Press release

Prairie Striders

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Running legend to take part in Jack 15

Amby Burfoot, winner of the 1968 Boston Marathon and retired editor of Runner’s World magazine, will be among the contestants at this year’s Jack 15 Road Race.

Burfoot, who is in Brookings as a part of the South Dakota Festival of Books, has entered to run the 15.2-mile race from White to Brookings Saturday, Sept. 22. The prolific author also will be available to sign books after talks on Sept. 21-22.

Dave Graves, co-director of the Jack 15, said, “Within the running community, few names are bigger than Amby Burfoot. In addition to his own running prowess, Burfoot steered Runner’s World into the premier magazine for runners. Fellow runners will enjoy hearing him talk as well as maybe having him autograph one of his books.”

Burfoot won the 1968 Boston Marathon in a time of 2:22:17 while a senior at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Conn., his home state. He was a teammate and roommate of Bill Rodgers, who would win Boston four times. He also roomed with fellow running legend Jeff Galloway. Burfoot’s college coach was John J. Kelley (The Younger), the 1957 Boston winner.

Burfoot holds a marathon PR of 2:14:28, set at the December 1968 Fukuoka Marathon in Japan. It was one second from the American record at the time.

He continues to run the Boston Marathon, initialing at five-year intervals from his 1968 win and annually since 2013, the year of the terrorist attack. His time this year was 4:53:22 (11:1 pace). Burfoot, who turns 72 Aug. 19, expects to run at a similar pace for the Jack 15, which has the distinction of being the oldest road race in the Midwest. It has been run every year since 1963.

The road to writing

When his racing career sunset, Burfoot turned to writing, joining Runner’s World in 1978 as its East Coast editor.

In 1984, Burfoot covered the first Olympic marathon that women were allowed to participate. He witnessed [Joan Benoit Samuelson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joan_Benoit_Samuelson) come into the Olympic Stadium ahead of the field and, to the surprise of media, win gold. In 1985, when Runner's World was bought by [Rodale Press](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rodale_Press) and moved from [Mountain View](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_View%2C_California), [California](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/California), to [Emmaus, Pennsylvania](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emmaus%2C_Pennsylvania), he was named the executive editor.

Burfoot held that position for two decades, and retired from Runner's World at the end of 2012.

Burfoot is the author of six books, most recently “Run Forever: Your Complete Guide to Healthy Lifetime Running,” which was released in March. Burfoot will share principles and philosophies from the book when he speaks at 7 p.m. Sept. 21 following packet pickup at Dykhouse Student-Athlete Center at South Dakota State University and at 3 p.m. Sept. 22 at the Brookings Public Library.

He will speak on “Run Forever” as well as his 2016 book “First Ladies of Running” at 1 p.m. Sept. 21 in the Archives Reading Room of Briggs Library, SDSU. He profiles 22 women who pioneered women’s distance running from 1958 to 1984. There’s also a chapter on Oprah Winfrey’s 1994 marathon that launched a women’s running boom that still continues.

All talks are free admission. Books also will be available for purchase and autographing.

Jack 15 details

The Jack 15 follows county roads from White to the Campanile on the SDSU campus. Prize money is offered for the top three male and female placers — $200 for first, $100 for second and $50 for third. All entries will receive a long-sleeve, moisture-wicking T-shirt and all finishers of the 15.2-mile run will receive a medal.

The race and the packet pickup talk are organized by Prairie Striders Running Club. Burfoot’s other talks are organized by the South Dakota Humanities Council.

Online race registration is available at allsportcentral.com.

For more information, go to prairiestriders.net or contact race co-directors Paul Ekern (t.c.s@mchsi.com) or Dave Graves (run@prairiestriders.net).