares, and did not become the runner with the most second-place finishes in the history of the race.

Winning Times

Thirteen was the lucky number for Saari and Brosius, as both champions recorded the 13th-fastest winning times in the history of the event.

The eight fastest women's times have all come since 1998. Only Nancy Felix' winning time in 1989 (3:25:19) and Mari Shirazi's winning time in 1995 remain in the top 10 from races prior to 1998.

On the men's side it's just the opposite, with only Mike Kramer's 2:47:2 in '05 and Kevin Brinegar's 2:47:29 in '99 among the top 10 from races since 1998. However, the 11th through 16th-fastest times have all occurred this century, so when you look at the 16 fastest male winners, things even out between eras.

Victory Margins

Laura Brosius cushion over runner up Melissa Lewis (3:03) was the 9th-closest margin ever from women. Saari's 3:45 advantage over Stensland placed them right in the middle of the pack – 23rd fastest of 46 races.

Course Records

Twenty-five races have been run since the men's record of 2:41:30 was set by Stan Justice. Susan Faulkner's 2002 time of 2:18:16 has stood for seven years.

Winners' Ages

At age 39, Saari became the second-oldest winner among men, younger only than Bob Murphy who won his sixth and final Equinox title in 1994 at age 42. If Saari wins again, he would become only the second male runner to win after turning 40.

Laura Brosius was the 29th-oldest/17th-youngest winner among women. More remarkably, she became the only person ever to win the race twice at the same age, turning 24 on the day of the 2008 race and not turning 25 until the day after this year's race.

Age-Class Records

Jim Madonna broke his on 70-75 age class record by a whopping 27:46 – more than a minute a mile. Fifty-five-year-old Mary Barrett broke one of Marcie Trent's three age class records (55-59, 60-64, 65-69), with a 3:56:50, 14:53 faster than Trent's 32-year-old (1977) time.

Last year three men's age-group records were broken, but no women's age-group records were broken.

Year-by-Year Age Records

Two men's records (ages 39 and 71) were set, and seven women's records were established (ages 39, 47, 54, 55, 56, 65, 72).

Matias Saari elbowed Nat Goodhue out of the top spot for 39-year-olds with a 2:51:05, surpassing Equinox Marathon founder Goodhue's 30-year-old 2:58:52. Jim Madonna knocked a substantial two hours plus off Jack Townshend's age 71 record. Madonna's time was also a 70-75 age class record, and is one of three age records he owns (68-70-71). Saari owns only the age 39 record, but has his eye on the times in the early 40's, including Bozanich' age 44 mark of 2:58:01.

New Men's Age Records

Age	Name	Place	Time	Old Record Holder	Year	Years	Place	Time	Diff.
39	SAARI, Matias	1st	2:51:05	GOODHUE, Nat	1979	30 Yrs	3rd	2:58:52	7:47
71	MADONNA, Jim	82th	4:27:50	TOWNSHEND, Jack	1998	11 Yrs	182nd	6:28:31	2:00:41

Melissa Lewis shaved 42 seconds off Tina Devine's 3:33:20 time from 2001. Mary Barrett broke a 36-year-old mark by Marcie Trent for age 55, which cushioned somewhat Barrett's loss of the age 47 and age 54 records to Amy Dalton and Jane Lanford, respectively. Dorli McWayne broke Trent's slightly younger 1974 record for age 56. Monte Jordan broke Doris Cooper's age 65 record (Jordan now holds the age 64 and age 65 records) and Cooper in turn smashed Barbara Wuttig's age 72 record by more than two-and-a-half hours.

McWayne is one of the most prolific of age-record holders, currently on top of the rankings for ages 51, 52, 53 and 56. Lanford also owns the age 48 record in addition to her new age 54 honors. Cooper is on top for ages 70 and 72. Trent still rules with records for ages 58-59-60-61-63-68. Remarkable.

New Women's Age Records

Age	Name	Place	Time	Old Record Holder	Year	Years	Place	Time	Diff.
39	LEWIS, Melissa	2nd	3:32:38	DEVINE, Tina	2001	8 Yrs	3rd	3:33:20	0:42
47	DALTON, Amy	6th	3:50:28	BARRETT, Mary	2001	8 Yrs	10th	3:52:29	2:01
54	LANFORD, Jane	10th	3:55:15	BARRETT, Mary	2008	1 Yrs	7th	3:57:04	1:49
55	BARRETT, Mary	12th	3:56:50	TRENT, Marcie	1973	36 Yrs	1st	4:15:22	18:32
56	McWAYNE, Dorli	14th	4:04:46	TRENT, Marcie	1974	35 Yrs	2nd	4:14:20	9:34
65	JORDAN, Monte	81st	5:31:01	COOPER, Doris	2002	7 Yrs	131st	6:24:57	53:56
72	COOPER, Doris	124th	6:28:25	WUTTIG, Barbara	2007	2 Yrs	236th	9:01:37	2:33:12

100 Fastest Women's Times

Five women joined the top 100 list this year. Besides Brosius 3:29:35/16th-fastest, Melissa Lewis (3:32:38/24th), Charity Walker (3:33:28/26th), Cortney Kitchen (3:43:35/68th) and Amanda Copus (3:48:00/96th) made the grade.

Gone from the women's list are Georgia Gustafson, Tina Devine's 3:49:09 from 1995, Kim Johnson, Pat Kling's 3:49:11 from 1986, and Eve Newman. Devine and Kling remain on the list with times that will not be bumped for several years.

100 Fastest Men's Times

Saari now has five times on the top 100 list, ranks 15-17-18 (this year's 2:51:05)-27-41. Not a bad record. Stensland's time was good enough to put him on the top page of the list in 37th place. Third-place finisher Tom Ritchie's time was 15 seconds too slow to join the list.

Bumped from the men's list were PJ Hill and Ken Zaklukiewicz.

25 Fastest Men and Women

Equinox rookies Melissa Lewis and Charity Walker moved into the 15th and 16th positions on the list of fast women. Brosius '08 time placed her in 4th all-time.

Stian Stensland was the only man to join the list, slotting in at the #16 position. Saari added to his number of fast times, and remains the sixth-fastest runner of all time.

Sub 3:45 / Sub 3:00 Clubs

Lewis, Walker and fourth-place Cortney Kitchen (3:43:35) became the 39th, 40th and 41st members of the women's Sub-3:45 Club. Stensland was the only male to join the Sub-3:00 Club, becoming the 29th man to break the three-hour barrier.

Benchmark Times/Depth at the Top of the Field

The men's race was pretty typical of the past several years. Beginning with the 1998 race, there have been one, two or three men under 3:00 each year, and this year there were two under the magic mark.

The women's race was also fairly typical of the period beginning in 1998. Since that time there have been 47 times under 3:45:00, an average of just under four per year; this year four women surpassed that standard.

Fast Top 10 Times

Brosius' 13th-fastest winning time was the only time in the women's top 10 that wasn't one of the 10 fastest all time for her place. Lewis had the 6th-fastest runner-up time, Walker was 3rd-fastest for third place. Others: Kitchen 7th-fastest in 4th, Amanda Copus 6th-fastest in 5th, Amy Dalton 7th-fastest in 6th, '08 runner-up Davya Flaharty 6th-fastest in 7th, Jenny Mahlen 4th-fastest in 8th, Amy Johns 4th-fastest in 9th, and Jane Lanford 3rd-fastest in 10th.

No men made the top 10 top 10 with their performances in the 2009 race.

Who Da Man? / Who Da Woman?

With her win, Brosius moved up into a tie for 12th place in the "Who da Woman?" list. Among those with whom she is tied are double-champions Sue Chapman, Nancy Felix, Carol Hogins, Mari Shirazi and Julie Udchachon. If Brosius runs next year and places fifth or higher, she will move into the top 10.

There were no meaningful changes in position on the men's list, but Saari has moved into elite territory on the men's list, with 53 points, putting both Mike Kramer (57 points) and Kevin Brinegar (60 points) within range of a good race in 2010. Only Justice (88 points) and Murphy (85 points) are above Brinegar.

Quality Streaks

Though Saari has won the Equinox only twice, his record over the past seven races is arguably the second-best long, consecutive-year streak among male runners, second only to Stan Justice' eight-year streak from 1980-1987.

During Justice' streak he recorded six wins and two second-place finishes, and ran under three hours each year, and under 2:50 six of those years. Saari's streak of seven years includes two wins, four runner-up finishes, one third place, and five consecutive sub-3:00 times, one of which was under 2:50.

The overall records of Murphy, Brinegar and Kramer may be superior to Saari's, but their records included interruptions. Brinegar's longest streak of continuing finishes was three years (three wins), Kramer did the same; Murphy had two wins and a second in three years. None made it four straight years.

There are several women with long consecutive streaks: Tina Devine (eight years, four wins, a 2nd and a 3rd), Bobbi Fyten (seven years, three wins, two seconds), Pat Kling (seven years, two wins, two seconds, two thirds). A number of women have shorter, high-quality streaks of three to four years.

"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. No one joined that elite club in '09.

Among those who are still active who are only missing one piece of the dinner service are: Kristen Bartecchi Rozell (no 1st place), Michelle Mitchell (also lacking a winner's platter), Susan Faulkner (no 2nd-place plate); for men: Mike Kramer (no 5th-place), Matias Saari (no 4th Place) are the only runners with a shot at the whole set over the next few years.

Oldies But Goodies

Mike Kramer's 2nd year in the 40+ group was a pretty good one, with a 4th-place finish, but he missed out on his objective of breaking Frank Bozanich' 1988 record in the 40-45 class.

John Weddleton and Joel Wattum were pretty spectacular in the 50-55 class, finishing 10th and 11th. Weddleton is amazingly consistent: 2003-10th, 2005-10th, 2006-11th, 2007-12th, 2009-10th. And he was six years older in '09 than when he finished 10th in '03.

Gary Holton (40-44) was 12th, Wayde Leder (50-54) 15th; Jeff "Yellow Jacket" Arndt was the top finisher in the 55-59 class, with a 20th place. Jim Madonna had a super race and set an age-class record with a 4:27:50 at age 71. Jim was the only male to set an age-class record.

Four 40+ women finished in the top 10: Amanda Copus (40-44) 5th, Amy Dalton (45-49) 6th, Amy Johns (45-49) 9th and Jane Lanford (50-54) 10th. Mary Barrett's 12th-place finish in 3:56:40 was also an age-class record, the only women's age-class record set in 2009.

Besides Barrett's outstanding performance, the second 10 was also heavily populated with 40+ runners: Jane Baldwin (45-49) 13th, Dorli McWayne (55-59) 14th, Karol Fink (40-44) 17th, Marcia Martin (50-54) 18th, and Tina Devine (45-49) 20th. Half of the first 20 women finishers were over 40.

Streaks and Multiple Finishes

Corky Hebard, Bob Baker, and Tom Wickwire continued to add on to their impressive total of Equinox Marathon finishes. Hebard recorded his 38th finish (including a few hiking finishes), Baker his 31st, and Wickwire, after taking last year off to attend a niece's wedding in 2008, his 29th. Hebard is 67 and Wickwire is 65. Baker is a youngster at age 51.

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

Relay Notes

Only two teams made the top 10 in their gender classes, Team FAST (Werner Hoefler, David Norris, Roger Sayre) won the Open Men's class in 2:44:13, the second-fastest men's performance of all time, behind last year's "Aas-Kickers" 2:42:54.

Jane LeBlond, Lisa Beattie and Heather Best ("Saving the Best for Last") recorded the third-fastest women's time of 3:30:08, 2:47 slower than the 1997 record set by the "Ski-Runners."

David Norris was the only relay runner to set a record for his or her leg, with a 58:20 for the very rugged leg 2. This was 2:01 faster than Marius Korthauer's 1:00:21 of last year. Three other men and seven women moved into the top 10 for their legs.

Norris' teammate Werner Hoefler ran the second-fastest first leg, only three seconds off Kevin Donley's 10-year-old record. The third member of the team, Roger Sayre, was fifth-fastest for the anchor leg – not bad for an over-50 runner.

Among women, Jane Leblond (1:00:52) had the third-fastest first leg of all time (behind fellow champions Laura Brosius' 58:58 (2007) and Susan Faulkner's 59:32 (2003)). Leblond's teammate Heather Best posted the fourth-fastest ever anchor leg. The holder of the two fastest anchor leg times for women is none other than Mara Rabinowitz, the 1979 champion at age 12. She recorded her relay times in 1999 and 1996.

Other women moving into the top 10 all time for their legs were Nellie Ballou (8th-fastest second leg) and anchor leg runners Debbie Cropper and Krista Heeringa – 6th-and 7th-fastest, respective.

Split Times Notes

Women's Race

The women's race started out looking at least as boring as the men's race. Brosius was ahead of Faulkner's record pace at the first checkpoint (Ballaine/Yankovich), but lost a few seconds per mile to fall behind record pace by the second (Yankovich/Miller Hill) and third checkpoints (Ester Dome/St. Patrick's Road). Then things started to get interesting.

Charity Walker tore it up on the ascent of Ester Dome to checkpoint four (Ullrhavn) with a time of 33:50, more than three minutes faster than Brosius, who had the fourth fastest-ascent (36:56). Brosius was looking a little peaked at the summit of the Dome before starting the Out-And-Back, and Walker was looking strong. Under the radar, eventual runner-up Melissa Lewis had the second-fastest ascent (34:58) and moved up from ninth at the St. Patrick's road to fourth at Ullrhavn.

Walker continued strong on the Out-And-Back, gaining 57 seconds on Brosius on the way out and another 46 seconds on the way back. Lewis was really picking up steam, running the fastest time from Ullrhavn to the Turnaround, seven seconds faster than Walker. Lewis gained 63 seconds on Walker on the way "back" and 1:49 on Brosius over the same stretch.

Out-And-Back times: Lewis: 38:14, Walker: 39:23, Cortney Kitchen (4th woman): 40:22, Brosius: 41:06. Amanda Copus (5th woman) was 41:50. Lewis' time is similar to Julie Udchachon's effort in her 2004 victory

(38:13). Sub-38 minute times were recorded by LeBlond in '01, Faulkner (37:15) and LeBlond in '02, Udchachon in '05 and Brosius last year.

At the top of the Chute it was Walker with 1:17 in hand over Brosius and 5:20 (that's right, 5:20!) over Lewis. Walkers quads headed south in a hurry, and Brosius was able to pull her into close proximity by the left-hand-turn at the bottom of the chute, taking over the lead shortly thereafter.

After suffering mightily ascending Ester Dome and running the Out-And-Back, Brosius was now back on track plummeting from Ullrhavn to Gold Hill Road in 30:28, over a minute faster than the second-fastest woman (Lewis, 30:30) and 93 seconds faster than Walker.

As she hit Gold Hill Road, Brosius had 15 seconds on Walker and was pulling away. Walker had 4:50 on Lewis. It would take a super effort from Lewis, combined with a substantial crash from Walker for Lewis to make up nearly a minute a mile over the final stretch but she did it with a 34:27 for the final leg. This was 2:02 faster than Brosius, but, more importantly 5:40 faster than Walker, whose time of 40:07 was the sixth-fastest for that segment.

Run-in times (top of the Chute to the finish, nine-miles): Lewis: 1:05:58, Brosius: 1:07:57, Walker: 1:12:08, Copus: 1:12:44, Flaharty: 1:13:38, Kitchen: 1:13:59. By comparison, the fastest run-in for which we have data is 1:04:16, by both Susan Faulkner in '02 and Laura Brosius in '08. Lewis' time is similar to the 1:05:40 recorded by Jane LeBlond in her 2001 victory.

Men's Race

The men's race was nowhere near as interesting as the women's race. Saari pulled into the lead early in the race and remained there for the whole distance. Ditto for Stensland in second. Kramer and Ritchie had a bit of back-and-forth in their battle for third place, won by Ritchie. Mark Lindberg was near the front for the first quarter of the race before dropping out – he said he didn't have it and couldn't see beating his head into a wall.

Fifth-place Drew Harrington was the only runner in the top seven who worked his way up through the pack, starting out 12th at the first checkpoint, 11th at Ullrhavn (the one-place improvement due to Lindberg's exit), then gradually working his way upward through the bottom half of the top 10, closing with the fourth-fastest run in from the last checkpoint at 20.5 miles to move into the top five.

Eighth-place finisher Jesse Carlstrom made the biggest moves upward during the race. He held places 24, 28 and 25 at the three checkpoints to the bottom of Ester Dome, then was 20th at Ullrhavn and the Turnaround. On the "back" portion of the Out-And-Back he gained seven places to 13th, knocked off three more places on the plunge from the top of the Chute to Gold Hill Road, and passed two more runners over the last 5.5 miles to the finish.

Out-and-Back times: Saari: 31:50, Stensland: 32:08, Kramer: 33:14, Ritchie: 34:42, Harrington: 35:58, Carlstrom: 36:21. Fifty+ John Weddleton recorded a noteworthy 36:54.

Daniel Shaw's 29:54 in 2002 is the only sub-30 for which we have data, although legend has it that Stan Justice recorded a time in the mid-28's in one of his victories. We have data for at least seven Out-And-Back times superior to Saari's 31:50 – including two by Saari (30:53 in 2007, 31:17 in 2005).

Run in times for the top 10: Saari: 54:45, Stensland: 57:30, Ritchie: 59:49, Kramer: 1:03:32, Harrington: 1:03:20, Mark Brady: 1:07:06, Shane Hargis: 1:06:29, Jesse Carlstrom: 1:03:52!, Jeff Wells: 1:04:52, John Weddleton: 1:08:25.

Saari's 54:01 in 2007 is the fastest run in for which we have data, with Aas' 2008 54:04 second-best among the four previous sub-55 run-in times – Saari recorded the fifth sub-55 this year.

Among the biggest fades were Brady, 19th-fastest over the last 5.5 miles, and Weddleton, 23rd-fastest. Weddleton almost lost his 50-54 class title to the fast-closing Joel Wattum, whose 34:28 was almost four minutes faster than Weddleton's 38:22 over the same stretch. The margin between them at the finish was seven seconds.