

## 秀秀秀 A lucky 7 in Striderland for 2007 秀秀秀

### 秀秀秀 Robyn Friedman running Faster & Faster 秀秀秀

Robyn is no stranger to fast times. As a Wartburg College runner she was a nine time All-American. Five years ago she got serious about the marathon distance and 2007 proved a breakout year. As the third best Iowa female all-time in the marathon, her two marathons in the fall were the best ever "double" by an Iowa woman. In October she set a best of 2:42:15 at the warmest Twin Cities in history, 4 weeks later she did even better on a tough New York City course with a 2:39:19. During the season she won Dam to Dam, Living History Farms and set her best in the half-marathon with a 1:16:10 at Park to Park. Her RunAblaze teammates had a very good year highlighted by Erin Moeller's 2:43:57 marathon best and Casey Owen's 33:38 10 kilometer and 16:12 5 kilometer on the track.

### 秀秀秀 Dowling Catholic Girls win Iowa, test the US 秀秀秀

Dowling girls breezed through the cross country season winning individual and team titles at every meet they entered. The State Meet in Fort Dodge proved their dominance, winning easily and becoming the first girl's team from Striderland to win the coveted title. A long season of training and competing didn't end as the team won the Heartland team championship, qualifying for the Nike Team Nationals where they finished 14th in the US. Star Dowling runner, Katie Flood, was the only NTN female to also qualify and run the individual Foot Locker Championship where she finished 8th, ranking second best sophomore in the nation.

### 秀秀秀 They soared - - Dam to Dam, Des Moines Marathon & Living History Farms 秀秀秀

The big three of Central Iowa running are more than numbers, although they had a banner year attracting runners. Dam to Dam had 3974 finishers in the 20 kilometer, Des Moines Marathon had 3871 finishers in the combined marathon and half-marathon and Living History Farms had 6232 finish the 6.8 mile. Each race had record numbers with almost 3,000 more finishers than 2006 in their featured race distances. Each race has developed a unique identity. Dam to Dam features the best of about running, with an early summer goal of running on a special course, reasonable entry fee, great results booklet and bountiful pre and post race refreshments. Des Moines Marathon has a big city feel that welcomes runners and walkers, has a big expo and offers something for everyone. Living History Farms had perfect weather, talented runners, rewards everyone after a long season of running and offers the most enjoyable race experience of the year. The Des Moines area is blessed to have these three races.

### 秀秀秀 Women have been getting the headlines, Men could easily too 秀秀秀

Iowa women have had spectacular years of late and Iowa men are poised for some good times too. Iowa isn't lacking talent on the men's side as evident by Marty Dalton's best marathon of 2:23:53 at Houston, Josh Moen winning Midnight Madness, Tommy Neal setting a record 1:07:45 at Park to Park Half-Marathon and Blake Bolden also setting a record of 1:08:07 at Des Moines Half-Marathon. Of special note is former Iowa resident Jason Lehmkuhle who was fifth in the Olympic Marathon Trials with a 2:12:54. Iowa men have a bright future. Possibly a club like the women's RunAblaze would solidify their efforts.

### 秀秀秀 Old Faithful - - Drake Relays On-the-ROADS 秀秀秀

Drake Relays has set the track world on fire as they host the NCAA Nationals in 2008, celebrate the 100th year of the Relays in 2009 and bring in the big guns with the USA T&F meet in 2010. With all the track action at Drake, it might be easy to forget one of Striderlands most beloved road races. Once a marathon ending a 25 year run in 1993, once a national 10 kilometer with 27:46 men's best and 31:44 women's best it now works perfectly as an 8 kilometer and Half-Marathon. This year was a picture perfect race with good weather, a beautiful tree lined and park like course, great start and finish area and race size that isn't crowded. On-the-ROADS has earned runner respect as it celebrates 40 years of great running in 2008.

### 秀秀秀 Best Striderland running didn't even happen at a road race 秀秀秀

The event may have been over hyped but the athletes were not. In terrifying heat, on a tough course running up the Capitol Walnut Street hill four times after swimming and criteria style bike racing, HyVee Triathlon athletes were amazing. Regardless of the grueling run the winning times were outstanding. The running portion of the triathlon had the men's winner finishing in 31:51 with 14 men under 34 minutes and the women's winner running a 36:52 with 13 women under 40 minutes. Considering the mid-afternoon heat, course difficulty and running as the third leg of the triathlon, this was some of the best racing seen in Striderland since the 'ole Drake 10 kilometer road races.

### 秀秀秀 First class runner, first class volunteer 秀秀秀

Iowan Joe Henderson in 1970 Runners' World said it simply, "Well, we aren't really that hard to please . . . just a chance to run" when describing early runners and races, pre-running boom.. Today we are in an era of big races that are run like businesses, with escalating entry fees and runners that need an aid station and music every mile to finish a race. So it's refreshing to have John Leonhart represent Striderland running at races here and throughout the US. John, a 50 state marathon veteran, has completed over 120 marathons. Additionally he is one of the founders of Dam to Dam where he remains a key volunteer, directs St Pat's race and is the voice at most area races, announcing finishers by the thousands each year. Through all his years of running John just desires a chance to run and be a part of great Striderland races - - nothing complicated.

By Cal Murdock, observing Iowa Running for three decades.