

A lucky 7 in Striderland for 2021



#1 Living History Farms race, a wonderful way to celebrate the end of the running season since 1979 is no more. The race had over 8000 runners in 2010 and was considered the largest cross country race in the US. All-Americans with speed and everyday joggers in costume - - it was a classic.



#2 Iowa State men shocked the cross country world finishing 2nd at the NCAA Championship. The men's top 5 scorers averaged 29:21 on the 10k course. Their finish matched their glory years when they were 1st-1989, 2nd-1990, 2nd-1991, 3rd-1993 and 1st-1994. The ISU women didn't take a back seat, they were the 9th best team.



#3 The Blazing 10k Invitational was the "race of the pandemic". Teams from Kansas City, Lincoln, Twin Cities, Chicago, Madison and local Runablaze Iowa competed. The race had 10 men breaking 30 minutes in windy conditions and a surprise victory in the women's race when the leader dropped out late in the race.



#4 The last decade, Dowling Catholic boys won 6 state championships (2011-12, 2015-16 & 2018-19). A new decade and the competition heated up. The team pulled an upset, winning at the state meet and taking individual honors too.



#5 2021 Drake Relays barely made it out of the starting blocks with a modified schedule, strict Covid restrictions and limited crowds. The rite of spring will come back with a flurry in 2022 (pictured 2019). Already the university teams are flocking to the blue oval and the field is considered one of the best in recent history. Whew, glad to have the Drake Relays back, it is the heart and sole of Striderland.



#6 Karissa Schweizer is the pride of Central Iowa, a Dowling Catholic grad. She burst onto the running scene as a collegiate during her junior year, winning the NCAA cross country, indoor 5,000 meter and outdoor 5,000 meter. At the extremely hot Tokyo Olympics she ran smart, finishing 11th in the 5,000 and 12th in the 10,000.



#7 The fall season spelled - we're back, finally! Races struggled in the spring and summer. As the pandemic eased, races roared back. The Des Moines Marathon had solid numbers and fast times. And the DM Turkey Trot had 5000 entrants, a record.

Honorable Mention:

- A trio of men burning up the roads - Austin O'Brien, Blake Whalen and newcomer Cody Baele.
- A trio of race directors making it happen on the roads - Chris Burch, Michael Zimmerman and Tyson Wieland.

By Cal Murdock, observing Iowa Running for over four decades.