

MINNESOTA MASTERS 15K USATF CHAMPIONSHIP
September 19, Edina

With only four weekends in September this year, and the Twin Cities Marathon slated for Oct. 3, the racing schedule is rather hectic. Rob Whetham and Jim Pelarske were up to the challenge, however, facing off three weekends in a row. Once again Whetham came out on top, evening the score for three losses he suffered earlier in the summer.

Whetham's time was just eight seconds slower than Pelarske's winning time last year. On the women's side, Nancy Marquette ran the fourth fastest time ever in Minnesota. It was the first time since 1989 that a woman has run 15K under an hour, and Diane Stoneking made it the first time since 1983 that two women have broken an hour in the same race.

Stoneking's 59:56 took 1:42 off the Minnesota age-group record for W45 (set by Trudy Rapp in 1983) and gave her second place in the "Age Graded Competition" in which the runners' times are "handicapped" by subtracting the Minnesota record for their age/sex group. First in that category was Lloyd "Forever" Young, whose 64:43 was 3:33 under Bill Andberg's M70 mark, which was also set in 1983. Setting single-age Minnesota records were Bruce Mortenson, John Keston (formerly of Bemidji), Paul Werner, Marquette, and Diane Goulett. Also to be commended were those runners who managed to "beat their age;" i.e., whose times in minutes were under their age. These were Keston, Harold Hubbard, Young, and John Burton. Of course it's a little harder for younger men to do it; any man under 51 who beat his age would be setting a US single-age record, and no woman of any age has done it.

Besides the record-setting runners in the USATF Minnesota Championships division, the Masters 15K gives awards in a "Novice" division to runners who have never won their age group in any race longer than a mile. Congratulations to Jay Goetz, Ed Dallmann, Steve Paladie, Mendal Mearkle, Nancy Anderson, Irene Kilanowski, and Karen Johnson, who have now broken that habit.