

MINNESOTA MASTERS 15K USATF CHAMPIONSHIP  
September 18, Braemar, Edina

What a great day for running! Temperature in the mid-60's even at the finish and no wind! Thirty-four runners claimed PR's. Who says masters are past their prime? Not all of them!

Once again it was the women's race that looked to be the more interesting, with three of the state's top runners in their respective age groups: Bev Docherty, Lynae Larson, and Marcy Gilles each having a good shot on paper at the win. Gilles went out fast. Her 5K split was 18:14, five seconds under US age-group record pace, and she went through 10K in 36:58, more than a minute faster than any other Minnesota master has run for that distance this year. "I caught her at about seven miles," says Docherty, who hadn't raced since Grandma's (where she became the first Minnesota woman to qualify for the 1996 Olympic Trials), "but I just couldn't hang on." Both women were well under the previous Minnesota record of 57:32, set by Susan Josselson in this race in 1983. Gilles's winning time of 56:00 is the third fastest ever run by a U.S. woman over 45.

The men's race was relatively pedestrian, with Rob Whetham winning his age group by a minute and a half. Last year at this time he was having some great races with Jim Pelarske, who is back in school this year (twenty-five years after winning the state high school cross country championship!) and not competing. "I miss him," says Whetham.

Besides the age-group records set by Gilles and Docherty, six other single-age Minnesota records were broken in the race, as indicated by the boxes around their results below. Runners are "age graded" by the Minnesota age group records. The top man and woman on this basis were each awarded a pair of HMS Snowshoes. Whetham won a coin flip with Lloyd Young for his pair, as their handicapped times were exactly the same.

Along with these record setters the Minnesota Masters 15K gives awards in "Novice" divisions to runners who have never won their age group in any race, ever. Congratulations to Jay Schroeder, Dennis Lien, Peter Hawkins, Allen Anderson, Lisa Ann Trainor, Barbara Beutler, and Peggy Trager, who have now broken that habit.

Thanks to BlueCross BlueShield of Minnesota, who have now sponsored this race an even dozen years, and to Q Cumbers, now a four-year sponsor.