



NOTES OF STATISTICAL INTEREST

from the 2010 race

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If you just can't get enough of Equinox Marathon Statistics, this section is for you. Take a look and see what you can find. If you think there's a statistical aspect of the event that might be interesting or if you see an error or an omission, please bring it to my attention by sending an e-mail to sportalaska@gci.net.

Farewell

. . . to the longest-serving race director in the history of the Equinox Marathon, Steve Bainbridge. During Steve's tenure as race director, participation increased from 260 finishers in the marathon to a high of 477 in 2007 – almost a doubling. Relay participation increased almost 400%, from 26 to a max of 125 in 2009. The ultramarathon was added in 2009. Total participants increased from 338 in 1995 to 907 in 2010. That's an amazing record.

Beginning in 1990, Steve ran the marathon 10 times, and ran the relay seven times. In 1990, he ran 6:19:12, then 5:36:01 in 1993, then PR'd the next year – 3:43:48, good for 27th overall. He had one more sub-4:00 performance in 1995, then ran between 4:00 and 4:36 for the remainder of his full marathon efforts. Pretty good performances for organizing **AND** running in the race.

Steve will be missed!

The Course

Due to sewer line construction along the normal finishing straight, which encompasses the normal starting area, the start and finish of the Equinox Marathon had to be modified. The distance from the start to the bottom of the hill was the same as with the "old" start, and the distance from the 26-mile post to the finish was still 385 yards. The sanctity of the marathon distance was not violated!

The start of the race was moved to the flat area just east of the "Beluga Pad." This area provided much more space for the field to line up in a level area, compared to the cramped, sidehill area previously used for the start. It was a major change for the better, and will likely be retained.

The finish presented more difficulties. The best space for the finish is clearly in the middle of the "Beluga Pad." It is a flat area with a good, smooth surface for running, and it provides a superior viewing area for spectators, families and friends who have come out to watch the finish.

The choices were: 1) add a maze or series of bends in the athletic field, then come up onto the "Beluga Pad" to finish; 2) run straight in and across the "Beluga Pad," and finishing east of the "Beluga Pad" on

ground which is not level with an uneven surface; 3) include a small climb near the finish on the flatter, bottom part of the “Beluga Hill,” then descend and finish on the “Beluga Pad.”

Our choice was the third option. It was not universally loved by runners, but it proved very popular with spectators, and added some drama to the finish.

REGISTRATION STATISTICS

Registration Information

This year the total field size for all events increased by 1%. However, relay entries were down 20% from '09 to '10 (372 to 300), but that was more than compensated by an approximately 40% increase in ultramarathon entries (from 54 to 74) and an increase of about 13% in marathon entries (from 473 to 533). The total number of participants was 907 (last year was 899). This was the fourth consecutive year that participation exceeded the 800 mark.

Since 1995, the only period for which dependable statistics are available, the 533 marathon entries was the third-highest, after 2002 (569) and 2007 (558). However, the combination of 74 ultra entries and 533 marathon entries made for 607 individual entries, an all-time (since '95) high.

The number of marathon finishers was up slightly from '09 (from 421 to 442), and about the same as '08 (445). Since exceeding 400 for the first time in 1999, the number of marathon finishers has fluctuated from a low of 330 in 2005 to a high of 477 in 2007. That's quite a broad range.

The relay this year dropped from last year's record of 124 teams to 100 teams. This was the third highest-number ever (there were 108 teams in 2008), but a significant drop, nonetheless. Ninety-six relay teams finished, but two teams were removed from the results due to missing one or both of the exchange points.

Where they Came From

Among marathon entrants, 16 of the lower 48 states were represented: Alabama, California (3), Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Iowa (2), Illinois, Indiana, Iowa (2), Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland (3), Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Texas, Vermont, Washington and Wyoming. In addition there was one Canadian (from Yukon) and eight Japanese.

Eighty-five marathon runners came from the Anchorage Bowl and Mat-Su Valley: 68 from Anchorage itself, eight from Eagle River, six from Chugiak, and smaller numbers from Girdwood, Fort Richardson, Palmer, Willow and Wasilla. Five marathoners came from the Kenai Peninsula.

Nine lower 48 states were represented in the Ultramarathon: Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Maine, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Washington. Eight Japanese also entered the ultramarathon, along with 14 runners from Anchorage.

Thirty-eight relay entrants came from Anchorage, five from Eagle River, five from Palmer. States represented among relay entrants included: California, Hawaii, Kentucky, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin, as well as Nova Scotia and Yukon among Canadian territories and provinces. Teppan, of Estonia, was the only non-North American in the relay.

Finish Distribution

The flow at the finish was a fairly-typical bell curve, but was somewhat fatter in the middle and skinnier on the ends than last year. This year's peak flow was, as is normal, between 4:30 and 5:00, but this year 82 runners finished in that time period, as opposed to 68 last year. This year the time between 4:30 and 5:30 saw 153 marathon runners cross the finish line, 37 (25%) more than one year ago.

CHAMPIONS

Victory Margins

Jane LeBlond's 10-minute, 41-second victory margin over Juneau's Rachel Phelps was the 13th widest for women. The men's race was much closer: the 2:28 between winner Matias Saari and rookie runner-up Eric Strabel was the 18th closest in 47 races.

Winning Times

LeBlond's 3:21:19 was the fifth-fastest winning time for women. Jane now owns three of the eight-fastest winning times, and four of the 12-fastest – not to mention that her runner-up time of 3:19:59 in 2002 would have won the race every year except that one. It is now becoming standard that a sub-3:30 is require to win the women's race. Since 1996, 12 of 14 winning times have been sub-3:30, and 9 of 14 have been sub 3:25.

Saari's 2:52:47 is the 18th-fastest winning time for men. His previous two victorious times are ranked 12th (2007, 2:50:23) and 13th (2009, 2:51:05). He also owns a sub-2:50 time which was good for second place behind Mike Kramer in 2005. It has now been 13 years since Kevin Brinegar ran 3:03:48, the last time the winner didn't break 3:00:00.

Winners' Ages

Saari now holds down both the 2nd and 3rd positions on the "Oldest Winners" list for men. Six-time champion Bob Murphy, who won in 1994 at age 42, is the only winner older than 40-year-old Saari.

The women's race is not so unkind to older runners, as there have been eight 40+ winners. LeBlond, at 35, is the =14th oldest women's winner, tied with Pat Kling (1981) and Tina Devine (1997). If LeBlond can win in 2013, she'll move into the top 10 on the list.

Multiple and Consecutive Winners

Saari became the 7th man to win consecutive races. Justice and Murphy (twice) accomplished back-to-back-wins. However Justice won four straight from 1984-87 and both Kevin Brinegar (1999-2001) and Mike Kramer (2004-06) won three straight. Saari has a chance to join that club in 2011.

Saari became the fifth man (along with Justice [6], Murphy [6], Brinegar [5] and Kramer[4]) to have won at least three Equinox Marathon titles.

Justice, Murphy, Brinegar, Kramer and Saari have combined to win 24 of the past 33 Equinox Marathons. Brinegar, Kramer and Saari have won 12 of the past 14 races, approaching the dominance of Justice and Murphy, who won 11 of 12 from 1978-1989.

LeBlond has equaled Tina Devine as a four-time champion, the highest total among women. LeBlond (1999-2001) also shares with Devine (1996-98) the honor of having won three straight races.

THE EQUINOX MARATHON PODIUM

First-Timers on the Podium Steps

Rookie runners Rachel Phelps (runner-up, Juneau) and Taryn Lopez (4th, Fairbanks) were newcomers to the Equinox podium, each collecting their first plates.

There were three podium newcomers among men. Dave Johnston (4th, Wasilla) worked his way onto the podium in his fifth Equinox with a 17-and-a-half minute PR and his first top-10. Rookies David Dyer (3rd) and Eric Strabel (2nd) made it to the podium on their first tries.

Who Da Man? / Who Da Woman?

LeBlond was on the podium for the fifth time – four wins and one second-place finish. Third-place Davya Flaharty was on for the second time in three years (she was second in '08), and 5th-place Jane Lanford (age 55) was most familiar with the podium, making her 6th appearance.

LeBlond leap-frogged Pat Kling to move into fourth in the “Who ‘da Woman” rankings, behind Marcie Trent, Tina Devine and Bobbi Fyten. Another win would move LeBlond into 2nd, behind Trent.

Drew Harrington put on a last-second sprint to eke out 5th place by a fraction of a second over Steve Humpal of Anchorage. It was Harrington’s second consecutive appearance on the bottom step of the podium – although last year he had a three-minute cushion. Saari made his 9th appearance on the podium, equaled by Brinegar, and surpassed only by the legendary Justice and Murphy.

Saari’s win moved him past Kramer and Brinegar into the third slot all-time, behind only the two legends.

Dominating the Podium

During the “Glory Years” when Stan Justice and Bob Murphy dominated the race, the two of them were on the top three steps of the podium in the same year five times. Four of those five times they placed first and second. It was Stan, then Bob in 1980 and 1984; it was Murphy first and Justice second in 1982 and 1989. In 1986 Stan won and Bob was third. So, in their best head-to-head matches, Stan holds a 3-2 lead. Murphy was the last one of the two with a podium finish, as runner up (by five seconds) to Tony Davies in 1995. In the 12 years from 1978 through 1989, Stan or Bob won 11 titles.

Only four years passed before a new crew began to dominate the podium – this time it was Kevin Brinegar, Mike Kramer and, a little later, Matias Saari. In 1999 Brinegar was 1st and Kramer was 3rd. Four years later, in 2003, Brinegar and Saari went 1-2, the first of six consecutive years when at least two of those three runners placed in the first three:

- 2003 1st – Brinegar, 2nd – Saari
- 2004 1st – Kramer, 3rd – Saari
- 2005 1st – Kramer, 2nd – Saari, 3rd – Brinegar
- 2006 1st – Kramer, 2nd – Saari
- 2007 1st – Saari, 3rd – Brinegar
- 2008 2nd – Saari, 3rd – Kramer (Harald Ås was the winner)

In addition to the top three steps, in 2000 Brinegar and Saari went 1-5; in 2008 Saari, Kramer and Brinegar were 2-3-5, and in 2009 Saari and Kramer went 1-4. In the 14 years from 1997 through 2010, Mike, Kevin and Matias have won 12 Equinox titles.

During this 11-year period,

- Kramer is 2-1 v. Brinegar and 3-2 v. Saari; 5-3 overall
- Brinegar is 1-2 v. Kramer and 2-3 v. Saari; 3-5 overall
- Saari is 2-3 v. Kramer and 3-2 v. Brinegar; 5-5 overall

THE TIMES, THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’

100 Fastest Women’s Times

LeBlond’s time was the 6th-fastest ever, Phelps’ the 25th-fastest, and Flaharty’s the 36th-fastest. They were the only women to move into the top 100, displacing Mara Rabinowitz’ 1979 winning time of 3:48:40, as well as Marcia Martin and Colleen Personett. Kristen Bartecchi Rozell now holds down the 100th position for the next 364 days with a 3:48:47. There have now been 82 sub-3:45:00 performances.

100 Fastest Men’s Times

The first three men also moved into the top 50, but no one else made it into the top 100. Saari’s time was 29th-fastest, Strabel’s the 39th faster, and Dyer’s the 44th-fastest. Leaving the list were Stan Justice’s runner-up time of 3:03:16 in 1989, as well as Don Wells’ 1978 time and Kevin Brinegar’s 5th-place time from two years ago. Harlow Robinson’s 3:03:11 is now number 100 on the list.

Through this year’s race 65 of the top 100 times are under 3:00:00. At the current rate it will be some time between 2020 and 2025 (around the 60th Equinox) before a sub-3:00 will be required to make the top 100.

25 Fastest Men and Women

Phelps and Flaharty both moved onto the list of the 25 fastest women, bumping Debbie Mumma (3:38:24 for 2nd in 1991) and Alyssa Shaw (3:38:38 for 6th in 2002).

Strabel and Dyer displaced Tony Davies (winning time of 2:58:23 in 1995) and Troy Larson (2:58:31 for 2nd in 1999) on the list of the 25 fastest men.

Benchmark Times/Depth at the Top of the Field

For the 9th time in history, and the first time in three years, there were three men under 3:00:00 (other years with three: 1978, 1979, 1983, 1986, 2005, 2007). In 1980 six men were under 3:00, and two years later five men broke 3:00:00.

This year marked the 10th time that three women had broken 3:45 in the same race. In 2001, 2002 and 2007 there were seven women under 3:45; five were under in 2000; four in 1999, 2003 and last year, and three in 1983, 1988 and this year.

Sub 3:45 / Sub 3:00 Clubs

Rachel Phelps was the only newcomer on the sub 3:45 list, becoming the 42nd woman to surpass that mark. Flaharty had previously joined in 2008. Twenty of those 42 women have “joined the club” in the past 10 years.

Rookies Eric Strabel and David Dyer became the 30th and 31st men to joining the sub-3 hour club, and the 5th and 6th to join in the past 10 years.

Fast Debuts

Strabel and Dyer moved into the 9th and 10th position on the list of fastest rookies – a list that a runner only has one shot at. In the last four races, there have been four of the 10 fastest rookie performances: Harald Aas' 2:51:08 in 2007, and last year's 2:54:50 by Stian Stensland.

Rachel Phelps had the 9th-fastest debut by a woman. The fastest-ever is Laura Brosius' 3:20:40 in 2008, followed by Shelley Johnson's 3:21:07 in 2007.

Fast Top 10 Times

Six women and three men made it into the "All-Time Top 10 Top 10" – the list of the fastest finish times for each of the first 10 places in the Equinox.

LeBlond's winning time moved her into 5th, bumping Mari Shirazi's 3:25:32 from 1995. Phelps became the 6th-fastest runner up, bumping Trish Livingston (1983), and Flaharty moved into 5th place for the third step on the podium, knocking Bobbi Fyten's 1991 race out of the top 10. Christie Hauptert became the 8th-fastest for 8th place, Cassidy Scholar 6th-fastest for 9th place, and Heather Gaines 7th-fastest for 10th place, bumping Maryellen Laberge, Sandra Kimbrell and Jane Lanford, respectively. Last year, places 2 through 9 all moved onto this list.

Third-place David Dyer (5th-fastest), 5th-place Drew Harrington (10th-fastest) and 6th-place Steve Humpal (7th-fastest) all earned positions on this list, displacing Mike Kramer, Corky Hebard and Robert Ripley, respectively.

RECORD-BREAKERS

Course Records

For the 26th year in a row there was no change in the men's course record. Jane Leblond threatened the women's record – she was on 3:20 pace as she began the descent of the Chute – but didn't make it, the eighth consecutive year the women's record has not been broken.

Age-Class Records

Jane Lanford now owns both the 50-54 class record and the 55-59 class record. She broke the latter this year with a 3:53:30, placing fifth and erasing Mary Barrett's one-year-old record of 3:56:50. Jim Madonna smashed his own one-year-old 70-75 record by almost five minutes, recording a 4:22:56 (v. 4:27:50).

Winner Matias Saari broke one of the older records, replacing Frank Bozanich's 1988 time of 2:58:01 with his 2:52:47, a 5:14 improvement.

NOTE: See complete list of age-class record setters and bumpees in Statistical Archives section 4

Year-by-Year Age Records

Six men and four women ran record times on the year-by-year age-record list. For men, Cass Keelan (age 8), Eric Strabel (29), Matias Saari (40), Wayde Leder (53), Jim Madonna (72) and Nobuhar Kohara (76) were the record-setters. Saari now holds the records for 39 and 40, Leder for 49, 51 and 53, and Madonna for 68, 70, 71 and 72 – the "worst" of the "multiple offenders" in this group.

Lanford's 55-59 age-group record was also an age 55 record. Lanford also holds the records for ages 48, 50 and 53. Dorli McWayne set a new mark for age 57, in addition to her marks for ages 51-52-53 and 56. Two other multiple-record-holders, Elaine Nelson and Monte Jordan, set the records for ages 64 and 66 respectively. Nelson, who broke Jordan's age 64 record, also holds the age 62 mark; Jordan has the age 65 mark as well as the age 66 mark.

NOTE: See complete list of year-by-year record setters and bumpees in Statistical Archives section 4

REALLY ESOTERIC AND OBSCURE INFORMATION

New Legends?

With his 2:52:47 victory this year, Saari has now put together the second-best consecutive streak of men's performances all-time. This marked the 6th consecutive year that Saari has run a sub 3:00:00 time, second only to Stan Justice's 8 straight years from 1980-1987 (all of Justice's sub-3's occurred during that run). Though six of Justice's times are faster than Saari's PR of 2:49:22, no one else has approached such a streak.

Brinegar (1999-2001), Kramer (2004-06) and Murphy (1978-80) all have three-year streaks of consecutive sub-3:00:00 races. Brinegar has six sub-3's over a nine-race period ('99 to '07), Kramer has five over a nine-race period (1998-2006), and Murphy has the most sub-3's, with nine of them over an 18-race span, from 1978 through 1995. His record of 17 years between first and last sub-3's is really remarkable.

Streaks and Multiple Finishes

Corky Hebard (39, 37 consecutive), Bob Baker (32, consecutive since 1984), and Tom Wickwire (30) continued to "plug along" on their streaks and accumulation of multiple Equinox Marathon finishes.

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

Oldies But Goodies

Saari's win in his first Equinox as a 40-plus runner was a noteworthy masters performance, as was Jane Lanford's 5th-place age class record time.

Dorli McWayne, age 57 placed 6th; 42-year-old Janna Miller was the only other female master in the first 10. Kristin O'Brien (42) was 13th, and Cindy Bravo (47) was 15th. Dena Doublex just squeaked into the first 50 (49th) as winner of the 60-64 class.

Mark Stevens of Anchorage (41) just missed the top 10 with an 11th-place finish. Greg Finstad, age 55 placed 18th in winning his 55-59 class, an outstanding performance, but he didn't win comfortably – "classmates" Rick Johnson (56) and Terry Honeysett (58) placed 20th and 21st overall.

In the top 50 were eight 40-44 men, three 45-59 men, three 50-54 men and four 55-59 men. Jim Madonna's age and age-group record performance was good for 77th, outstanding for a 72-year-old.

"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.

Five men have four-fifths of a dinner service: Mike Kramer is missing 5th, Matias Saari is missing 4th, Allen Doyle lacks 4th, Nat Goodhue is without 2nd, and Evertt Rubel doesn't have a 1st-place award. Of these, Kramer and Saari are probably the only ones with a shot at the full dinner service.

Four women ranked in the top six all-time best are missing only a 5th-place award and odds are against any one of them completing their set: the late Marcie Trent, Bobbi Fyten, Pat Kling, Helen Desinger. Susan Faulkner is missing only the runner-up plate, and has a chance, although a long shot, of bagging the fifth award. Three runners have places two through five, but are missing the big one: Kristen (Bartecchi) Rozell, Michelle Mitchell, Lyn Gilbert-Gard.

HOW THE WINNERS PACED

Split Times Notes

Women's Race

In running the 6th-fastest time ever for women, Jane LeBlond ran a fairly steady race. She had the 4th, 5th, 6th or 7th-fastest segments for most of the segments of the race for which we have a reasonable amount of data.

Her fastest segments, in comparison to other fast times, were from the Yankovich Road-Ballaine Road intersection to the top of Miller Hill, and from the top of Miller Hill to the St. Patrick Road-Ester Dome Road intersection. She was 2nd-fastest ever for both those sections: 14 seconds slower than Faulkner's '02 record pace on the former section, and 11 seconds behind Faulkner's time on the latter.

Jane's time on the Out-and-Back section was fourth-fastest all-time, and was 16 seconds faster than she ran in her 3:19:59 in 2002. At the beginning of the descent of the Chute, she was only 22 seconds behind her sub-3:20 pace. However, on the run-in from the top of the Chute to the finish, she was 58 seconds slower than her '02 pace. Had she run the same time as in '02, she'd have recorded the 3rd-fastest time ever for women.

Julie Udchachon, who dropped out of the race on the ascent of Ester Dome, ran a very fast starting time of 16:59 to Yankovich/Ballaine – the 3rd-fastest ever. LeBlond passed Udchachon on the Yankovich/Ballaine to Miller Hill segment, but from Miller Hill to St. Patrick/Ester Dome Road, Udchachon ran the 2nd-fastest time ever, 22:45, only 7 seconds slower than Faulkner's pace.

Runner-up Rachel Phelps was consistently among the three or four fastest for each segment, and was more than a minute faster than LeBlond for the last 4.72 miles, from the Henderson Road-Gold Hill Road intersection to the finish (34:10 to 35:15).

Davya Flaharty was in third for the first 10-11 miles of the race, but assumed second place when Udchachon dropped out. She was 3 minutes ahead of Phelps when she reached Ullrhavn after the ascent of the Dome, but she lost two-and-a-half minutes of that lead on the return portion of the Out-and-Back (she was 10th-fastest for that leg). When she hit Gold Hill she was still 16 seconds in front of Phelps, but Phelps laid nearly 3 minutes on her over the last 4.72 miles (more than 30 seconds a mile) to sew up second place.

Among the top 10 finishers, 8th-place Christie Hauptert an 9th-place Cassidy Scholar were the best pacers. At the first checkpoint they were in 12th and 14th respectively, before gradually moving up into the top 10.

Who died the worst? That “prize” would have to go to Cheri Gomez of Fairbanks, who was 10th at 2.5 miles, 11th at 5.5 miles 15th at 9 miles, 17th at the top of the Dome, and finished 55th in 5:02:06.

Men’s Race

In terms of comparisons with previous fast times for which we have data, Saari ran somewhat similarly to LeBlond – a steady pace with no really remarkable segments. Saari took the lead early (an 18-second lead over David Dyer at 2.5 miles), and quickly made the decision that if no one was going to follow him, he would try to build an unassailable lead.

His lead over Dyer was still 18 seconds at 5.5 miles, and was down to 14 seconds at 9 miles. However, on the climb up the Dome, Dyer slowed and Eric Strabel, who had started out very conservatively in his rookie appearance in the Equinox, took up the challenge.

Strabel and Saari ran virtually the same time up the Dome, and Saari’s lead over Strabel held steady at 1:17. Matias gained 22 seconds between Ullrhavn and the Turnaround, and gained another 24 seconds on the return, boosting his lead 2:04.

Descending with reckless abandon is Saari’s specialty, and he averaged 5:34 per mile between the top of the Chute and Gold Hill Road, making his biggest one-segment gain on Strabel – 1:27, which boosted his lead to 3:30. Dyer descended that stretch 40 seconds faster than Strabel, but still 47 seconds slower than Saari. When he reached Gold Hill Road (2:21:00), Saari would have had to average better than 6:10 per mile in order to have broken 2:50. In ’08, Harald Ås reached Gold Hill in the same time, averaged 6:11/mile, and ran 2:50:12.

Saari averaged 6:44’s from there in, yielding a 2:52:47. Strabel and 4th-place Dave Johnston of Wasilla really burned up that last, pavement-heavy stretch, both running 30:44 (6:31/mile). Dyer lost only three seconds to Saari on the final segment, but lost 57 seconds to Strabel.

In looking at the segment rankings over the years, the biggest time losses for both Strabel and Dyer came on the Out-and-Back. Neither of their times for that crucial section were within 30 seconds of the 11th-best time that we have in our data. Most of their other segment times would have been in the lower end of our list of fastest times by segment.

Dave Johnston, an “ultra-guy,” paced very intelligently to move from 10th place at the first two segments to fourth by 20 miles, which he held to the finish. Wayne Leder was another outstanding pacer – to no one’s surprise – starting out 18th at the first checkpoint, then gradually picking people off until reaching 7th place.

On the other end of the pacing judgment spectrum was David Maxwell. At the first four checkpoints (all the way to Ullrhavn at 12.4 miles) Maxwell ranked 17th, 18th, 18th and 16th. He was still 28th after dropping 12 places on the Out-and-Back. However, over the final nine miles he dropped another 28 places to finish 55th.

RELAY AND ULTRAMARATHON NOTES

Relay Notes

Though the number of relay teams dropped, there were some outstanding relay performances. For the first time a relay team broke Stan Justice’ 1984 solo record of 2:41:30. Former UAF skier Vahur Teppan (Tartu, Estonia) ran a record first leg, (first sub-50 ever), middle-man Devin McDowell had the

2nd-fastest second leg ever, and became only the second runner to break one hour for that leg, and anchor Chris Eversman, former UAF runner from Salcha, set a new mark for the last leg by becoming the first runner to break 51. Their team (“Tall, Skinny, Handsome”) total was 2:39:50, 1:40 ahead of the individual record.

The “Larry’s Girls” team of Heidi Rader, Nellie Ballout and Krista (Rader) Heeringa ran the 4th-fastest time by a women’s team, and “Where’s the Hot Tub” (Meaghan Loughlin, Helen Cortes, Meaghan Loughlin) was sixth-fastest among women’s teams.

Jason Walker, winner of the Beat Beethoven and Chena River Run 5Km’s earlier in the season, pushed Teppan all the way through the first leg, finishing only 11 seconds back, and leading his team “We Are the Free Food” (Walker, Julia Coulter Pierson, Einar Often) to the third-fastest time ever by a mixed team. The “Tough Sheep” team of Leith Nye, Jason Croft and Greta Lewanski ran the 9th-fastest time ever by a mixed team.

Meaghan Loughlin equaled the 7th-fastest opening leg ever (1:03:01) by a woman. Teammates Nellie Ballou (2nd leg) and Krista Heeringa (3rd leg) both moved into 8th place on the all time lists for their legs.

Teppan, Walker, McDowell and Eversman, whose performances are described above, were the only men to post times that put them in the top 10 all-time.

Ultramarathon Notes

It is difficult to do much statistical analysis based upon only a two-year sample. However . . .

Damian Stoy’s winning time of 3:52:26 was 9:05 faster than last year’s champion, Rorik Peterson (4:01:31). Stoy and runner-up Bixler McClure became the first runners to break four hours for the 50Km distance. Last year there were three men under 4:30 – a number that doubled this year. However, both years there were only eight men under five hours.

The women’s race, on the other hand, was considerably slower than last year. Robin Beebee’s 2009 winning time would have placed her 3rd among men in 2009, and 5th among men in 2010. Laura McDonough’s 2010 winning time of 4:41:32 would have placed her one second behind third place in 2009. Tina Devine’s 2nd-place time of 4:50:40 would have placed her 5th one year ago.

More interesting is how similar the paces are for the top runners in the 50Km, compared to the top runners in the marathon. Stoy’s 7:29/mile pace, and McClure’s 7:30/mile pace would have placed them 7th and 8th in the men’s marathon field. Rorik Peterson, 3rd in the ultra at 7:49/mile, could have been 9th in the marathon.

Even with the slower women’s field this year, the per-mile pace of the top five runners would have placed them in the first 15 in the marathon (McDonough 8th, Devine 11th, Kincaid 13th, Goodwin 14th, Van Flein 15th).

With the paces of the leaders so comparable, it is clear that the 50Km race is not very different from the marathon distance.

McDonough became the first runner, male or female, to win both the Equinox Marathon and the Equinox Ultramarathon.