

Equinox Marathon - Close But No Cigar

The Best Runners Never to Win the Equinox Marathon

There are a number of outstanding runners who have run fast times and had high finishes, but who have never made it to the top step of the Equinox Marathon awards podium. Below are listed the Equinox Marathon histories of what I believe to be the best runners who have never won.

To winnow things down a little, I applied these standards: Women: must have finished in the top four at least twice, and must have run sub 3:50:00 at least three times; Men: must have finished in the top four at least twice, and must have run under 3:05:00 at least twice.

These standards eliminated female runners Linda Huyck (3:28:17 in 2002), Kat Betters (3:30:34 in 2001), three-time runner up Barb Page (1969-70-71) and Mary Ellen Laberge (2nd, 2x3rd and 5th between 1988 and 1995). Among men, Audun Endestad (2:52:47 in 1983) and Guy Thibodeau (2:53:05 in 1982), not to mention two-time runner-up Donn Wells (1976-77) and Forrest May (4th-3rd-2nd in 1972-73-74) were eliminated.

Female Runners

<u>Runner</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>3rd</u>	<u>4th</u>	<u>5th</u>	<u>Other</u>
Michelle Mitchell	1996	22	4:09:35				4		
	1997	22	3:52:57					5	
	1998	23	3:33:40		2				
	1999	24	3:38:17			3			
	2000	25	3:42:24				4		
	2001	26	3:33:47				4		
	2002	27	3:31:35				4		

<u>Runner</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>3rd</u>	<u>4th</u>	<u>5th</u>	<u>Other</u>
Dianne Munson	1985	24	3:41:33		2				
	1986	25	3:40:23		2				
	1987	26	3:43:49		2				

<u>Runner</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>3rd</u>	<u>4th</u>	<u>5th</u>	<u>Other</u>
Kristen Rozell	1997	26	4:10:33						11
	1998	27	3:59:59						8
	1999	28	3:47:14					5	
	2000	29	3:30:34		2				
	2001	30	3:46:12						8
	2002	31	3:54:36						10
	2004	33	3:48:18				4		
	2005	34	3:42:13		2				
2008	37	4:35:20						35	

Male Runners

<u>Runner</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>3rd</u>	<u>4th</u>	<u>5th</u>	<u>Other</u>
David Bloom	1983	25	3:01:54						7
	1984	26	3:02:20				4		
	1986	28	3:04:48						6
	1987	29	3:11:29				4		
	2005	47	3:47:49						25

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Mike Johnson	1983	25	3:01:54						7
	1985	27	3:05:17			3			
	1986	28	2:54:27		2				
Kent Karns	1975	17	3:19:56					5	
	1982	23	3:08:35						6
	1983	24	3:00:38				4		
	1984	25	3:00:43			3			
	1985	26	3:07:34				4		
Harlow Robinson	1997	30	3:05:30		2				
	1998	31	3:04:33					5	
	1999	32	3:06:28						6
	2002	35	3:03:11			3			
	2004	37	3:04:13		2				
	2006	39	3:05:16			3			
Everett Rubel	1976	14	3:15:27					5	
	1979	17	2:58:38		2				
	1980	18	2:54:25			3			
	1981	19	2:52:11		2				
	1982	20	2:53:14				4		
	1983	21	3:00:39					5	
Ken Zaklukiewicz	1994	32	3:09:28				4		
	1995	33	3:03:59			3			
	1996	34	3:18:48				4		
	1999	37	3:03:57				4		

In the last two years two runners have taken themselves off this list. In 2006 Laura McDonough, at age 45 the oldest female winner 30 years (Marcie Trent won at age 58 in 1976) won the Equinox at a relatively late stage in her distinguished and consistent career.

Matias Saari got the "close but no cigar" monkey off his back with a victory in 2007. Saari, with his win and his three fast times in 06-07 migrated off this list and onto the "Legends of the Equinox" list, mostly on the basis of his times.

In my mind, one male and one female runner stand above the rest. Michelle Mitchell, with three sub-3:35:00 times in addition to a 3:38:17 and 3:42:24, a second place, a third place and three fourth-place finishes beats out Dianne Munson, who was runner-up three consecutive years - she had the misfortune to run second to Sue Chapman's record time in 1985, and then was runner up to Bobbi Fy during her heyday in 1986 and 1987. Both Michelle Mitchell and Kristen Rozell are still in their running primes, so their membership in group may not be terminal!

For men, Everett Rubel is clearly at the top. He is the only runner to have broken 3:00:00 four times and never to have won. Only Justice and Murphy have broken 3:00:00 more times than did Everett Rubel. Rubel went sub-3:00:00 three times while still in his teens. It's hard to decide between Mike Johnson and Harlow Robinson for next-best, but I think Harlow gets the nod. His five races with consistent times and top finishes outweighs Mike's great 2:54:27 in 1986. Robinson is still active and running fast, so he may be able to escape this group in the next few years. Kent Karns, with his two sub-3:01's, beats out Dave Bloom and Ken Zaklukiewicz as the best male runner never to finish 1st OR 2nd.

In 1983, Karns, Rubel, Johnson and Bloom finished 4th, 5th, and tied for 7th in head-to-head competition.