

1970s - Iowa Running History

1978 - - Marathon mania invaded Iowa soil spurred on by running heroes - Frank Shorter 1972 & 1976 Olympic Marathoner and Bill Rodgers 4-time Boston & New York winner. The best of the day and faster ever by an Iowan at a Iowa Marathon was Frank Richardson (pictured, Frank is in the middle of the 3 runners) winning Iowa City Road Races in 2:18:09.



1978 - - At the Drake Relays 12 men broke 2:30 and a women ran 2:47:46. 193 of the 805 finishers were under 3 hours. Other marathons during the 1970s were held in Ames, Winterset, Fort Dodge, Okoboji, Storm Lake, Lamoni, Cedar Falls and Cedar Rapids.

1978 - - The fastest race of the decade was held in Cedar Rapids, the Adidas Armstrong 10k. It was won in 28:13 by Jeff Wells with Greg Newell one second back. The course was reportedly very short. Accurate measurement of courses was just beginning. Robert Ray got into the running with the Governor's Cup 10k starting and finishing at the state Capitol.

1977 - - Iowa races were in their infancy. The first Iowa City Road Races (now called Run for the Schools) started on a high note with over 300 finishers.

1975 - Bix 7 started with 83 runners on a hilly 7 mile route including 3 women. The winner won in a speedy 34:34.



1972 - - Midnight Madness (start & finish pictured) started as a marathon on Highway 30 bypass south of Ames that was under construction, which seemed perfect for a late night marathon. 12 runners finished Madness with the winner in 3 hours.

1969 - - the National Junior AAU Championships were held in Redfield, Iowa. The conditions were extremely cold (6 degrees). The winner was Jay Dirksen (pictured below) in 2:24:36. Jay later became the Nebraska cross country coach and won the first Drake Relays Marathon that same year.

