

# The Pacesetter

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## Into Jackrabbit Hall of Fame Once persuaded, Foerster becomes one of SDSU's best

By **Dave Graves**  
Newsletter editor

Becka (Mansheim) Foerster grew up in Brookings. Her father was a rabid 'Rabbit fan. But during her early years at Brookings High School, South Dakota State University was the last place she wanted to enroll.

She and the university are glad Foerster had a change of heart.

Her marriage to the local land-grant university has turned out quite well. She set several track records, earned an NCAA Postgraduate Scholarship, became a member of the nursing faculty and on Sept. 27 was inducted into the Jackrabbit Sports Hall of Fame on the same evening her coach (Rod DeHaven) received the Ralph Ginn Award (see separate story).

Foerster's "any place but home" thinking when it came to choosing a college is pretty common and she made visits to places like the University of Nebraska, the University of South Dakota, Creighton and Mankato State. But the appeal of a top-notch nursing program and an enthusiastic track and cross country coach proved irresistible.

Paul Danger was head coach for the Jackrabbits when Foerster was a senior at Brookings High School in 2002-03. The DeHaven era didn't begin until 2004-05.

### All-sport athlete at BHS

Growing up, Foerster was the epitome of an all-sport athlete.

In the fall, it was football cheerleading and cross country (she was a five-year letter winner). In the winter, she was a boys basketball cheerleader and a swim team sensation. In fact, until her junior year Foerster thought her collegiate future was going to be in the pool. In the spring, she ruled the distance races.

While Foerster was a four-time all-Eastern South Dakota Conference honoree and a two-time state placer in cross country, she also struggled in the fall sport.

### Toughest opponent: asthma

"There were races I wasn't able to complete" because of battles with asthma, she said. Part of the appeal to college track for her was being able to run at meets outside of the Midwest, where pollen counts tend to be high, she said. Foerster also was thankful that about

the time she enrolled at SDSU, a new inhaler had come on the market and her parents (Harry and Connie Mansheim) were able to foot the bill on the expensive new medication.

It was effective. Foerster's asthma issues were much less at SDSU. Also, as a Bobcat she was doing everything from Spanish club to swim squad. Distance training was 25 miles per week for a few months out of the year.

She had a great high school experience and logged some 1,600- and 3,200-meter times that ranked in the top 10 school history (5:21.63 and 11:35.19, respectively). But she wasn't winning state titles. Ramsey Kavan of Yankton dominated that era. Watertown, Roosevelt and Rapid City Stevens were also producing elite runners.

When Foerster focused strictly on running at SDSU, she became an elite runner. In fact, she was beating the girls who had beaten her in high school.

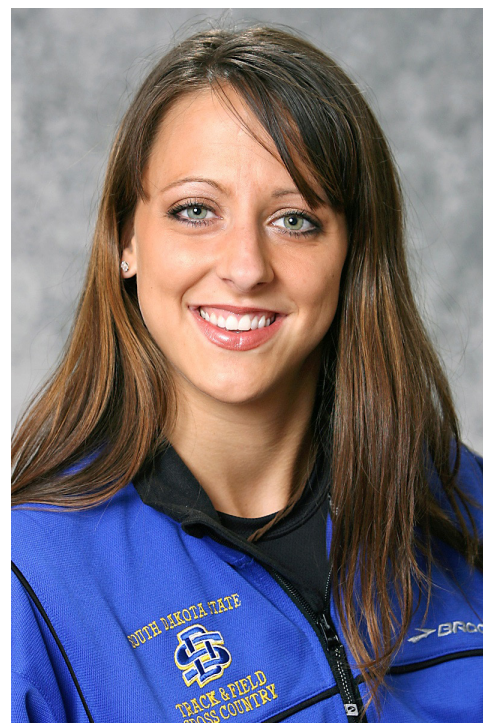
### Focus narrowed in college

How focused was Foerster on running in college? When asked to name a non-running favorite SDSU memory, Foerster struggled before saying, "My roommates were my teammates. A number of them were also in nursing school a year ahead of me and paved the way. The nursing faculty were very supportive" of their athletics.

She had no trouble bonding with her new SDSU teammates, even before she was officially an SDSU student.

In summer 2003, Jackrabbit upperclassmen Sheena Dauer and Greg Derbyshire invited Foerster to join them on some of their training runs.

Dauer said, "It doesn't take long in the presence of Becka to know she is one of those 'once in a lifetime' type of people; the type of person you know you want to be around because they make you better just by who they are. Becka's inner beauty and humble confidence



were immediate before she committed and I could only pray that she would choose SDSU.

"When she did, the sky was the limit for SDSU cross country and track. As Becka said, 'Our teammates were our friends.' Becka was central to that. She was dedicated to her running and her education and lead with an example that I, her senior, benefitted from and still do today.

"Becka's deep-rooted values, instilled into her by her second-to-none family, made an impact on me, the coaches, and the team with the results resonating loud even today."

### Made immediate impact at SDSU

"I know the summer I trained coming into my freshman year it was the most miles I had ever run. We had handwritten mileage logs. I wanted to get a 500-mile club T-shirt (she did and

**See Hall of Fame**  
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## 2026 RACE SCHEDULE

Prairie Striders Indoor 5K..... Saturday, Jan. 24	Jack 15.....Saturday, Sept. 26
Arbor Day 5K.....Friday, April 24	Scotty Roberts 5K.....Friday, Oct. 16
Longest Day 10K..... Saturday, June 20	Brookings Marathon, Half & Relays .....Sat., Oct. 17
Beef and Eggs 5K.....Saturday, July 11	Hobo Day 5K..... Saturday, Oct. 24
Oakwood Lakes Trail Run..... Saturday, ??*	Turkey Day Run..... Thursday, Nov. 28
Predictor Mile ..... Wednesday, July 29	

\*Race director needed.

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# Hall of Fame

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still has it) and I wanted to be one of our top five runners so I could run at Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx that fall," Foerster said.

She achieved that goal too and was fourth or fifth member of the team all season, which ended with a trip to the national Division II meet in North Carolina and a fifth-place team finish.

The meet was significant for a couple other reasons. It was the team's last in the school's Division II era. SDSU was studying a move to Division I during Foerster's senior year in high school. She didn't think it would happen. She also didn't realize that 2003-04 would be her only year under Coach Danger.

## Coaching, division transition after 1 year

That fall, Danger made the decision to move on because of a job opportunity for his wife. But he recruited his own replacement. Among those in North Carolina to support that Jackrabbits was 1989 alum Rod DeHaven, an Olympian whose professional career was drawing to a close.

Danger spoke to DeHaven about putting his name in the hat for the job at his alma mater.

DeHaven was announced as the new Jackrabbit coach in July 2004 and has built a resume that matches his legendary competitive record.

"We felt good and supported with Rod being the new coach. Rod had already watched us run at some meets," Foerster said.

## Finding new goals to attain

While DeHaven's teams have won a combined 22 Summit League titles during his SDSU tenure, there were no titles to win in 2004-05. SDSU was competing as



in independent in the transition years between Division II and Division I.

"Rod found us other ways to set goals beside conference championships and national meet appearances. Setting school records and going to USATF meets to run against professional runners was part of that," Foerster said.

And set records she did. A total of six. In addition to individual marks in the 1K, 3K and the indoor mile, and the 1,500 meters outdoors and, Foerster was part of two record-setting relay teams. One of those marks, the 4 by one mile, remains and may stay in place for a while.

Foerster led off the quartet of Shannon Hattervig, Krysti Ratzlaff and Dauer, who ran 20:03.00, each clocking about a five-minute mile.

DeHaven recalled, "We placed a lot of focus on relay events both during the indoor and outdoor season. It took the edge off of not having a the typical pursuit of gaining an individual berth in the national championships.

"The Drake 4 x 1600 demonstrated the grit of the group. Becca started off well and the rest of the other ladies competed very hard to keep us near the front. Eventually three Big 10 quartets pulled away, but in the end we finished fifth. They also had a solid run in the distance medley the next day. It cemented the notion that they could compete at the NCAA Division I level."

Dauer adds, "I feel no hesitation in saying this record would not have been set without the critical competitive but always supportive environment we set for each other day in and day out. Coach Danger set that foundation for both Becca and I. Coach DeHaven led with his quiet confidence built best through experience. Then there was the dedication we all had to each other to give our best. This was a truly memorable experience."

## Chasing indoor mile record

Another mark that Foerster is particularly proud of is her indoor mile time of 4:51.47.

"I really worked toward breaking the indoor mile record (of 4:54.16 by Jodi Smith, 2000)." DeHaven had scheduled her 2006 indoor season around that goal. A bout of bronchitis and schedule that had her burning the candle on both ends with nursing clinicals and training demands added to the goal's obstacles.

But DeHaven entered Foerster in an indoor last chance meet at Notre Dame with Paul Danger, who was in Valparaiso, Indiana, coaching her. The effort paid off as Foerster ran a 4:51.47.

"Records are made to be broken" was Foerster's attitude for her senior year. She broke indoor records in the 1K and 3K as she trained to break her own mile record. "I was in shape to do that" and was again entered in the Norte Dame last chance. "I thought I was in sub-4:50 shape based on the workouts I was running," Foerster said.

But a March 2007 snowstorm shut down both air and vehicle traffic. There was no leaving town. There was no other



The Foerster family gathers after Becca's induction into the Jackrabbit Sports Hall of Fame Sept. 27. Pictured, from left, are Danny, Jada, Becca, Kalla and Drake.

opportunity to go after the record she had been chasing.

Dauer said Foerster felt shorted for the moment, but "true to Becca's character she was soon on to the next thing.

"Becca's biggest lasting impact on me is how she carried herself through every end of the spectrum from elation to frustration, her composure, strength, and absolute resolve in knowing who she is rooted in faith leaves me feeling truly blessed to know her then and now.

Foerster did close out the 2007 outdoor season with the 1,500-meter championship at the Division I Independent national championships. She was named track athlete of the year at that meet in 2006, when she won both the 1,500 and 5,000-meter runs, both of which also had prelim races.

## New goal: race in all 50 states

After college, Mansheim ran briefly with Prairie Striders racing team and won a couple of titles in the Hobo Day 5K and the Beef and Eggs 5K. She still works out every day and instructs at Synergy Strength Studio with running on the schedule some days.

Her current goal is to run a race in all 50 states. She now is at 37.

"It's so cool the people you meet. I've met such inspiring people," like the Georgian who is a four-time member of the 50 States marathon club with more than 2,000 total races. She also has done a night desert run "with headlamps and on an uneven surface with cactus around you, and you're hearing the wolves howl."

Another race that stands out is the Ainsley's Angels 5K in Biloxi, Mississippi, where each runner pushes an adult disabled persons.

Foerster's other goal is keeping pace with her family.

She and her high school sweetheart Danny have three children—Kalla, a Brookings High School sophomore whose focus is swimming, fast pitch softball and running, in that order; Jada, an eighth-grader whose interests are soccer, gymnastics, and track/cross country; and Drake, a fourth-grader, who enjoys football, hockey, baseball and soccer.

# SDSU grad Reichow top American field at NY Marathon

Joel Reichow, a 2017 graduate of South Dakota State University, finished sixth in the New York Marathon Nov. 2. He was the top American finisher.

It continues a dominating year for the Minnesota Distance Elite athlete who on June 21 became the first American and Minnesotan to win the Grandma's Marathon since 2009.

Reichow's New York Marathon time of 2:09:56 (4:58 pace) took a full two minutes off his Grandma's time and was 41 seconds faster than his marathon PR.

He ran the first half in 1:05:21 (4:59 pace) and was last in the chase pack but then made a move coming down the Queensborough Bridge and continued to push the pace, recording 1:04:35 second half (4:56 pace).

In an interview with New York Road Runners, he acknowledged his quads were "pretty beat up" by Mile 19, but Reichow added, "Any marathon is going to have a few moments of self-doubt. You just need to trust yourself, know your effort and keep things measured."

Asked if had any self-talk that keeps him going in tough spots, Reichow said he tells himself "you're doing fine. You're just feeling lazy. Sometimes it's like you know it's there, you just don't want to fight that hard, and you just need to remind yourself you're going to be okay."

Clearly, the St. Paul, Minnesota,

resident and White Bear Lake, Minn., native was more than OK at New York City.

SDSU Coach Rod DeHaven said of his former runner, "Joel has proven that consistent training and racing will usually yield great results. It is a testament to his character to continue stay with the sport well after his college days. For most individuals it is easier to move on than to commit to the dream."

Reichow, 32, was a two-time NCAA DI Cross Country All-American at SDSU finishing as high as 20th at the national championships, and a four-time Summit League champion. The 2017 biology graduate, who now works part time at a running store, also placed sixth and then third at the NCAA DI Midwest Region Cross Country Championships.

During his collegiate career, he set three school records—13:53.05 in the outdoor 5000m, 14:07.19 in the indoor 5000m, and 28:55.84 in the outdoor 10,000m (his coach, Olympian Rod DeHaven, ranks 4th in the 10,000 in Jackrabbit school history).

Reichow, who finished 20th at the 2024 New York Marathon, didn't have a sponsor or an agent this season. That is likely to change in 2026 as he becomes a bona fide contender for the 2028 U.S. Olympics team.

Minnesota Distance Elite head coach Chris Lundstrom said that while



Reichow's victory at Grandma's won him a lot of local recognition, he remained little known nationally.

He told the Minneapolis Star-Tribune, "Joel is like the best runner that no one has ever heard of."

With a tall build and long, wavy locks, Reichow has an unforgettable profile. Now he also has an unforgettable performance on a premier stage.

## DeHaven honored with Ralph Ginn Award

South Dakota State University's Rod DeHaven was honored Sept. 27 as the 2025 recipient of the Ralph Ginn Award for Coaching Excellence. He was recognized during the Jackrabbit Sports Hall of Fame banquet.

A 1989 graduate of SDSU, DeHaven has served as the Bargmann Endowed Head Coach for Track & Field/Cross Country at his alma mater since 2004. He has led Jackrabbit teams to a total of 22 Summit League championships, claiming 14 of those titles in men's cross country with a current streak of 10 in a row. The Jackrabbit women's cross country team has claimed four Summit League championships, while the men's track and field team has earned three indoor conference championships and one outdoor title.

The SDSU men completed a sweep of the three championships during the



2024-25 season, with DeHaven being named Summit League Coach of the Year

in all three sports.

Early in DeHaven's tenure, he led SDSU to a men's Division I Independent cross country title in 2005, with the women's squad winning the same championship in 2007.

DeHaven was the 49th recipient of the Ralph Ginn Award for Coaching Excellence since it was first awarded in 1972. Recipients of the award must be graduates of SDSU and have distinguished themselves in the field of coaching and education.

The award's namesake coached football at South Dakota State in 1947-68, compiling a 113-89-9 record with nine North Central Conference titles in 22 seasons. Ginn's victory total stood as the most in program history until being passed by recently retired SDSU head coach John Stiegelmeier in 2014.



### Member Spotlight

**Name:** Andrew Dickinson

**Age:** 46

**Residence:** Sioux Falls

**Occupation:** Catholic priest

**Family:** See above- many people call me "Father"

**Years as a Prairie Strider member:**

Probably since fall of 2010 when I first ran the Jack 15

**Why you're a member:** Prairie Striders puts on great races and was a great part of my experience in Brookings. I love supporting their efforts.

**What you enjoy about running:** I love

time to think and be on my own. I also love the (increasingly rare) moments when I feel fast!

**Favorite running memory:** Running the Brookings Half Marathon in 2012 and I finally figured out pacing. I didn't grow up running distance and being able to "conquer" the distance made me feel great and kept me running.

**Your favorite Prairie Striders race:** Jack 15

**Favorite workout:** 400-meter intervals, of all things

**Your running goal:** Run my age in a 10k

# Adrienne Bender — getting older AND faster

By **Dave Graves**  
Newsletter editor

When runners get past age 50, they tend to talk about personal records, not set them.

That isn't true for Adrienne Bender, who this fall at age 53, set PRs in both the Jack 15 and the marathon.

Her time in the 15.2-mile Jack 15 on Sept. 20 was 2:00:10 (7:54 pace) to cut four minutes off her previous best, which was set in 2013. She cut nearly a minute per mile from 2024, when she ran a 2:13:33. Her 2025 time allowed her to crack the Top 100 list for the 63-year-old race, pushing her to No. 89.

In the Oct. 18 Brookings Marathon, Bender was the second-place female and the first-place women's masters runner with a time of 3:36:38 (8:16 pace). It knocked 12 minutes off her previous marathon PR, which was a Boston-qualifying 3:48 set at the 2021 Brookings Marathon.

The secret: Good coaching.

She is in her second year of being tutored online by Eric Pooley of Dakota Distance Project. The former Sioux Falls Lincoln High School track coach had Bender focus on laddered tempo runs. For example, in the middle of a 15-mile run, she was charged putting in an 8:30 mile followed by two 8:20 miles and then two 8:10 miles before easing back for the last five miles.

Other workouts included mile repeats at or faster than race pace and then progressing to two-mile repeats at the same pace.

## Pooley on Bender: 'Competitive, smart'

"I don't know if he (Pooley) is challenging me more or I'm taking it more seriously. It was pretty hard. Sometimes I couldn't keep the paces. But as I progressed, it got easier. I got used to it. But I would definitely look ahead (at the workout schedule) and make sure I was rested before a hard workout," said Bender, who has run 17 lifetime marathons, the most recent being in 2023.

Pooley noted, "Adrienne has responded tremendously well to the challenge of workouts, which are drawn up to build both aerobic strength and turnover. She's very competitive with herself. But she's also very smart about her training. If she isn't quite right for a quality session, she pushes it back a day.

"She has the freedom to slide her week around accordingly based on her travels, strength and general fitness routine, and life as a mom and wife. My goal is to make a running schedule that ebbs and flows with each individual's schedule where they can slide in their run for the day and stick to it long term. Life never slows down, so keeping a schedule flexible is paramount."

## 'Wanted to see if I could do more'

Bender has run the Brookings Marathon eight times, the first in 2006.

She didn't hire a coach to set a Brookings Marathon PR. Rather, she wanted to challenge herself. "I wanted to see if I could do more. I didn't have a certain race in mind. I just wanted to challenge myself if I could do better," said Bender, who started running at age 22.

She started training for the Brookings Marathon in June, so this fall's races were the first competitive tests for the effectiveness of her new training.

"I'm getting old. I was thinking if I didn't get better, do I really need a coach? But it's been effective for me."

## Coach's workout produces confidence

Pooley explained, "Adrienne has done a remarkable job living by one of our key principles, 'Mileage is great, consistency is king.' Week in and week out, she stays consistent with both her running and strength schedule. Add that up over time, the results start to come across in all race distances.

*"She's very competitive with herself. But she's also very smart about her training."*

— Coach Eric Pooley on Adrienne Bender

"Her real breakout race came at the Beef and Eggs 5k where she ran 22:08, hovering right around that 7:00 mark the entire race. She popped one. Her training had been going well up to that point but it was one of those races where she took two steps forward.

"From there I increased her workout times with some stronger finishes accordingly. After looking at one of these workouts in July, she simply asked, 'Do you really think I can do that?' I answered, 'The times don't lie.' She responded, 'Ok, I'll try!' And she did.

"She nailed the workout that

day, running a four-mile snowball (progression run where you pick up each mile with the goal of finishing with your fastest mile at the end) with a 6:58 finishing fourth mile. This is really where the confidence seemed to blossom for her."

Nancy Scholl, a sometimes training partner with Bender, said, "I've seen her go from not feeling very positive about the outcome of an upcoming race to exceeding her expectations. She's been a great training partner for me since she is able and willing to help me hit and maintain my training paces without it being a struggle for her.

"She's dedicated to her training plan. She hits the treadmill when the weather is inclement.

She is competitive but likes the process as well."

## Healthy, aiming for Boston in '27

A process no runner likes is rehabbing from an injury, but Bender has been healthy for two consecutive years. She attributes weight lifting three times a week at CrossFit for that. Some days the schedule calls for both lifting and running. So much for settling into old age.

She went into the Brookings Marathon wanting to qualify for the Boston Marathon, which has a 3:50 minimum for a 53-year-old female. She also wanted to break her marathon PR of 3:48. The stretch goal was 3:40. Bender's actual time was 3:36:38.

She admits she surprised herself with her time. "I didn't think I would be able to pull it off until I got to mile 20 and my watch said 2 hours, 50 minutes. I told myself, 'I can do that.'"

Indeed she could. Bender even had enough in the tank to pass Lisa Kolda, 47, of Sioux Falls, in the final few blocks to win the female master's title by 40 seconds.

The next goal on Bender's list is a half marathon PR at Panama Beach, Florida, Dec. 6. She will have to go below 1:42 to do that. She also plans to be in Boston for the 2027 marathon — at the young age of 54.



Adrienne Bender, far right, is feeling relaxed as she hit the 5-mile mark of the Brookings Marathon. She would go on to smash her personal record in the 26.2-mile event.

# Health & Running

## Trade Your Road Miles for Strength Gains This Winter



By Kyle Behl  
Doctor of Physical Therapy

With the days getting shorter and the unpredictable chill of winter setting in, those glorious road miles can become a lot harder to come by. Ice, snow, early darkness and biting winds often force us to shorten our runs or stay indoors, making it tough to maintain our routine.

But don't let this be a period of setback. Instead, view winter as your **secret weapon**—the perfect opportunity to invest in your body and build the foundation for a strong, injury-free next running season.

This isn't about *replacing* running entirely; it's about **re-balancing** your training. Strength training directly addresses the imbalances and weaknesses that running, by its very nature, can create. A little time spent lifting weights or doing bodyweight exercises now can pay huge dividends when you ramp up the mileage in the spring.

### Why Strength Training is a Runner's Best Friend

- **Injury Prevention:** This is arguably the biggest benefit. Stronger glutes, hips and core muscles stabilize your pelvis

and knees, reducing the strain on tendons and ligaments.

- **Improved Running Economy:** When your muscles are stronger, you use less energy to maintain your pace. They help you generate more force with each stride and keep your form crisp.
- **Greater Power and Speed:** Strength work helps you unlock that extra kick on race day.

### How to Program Your Strength Sessions

Integrate your strength work strategically to maximize results without burning out:

- **Aim for Consistency:** Plan for **two non-consecutive 45-60 minute strength sessions** per week. Monday/Thursday or Tuesday/Friday works well.
- **Timing is Key:** Perform your strength work on a day you are *not* doing your longest or hardest run. Ideally, lift after an easy run, or on a cross-training day.
- **Start Easy:** Begin with the bodyweight versions of the exercises. Use the listed rep ranges (8-12 reps for strength, 15-20 for stability).
- **Progress Slowly:** Once you can comfortably complete the specified number of reps across all sets, **gradually** add a light resistance (dumbbells, kettlebell, or band) to continue challenging your muscles.

### The Runner's Core Strength List

Focus Area	Essential Exercise	Why It Helps
Glutes/Quads	Goblet Squat	Builds overall leg power and stabilizes the knee joint.
Hamstrings/Glutes	Romanian Deadlift (RDL)	Strengthens the posterior chain, key for running propulsion.
Unilateral Strength	Reverse Lunges	Mimics the single-leg stance of running and improves balance/stability.
Hip Stability	Clamshells	Isolates the crucial deep hip muscles to prevent the knee from caving in.
Core/Anti-Rotation	Bird-Dog	An effective move for torso stability and preventing lateral sway.
Calves/Achilles	Calf Raises (Single-Leg)	Essential for ankle stability and absorbing impact.

### Simple Program Design: The 2-Day Routine

Aim for just **two non-consecutive 45-60 minute strength sessions** per week. You can do these on days you run easy or on complete rest days.

Day	Exercise	Sets	Repetitions (Reps)
Strength Day 1	Goblet Squat	3	8-12
	Reverse Lunges (per leg)	3	8-12
	Clamshells (per side)	2	15-20
	Plank (Hold)	3	45-60 seconds
Strength Day 2	Romanian Deadlift (RDL)	3	8-12
	Single-Leg Calf Raises (per leg)	3	15-20
	Bird-Dog (alternating)	3	10 per side
	Side Plank (per side, Hold)	2	30-45 seconds

### Keep Up Your Cardio Indoors With the Cold Outdoor Weather Coming!

If you're worried about maintaining your cardiovascular fitness and running volume, consider the **treadmill** to help you get those important cold-weather miles in comfortably and safely.

Also consider cross-training to give your running muscles a break while still boosting your fitness base. Each of these options build cardiovascular endurance and engage your upper body and core: **ski-ergometer, rowing machine and stationary bicycling.**

Don't let the weather dictate your fitness goals. Use the quiet months ahead to build a strong, resilient body. Your future self—crossing the finish line of your spring race—will thank you!

**Editor's note:** Kyle Behl is owner of Empower Physiotherapy and Wellness on South Main Avenue in Brookings. An SDSU graduate, he and his wife have four children. In addition to keeping tabs on their children, the Behls can be found volunteering at Prairie Striders events, particularly the Run4Fun—Brookings summer track series for children.

# Puking, pain and gratefulness

## Brookings Marathon winner sums up his inaugural marathon

By Dave Graves  
Newsletter editor

Running a marathon for the first time provides a platform to learn lots of things about the race and one's self.

That certainly was the case for Caleb Sayler. What separates Sayler from virtually any other marathon newbie is that he won his first marathon. Sayler, 23, claimed the Brookings Marathon crown Oct. 18 with a time of 2:40:11 to win by nearly 5 ½ minutes.

Sayler, a 2025 graduate of Dakota State University, entered the 56th running of the third oldest consecutively run marathon in the United States with an eye toward the NAIA marathon championship in Dallas Dec. 13.

As a graduate student at DSU pursuing a master's degree in business with an emphasis in sports management, he is eligible to compete in the NAIA marathon even though his college track and cross country eligibility is complete. To qualify, runners attending NAIA schools must log at least 40 miles per week (as verified by Strava) and have at least two qualifying two-hour runs.

The top 60 times will be entered. He has previously ranked 13th after an earlier noncompetitive two-hour run. His marathon time has him ranked 10th.

### 'I'm not a quitter'

That doesn't mean Sayler skated through his first marathon. In fact, shortly after Mile 20 Sayler, originally of Lennox, was on the rocks. He had taken his fourth gel at about Mile 18. About 12 minutes later, Sayler was bent over puking. "That fourth gel I took threw a mean left hook that connected flush," Sayler said.

The accomplished former collegian runner thought he was done. But he rinsed out his mouth, puked a little more, rested briefly, repeated the mantra "I'm not a quitter. I'm not a quitter." He was back on the course with runner-up Blaine Moran still not insight. Though a bit slower, Sayler kept a steady pace in the following miles and gradually started to feel better.

His finishing time equated to a 6:07 pace. His goal pace was 6:00 and was right on schedule through 12 miles. He actually put in some 5:45 miles between miles 15 and 20 to drop his cumulative pace to 5:55 through 20 miles. A couple 6:25 miles after the upset stomach bloated his finishing pace to 6:07 per mile.

### 'Marathon... completely different monster'

Sayler said he learned a lesson about taking enough water to make sure the gel works its way deeper into the digestive system and he also learned about the nature of a marathon.

"The first 20 miles are not the tough part of the race, it's the last six. I learned I need to be more patient when I'm feeling good. I may be feeling good now, but it doesn't mean I will be at the last six. Coming from a track background, if

you're running a 5K, you're 2.5K in and you're feeling really great, you should really start to push it. The same thing with a mile. If you're 800 in and you're feeling good, you should start to push it.

"But the marathon is a completely different monster when it comes to that."

*"After running Brookings, I think the marathon could be really something I find myself enjoying. It's a new competitive outlet I had been missing since my competitive days in college."*

— Brookings Marathon winner Caleb Sayler

Sayler entered the marathon to pace his running coach and friend Derek Ettel, of Sioux Falls. Both are members of the 605 Running team. They ran together through Mile 12, when Sayler pulled ahead and Ettel pulled out shortly afterwards with a calf injury.

"It was definitely tough" not to have anyone to run with, Sayler said. "But it wasn't something I wasn't used to. I ran three years at DWU and the last year there (at Dakota Wesleyan) the distance squad consisted of an 800 runner and myself. I've run a lot of lonely miles in my life. I've done a lot of 15- and 17-mile runs that were completely solo.

"But it would have been nice to have someone by my side at Mile 22 when I was really hurting. It would have been nice to someone to compete with, to have something else to focus on except the suffering."



Caleb Sayler was feeling good after coming down Larson Hill in the Brookings Marathon Saturday. Sayler didn't smile the entire race, but he did win the 56th Brookings Marathon while running his very first marathon. Sayler and Derrick Ettel (66) ran together until about Mile 12. Ettel later dropped out.

### 'Overwhelmed with excitement'

But to paraphrase Lance Armstrong, pain is temporary.

When Sayler was down to the final 0.2 of his inaugural 26.2, Sayler said, "It didn't really dawn on me what I had accomplished until I turned the final corner and could see the finish line. It was just an instant rush of emotion. Gosh, it's been tough to figure out running post college. I just completed something this difficult despite everything going on with life and work changes.

"I was overwhelmed with excitement for finishing it. There was just the full range of emotions. I'm suffering but this feels so good to having run a marathon and getting to do something not a lot of people get to, and to win a marathon, which even less people get to do. It was just an overwhelming feeling of

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Relieved and thankful to reach the finish line in the Brookings Marathon is Caleb Sayler, 23, of Lennox. He finished in 2:40:11 to win the event in his first try at a marathon.

## Puking

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gratefulness, gratitude and excitement for what this sport can continue to bring for more me now that I'm done competing collegiately."

His college focus was mile, 5K, 10K. He thought his postcollegiate running would be community 5Ks and eventually run a marathon to "say I did that."

Now his marathon experience exceeded his expectations.

Time wise, the marathon "was pretty right on to what I thought I could run. What defied my expectation is how I am feeling the week after. I haven't missed a run this week and did a 400 and a couple 200s with the cross country team. I'm surprised how I am recovering pretty decent from it.

"I was expecting it to hurt and it did hurt. I was expecting challenges with fueling and did have challenges with fueling. I also was expecting to enjoy it less than I did. After running Brookings, I think the marathon could be really something I find myself enjoying.

"It's a new competitive outlet I had been missing since my competitive days in college. There a things to shoot for, like Boston qualifying."

## Life member Berseth dies

Steven Berseth, a life member of Prairie Striders Running Club and a dedicated volunteer for the South Dakota State University track program, died Oct. 15, 2025, at Avera McKennan Hospital at age 76.

Berseth, of Brookings, was born Sept. 28, 1949, in Fargo, North Dakota. He received his public school education in Abercrombie, N.D., and was a 1967 graduate of Eagle High School. He earned his bachelor's and master's degree from North Dakota State in 1971 and 1973, respectively.

Berseth married Benda Gronneberg on Dec. 19, 1971, in Cooperstown, N.D. They moved to Brookings in 1972 and he began a 39-year career as a teacher, counselor, coach and activities director at Brookings High School.

Berseth became a life member of Prairie Striders in 2021, twice ran the Jack 15 (1979 and 1982), and served as coordinator of track officials at SDSU indoor meets.

His leadership abilities earned him induction into the halls of fame for Brookings High School, the South Dakota High School Coaches Association, the National High School Activities Association and the South Dakota



Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association. He was named National Athletic Director of the Year by the NHSACA in 2010.

Survivors include his wife of 53 years, Benda, of Brookings; a son, Craig, of Brookings; a daughter, Brienne (Joel) Torgrude, of Brandon; four grandchildren and three brothers, Mike, Brian (Connie) and Neil (Kim).

## Fall Challenge patch achievers listed

Complete three races in four weeks. It's not exactly a herculean achievement, but it does take considerable commitment and is worthy of a braggin' patch. The following 14 people now have that patch.

When the Brookings Marathon was moved to the fall, the Prairie Striders Fall Challenge was created. If a runner competed in the Jack 15 (Sept. 20), the Hobo Day 5K (Oct. 11) and the Brookings Marathon and Half Marathon (Oct. 18), they earned the patch. (Relays and the Scotty Roberts 5K (Oct. 17) counted too.)

An extra accolade goes to Adrienne Bender and Jerid Kieso. Both Brookings runners completed the marathon in their trifecta.

Adrienne Bender  
Daniel Bielfeldt  
Andrew Dammen  
Brady Diercks  
Trevor Hinderaker  
Jason Hodne  
Heidi Hopewell



Brady Diercks, left, and Jason Hodne show off their Prairie Striders Fall Challenge after completing the Scotty Roberts 5K Oct. 17.

Jerid Kieso  
Jessica Kieso  
Lisa Kieso  
Stephen Lindsey  
Mary Prusa  
Collin Vaughn  
Maggie Veldkamp

## Hoyt running chair helps create partnership

Advance client Josh Aderhold and Brookings runner Jacob Hanson joined forces to run the Bob Bartling Hobo Day 5K Oct. 11.

Aderhold was riding in the Hoyt running chair that Prairie Striders Running Club purchased to make its races accessible to people of all abilities. Reports are that both Hanson and Aderhold enjoyed the experience and plan to compete in next year's race as well. In addition to the opportunity to compete with more than 300 other runners in the 3.1-mile run, Hanson and Aderhold also used their 30 minutes and 56 seconds on the course to build a bond.

Aderhold remarked, "I loved every part of it and can't wait to do it again next year."

The club offers use of the chair at no charge. Persons interested in using it should contact the club at [run@prairiestriders.net](mailto:run@prairiestriders.net)

## Jackrabbit cross country races to success

Summer road miles again paid off for the South Dakota State University team on the cross country courses late this fall.

A few highlights:

- Cody Larson, a senior from Warner, qualified for the NCAA Division I meet in Columbia, Mo., Nov. 22 by finishing 13th at the regional meet with a 10K time of 30:37.1. A year ago he was 44th at the Midwest Regionals with a time of 30:35.4
- Both the men's and women's team

finished 10th at regions, which were Nov. 14 at Stillwater, Oklahoma. A total of 31 men's teams and 32 women's teams competed. The women's finish tied their best ever mark at regions. The other Summit League standout was the University of North Dakota (eighth in women's and 13th in men's).

- The men won the Summit League title for the 10th consecutive year.

- Rod DeHaven was named Summit

League Coach of the Year, making it 16 cross coach of the year honors for DeHaven in his 21 years at SDSU. He has lead the men to 15 total cross country titles, the DI Independent Championship in 2005 and 14 Summit League titles. The women have won five titles in his tenure, the DI Independent Championship in 2007 and four Summit League titles.