

2009 Big Butte Challenge



Big Butte 11K winner, Thomas Jodoin (pronounced “Joe-dn”) of Helena shown here at 2K as he powers around the Big Butte. Jodoin’s huge early lead would only grow wider as he went on to post the fifth fastest time ever on the course (41:18).

Tony Banovich of Plains out-paced and then later passed Nicole Hunt (fastest woman who has ever set foot on the 11K course) to secure a third place overall finish and he was also the first masters age (40+) finisher in 46:46.



Deer Lodge runner Nicole Hunt flashed around the 11K course to set a new all-time best in 46:55, becoming the first woman to break the 47 minute barrier.



5K Males Overall: 1, Ray Matteson, 18:49; 2, Miles Pennell, 22:10; 3, Chris Wareham, 22:52.

0-12: 1, Christian McIntyre, Butte, 34:19.

19-29: 1, Miles Pennell, Lewistown, 22:10; 2, Ryan Rich, Butte, 24:52; 3, Chris Connors, Butte, 26:37.

30-39 — 1, Robert Rader, Butte, 32:02; 2, Kevin Mueller, Butte, 32:23; 3, Mark Ewanic, Butte, 50:20.

40-49: 1, Leo Graham, Phillipsburg, 23:26; 2, Mike Carle, Billings, 24:39; 3, Tim Hansen, Silver Star, 25:29.

50-59: 1, Ray Matteson, Butte, 18:49; 2, Chris Wareham, Butte, 22:52; 3, Leonard Baluski, 28:51.

60-69: 1, Bruce Robinson, Butte, 27:12; 2, Leon Shearman, Bozeman, 27:32; 3, Phil Cammack, Butte, 29:10.

70⁺: 1, Jim Lester, Butte, 30:15.

11K Females Overall: 1, Nicole Hunt, 46:55; 2, Nikki Kimball, 51:45; 3, Kaci Hockaday, 55:24.

19-29: 1, Kaci Hockaday, Butte, 55:24; 2, Molly Mueller, Butte, 1:04:38; 3, Ginger Murray, Great Falls, 1:21:45.

30-39: 1, Nicole Hunt, Deer Lodge, 46:55; 2, Nikki Kimball, Bozeman, 51:45; 3, Elizabeth Rehmer, Livingston, 1:05:05.

40-49: 1, Valerie Pallister, Jefferson City, 1:00:11; 2, Vicki Carle, Billings, 1:04:37; 3, Melissa McGregor, Walkerville, 1:20:11.

50-59: 1, Eddi Walker, Butte, 1:06:44; 2, Doreen Harding, Helena 1:10:54; 3, Karen Hueftle, Butte, 1:11:44.

60-69: 1, Nancy Wells, Helena, 1:27:26.

11K Males Overall: 1, Thomas Jodoin, 41:18; 2, Jesse Berwald, 46:01; 3, Tony Banovich, 46:46.

19-29: 1, Thomas Jodoin, Helena, 41:18; 2, Chris Heinrich, Spokane, 57:32; 3, Ryan Nielsen, Butte, 59:19.

30-39: 1, Jesse Berwald, Bozeman, 46:01.

40-49: 1, Tony Banovich, Plains, 46:46; 2, Marvin Speece, Butte, 48:26; 3, Tony Campeau, Butte, 1:20:47.

50-59: 1, Rande Farrow, Butte, 57:35; 2, Jim Ryan, Jr., Butte, 1:04:08; 3, Dan Mueller, Butte, 1:06:25.

60-69: 1, David Mueller, Butte, 59:18; 2, Vern Roberts, Helena, 1:18:15.

Saturday, 11 April – Race organizers reported that more than 100 walkers and runners showed up at Montana Tech to enjoy the sunshine and the scenic course of the YMCA's 29th annual Big Butte Challenge. The morning warmed quickly under clear and calm conditions, and the course was mostly dry after absorbing snow and rain from earlier in the week. There were a few puddles to negotiate, and some of the trails after the creek crossing were spongy.

Susan Kaluza of Butte was the overall winner of the women's 5-kilometer run for the fifteenth time in her sixteen attempts. Kaluza's last win here was six years ago. Kaluza seems to defy aging, as her finish time of 21:49 is the ninth fastest women's time recorded since the new 5K route was established in 1993, and Kaluza is just shy of her fiftieth birthday.

Butte's Ray Matteson was the overall winner of the men's 5K. Matteson is passed his fiftieth birthday, and he also produced one of the top ten fastest times ever recorded (no. 8 at 18:47).

The 11-K run, which routes runners up the face of Big Butte and then down the “M” access road, was popular with the women this year, attracting 19, compared with 14 men running that race. Overall, the total number of runners and walkers was the most in 21 years, organizers said.

Deer Lodge resident Nicole Hunt (38) has run the Big Butte 11K three times, all since 2006, and each time she has established a new course record for women. In all, Hunt has lowered the pre-existing record by 4 minutes and 16 seconds. Her time today (46:55) made her the first woman to eclipse the 47-minute barrier. Hunt's record proves that she is coming strongly back to her fitness after giving birth to her first child last June.

The all-time record in the men's 11K (40:53) was set in 1984 by Butte running legend Tony Banovich. Banovich, who now lives in Plains, returned today -- 25 years later -- for his second attempt at the distance, but this time he was rehabbing a broken patella bone that he suffered 12 months ago in a motorcycle crash. Shortly after the start of today's race, Banovich found himself way behind after having cautiously scaling the Big Butte in the first portion of the race, but he then patiently worked his way back toward the front of the pack, and he eventually caught and passed Nicole Hunt and then he held her off the rest of the way as they finished third and fourth overall.

Helena's Thomas Jodoin was the overall winner of the men's 11-K in his first attempt at this race. Jodoin made a strong attempt to the break Banovich's course record, but fell just short with the fifth fastest time ever (41:18).

First, second and third place finishers by age division were as follows:

5K Females Overall: 1, Susan Kaluza, 21:47; 2, Cara Whitlock, 23:11; 3, Rachel Schoening, 24:54.

0-12: 1, Ashton LaFond, Butte, 37:46.

13-18: 1, Rachel Schoening, Butte, 24:54.

19-29: 1, Demetra Davis, Butte, 36:00; 2, Dena Helman, Bozeman, 39:06; 3, Lorna McIntyre, Butte, 52:58.

30-39: 1, Cara Whitlock, Butte, 23:11; 2, Kristen Webster, Livingston, 29:01; 3, Dana Cotton, Butte 30:33.

40-49: 1, Susan Kaluza, Butte, 21:47; 2, Cheri Cusson, Butte, 41:18; 3, Colleen Cooney, Butte, 42:02.

50-59: 1, Stephanie Hahn, Butte, 30:49; 2, Sheila Franey, Butte, 35:29; 3, JoAnn Farrow, Butte, 42:31.

60-69: 1, Marilyn Pearson, Helena, 35:49; 2, Sue Burton, Butte, 51:17.