The Pacesetter

A publication of the **Prairie Striders**

Prairie Striders Running Club BROOKINGS, SD EST. 1969

Vol. 21, No. 3 **Brookings, S.D.** **August 2024**

Scholarship drive to honor running legend Bartling

By Dave Graves
Newsletter editor

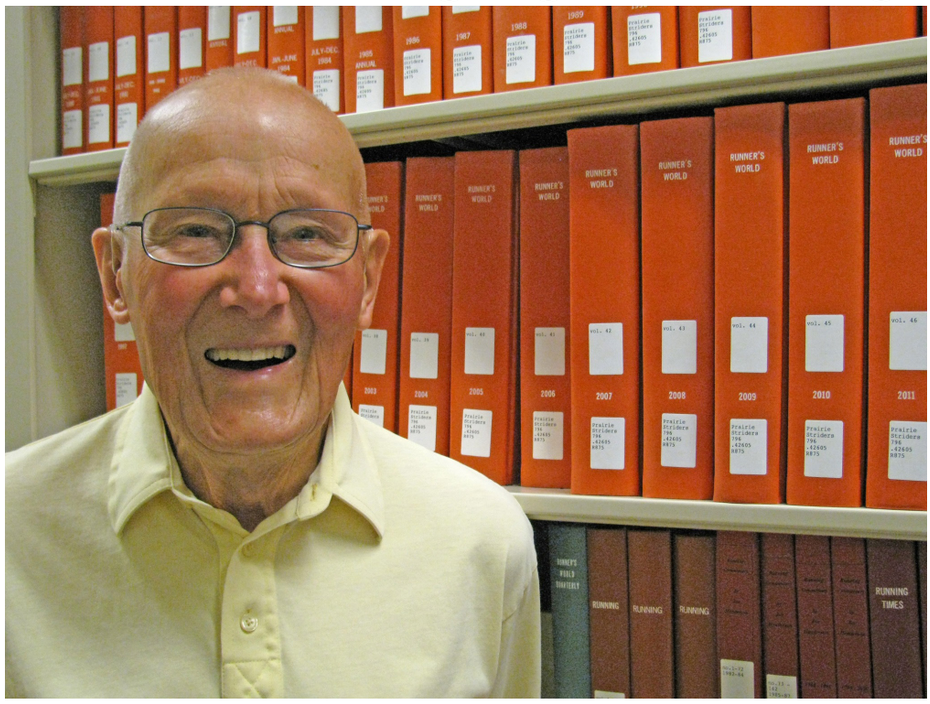
Bob Bartling, a founding member of Prairie Striders Running Club, is being honored by the club through a fundraising effort to endow the Friends of Bob Bartling Scholarship for the South Dakota State University track and field program to the $100,000 level.

Bartling was Prairie Striders inaugural president in 1970 and its treasurer from 1971 to 2012. He served as club librarian from 1978 to the date of his death on Feb. 24, 2024, at age 97.

Current Prairie Striders President Dave Graves said, "Bob's enthusiasm for life was unparalleled and he found joy in almost everything he undertook. At the top of the list was running — not only his own adventures but also his close relationship with the South Dakota State University cross country and track and field programs.

The ***Friends of Bob Bartling Scholarship*** was created in 2004 by Rob Beyer, a former SDSU runner, with the financial assistance of 29 others, and the scholarship fund stood at $29,000. Following Bob's passing, his son, Dave, used inheritance funds to make a $21,000 donation, bringing the total to $50,000.

"As Aug. 26 approaches — the date of Bob's birthday — it seems appropriate for friends of Bob Bartling to memorialize him through a donation. It has been said of Bob, 'Everyone was his friend and everyone deserved his undivided attention when they were with him.' If you had the privilege of knowing Bob, I hope you will join us in honoring Bob with a gift," Graves added.



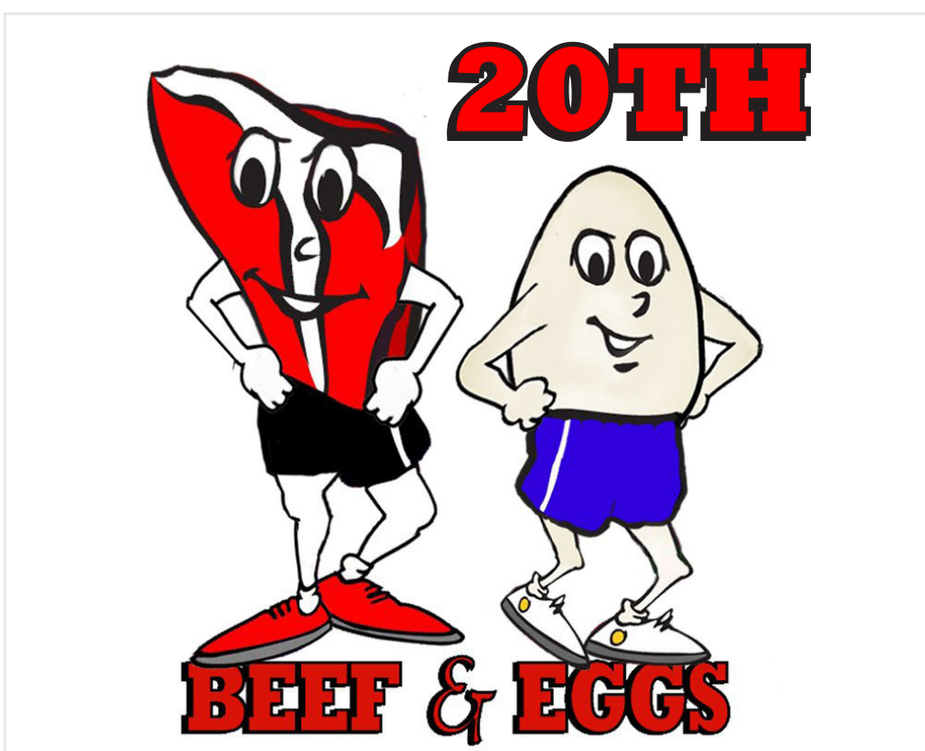
Bob Bartling poses by bound volumes of Runner's World in Briggs Library, which houses the vast book and magazine collection of Prairie Striders Running Club. Among Bartling's club contributions was serving as librarian from 1978 until his death Feb. 24, 2024.

The South Dakota State University Foundation handles financial administration of the scholarship funds and donations. The foundation is a 501 (3) (c) organization, so gifts are tax deductible.

"We invite you to join a pair loyal Jackrabbits, Vick (Coyle) Nelson and Jeff Massmann, who are serving as scholarship co-chairs, and support this effort," Graves said.

Gifts can be made quickly and securely through this link to the SDSU Foundation: https://shorturl.at/o84Vr

Kevin Bjerke, left, and Ryan Egeberg share a smile following the 20th running of the Beef and Eggs 5K July 13. Bjerke and Egeberg were going into their final year on the SDSU cross country and track team when they held the first Beef and Eggs. They have directed the race ever since. The race directors were honored by Prairie Striders with a presentation of Beef and Eggs bibs No. 1 and 2 before to this year's race.



Funner with friends

Marathoners cruise thru scenic Big Sur

By Dave Graves
Newsletter editor

Gathering after completing the Big Sur Marathon April 28 are Brookings residents, from left, Ross Abraham, Rich Reid and Anne Johnson. They ran almost the entire 26.2 miles together. Not pictured is Katie Jones, who outpaced her companions.

Those who have taken the Big Sur Marathon challenge leave the 26.2-mile event on the scenic California coast thinking it should be called the Big Sir Marathon due to its hilly finish.

For a quartet of Brookings runners, they found a good dose of companionship did a lot to minimize those ascents.

"I can't imagine too many ungifted runners can say they did Big Sur to crush their BQ (Boston Marathon qualifying) time," said Rich Reid, who was joined on the course by Anne Harris, Katie Jones and Ross Abraham as well as 4,500 others April 28.

Reid said, "If I felt myself slowing down a bit, I'd make the effort to catch up. If I was having a good mile, the others would keep up. I think if we'd been running individually, we would have had slower times. Plus, the pacer was also key. It was like running with a coach ... Our goal was under four hours and Ross suggested we start with the 3:50 pacer, which turned out to be a good idea."

One of the quartet, Jones, actually ran independent.

"Katie overachieved and finished 150th (8th out of 363 in the F30-34 age group). She did a 3:18:44 (7:35 pace) and almost seemed disappointed," Reid reported.

Abraham, Johnson, Reid paced one another

"Ross Abraham, Anne and I ran the almost every step together. Ross pulled away a bit at the finish and came in at 3:45:31 (594th out of all finishers, and 22nd of 164 in the M 50-54 group). Anne and I posted the exact same time at 3:46:17; 615th overall and 37th of 373 in the F 40-44 age group.

"For some reason I came in at 3:46:17, which put me 614th overall, 14th out of 123 in the M 60-64 age group. Amazingly, I beat my Boston time from last year (a friendlier course) by 45 seconds. My goal time was to be under four, my stretch goal was 3:50 and my fantasy goal was 3:45. I was pretty thrilled with my result. Since I turn 65 in September, I am now 19 minutes under my BQ time."

Boston, Big Sur within 2 weeks

For Harris, her finish completed the B2B Challenge. Thirteen days earlier she ran the Boston Marathon in 3:53:29.

Harris said, "The group had discussed Big Sur, and we decided it would be a bucket-list marathon to check off the list, so we all registered for it as soon as it opened. I wasn't sure about doing Boston, but when the registration week came around, I couldn't pass it up. Someone once told me that 'as long as you have a Boston qualifying time, you have to do it, because some day you won't.'

"Overall, I'm so happy I did the B2B challenge. They are entirely different races, but incredibly special in their own way. The heat in Boston made for a humbling run this year, but the history and emotions in Boston are unmatched. As for Big Sur, a more beautiful course is unimaginable, and the excitement and energy there is contagious.

"I was so grateful for my running friends at Big Sur. The last 6 miles would have been much more of a struggle without them!"

Sister-in-law turns into sponsor

Abraham is an avid runner who completed his third marathon at Big Sur, but he was coming off a long layoff.

"I was planning to run the Lake Wobegon Trail marathon in 2022, but the day before the race I tested positive for Covid and then had to quit running for 1 ½ years due to plantar fasciitis," he said.

Abraham added, "I had read about Big Sur as being one of the most scenic marathons in the country and one that should be on everyone's bucket list, so I

Rich Reid runs on scenic California Highway 1 in the second half of the Big Sur Marathon April 28. A mudslide turned the race into an out-and-back event, but Reid and his Brookings companions were still enthralled by the scenery.

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Big Sur

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always thought it would be a good one to run. One day last fall Rich, Anne and Katie said they were signing up and that I should do it too.

"At first, I didn't think it was possible with work (SDSU math faculty member) and a busy spring, but I didn't want to be left behind in Brooking while my friends did this marathon that I've always wanted to do. I told my wife and her sister that I wanted to do it but wasn't sure if we could afford the time or cost.

"They said that I absolutely needed to make it happen. In fact, my sister-in-law, Jeni, had been looking for a birthday gift for me and she took out some cash and fanned it in my face and said it would be her gift for my birthday, but I wouldn't get any of it until she sees the registration receipt. I signed up on the spot, called her my sponsor and it was a great decision!"

Camaraderie tops Big Sur highlights

The highlights for Abraham include "being able to view all the beautiful scenery throughout the run ... It was also a great experience to run it with Rich and Anne (Katie is way too fast for us) to have people to talk to during the race.

A fixture of the Big Sur Marathon is a pianist on a grand piano at about Mile 5 facing the Pacific Ocean.

"Renting a house for the group and some of our spouses was a new experience for me and it turned out to be a lot of fun and gave us a place where we could rehash the race all afternoon long as part of our recovery. I was glad my wife, Julie, came with us and it was cool to explore Monterey, do some shopping and eat at some excellent restaurants."

Reid emphasized "the shared experience with the group. It was wonderful that my wife Kathy was able to join us and our daughter Becky came down from Sacramento as well. Becky and Katie were nursing students at SDSU around the same time and it was great to see them connect.

"We rented an Air BnB for three nights, ate meals together, went to the expo, drove the course the day before, etc. It truly was a wonderful time and I couldn't have asked for a better weekend. Three of us ran almost every step of the race together and we pretty much had a conversation going until the last few miles."

High bar set for next marathon adventure

Harris added, "I think we've all agreed that our Big Sur adventure couldn't have been better. It's hard to pick a single highlight as everything was so great! We laughed, we ran, we ate and truly enjoyed each other's company. Sitting out on the back patio with our feet up enjoying the sunshine the afternoon after the race was pretty perfect!"

Given the group's evaluation of the weekend, it is no surprise another marathon trip is in the works, they're just not sure where.

"Some people plan destination weddings. We're just thinking about destination marathons and it doesn't have to be a prestige race," though Boston and Chicago remain possibilities.

$10 discount offered for Crazy Horse Marathon

Organizers of the Crazy Horse Marathon Half Marathon and Marathon Relay on June 2are offering a $10 discount to Prairie Striders members through Oct. 6. Go www.RunCrazyHorse.com and use the code 24RCH10.

At the race, the sound of native drums will send runners on their way for a run through the sacred land of the Lakota people. The adventure begins in the shadow of the world's largest mountain carving — Crazy Horse Memorial — and ends in The Heart of the Hills — Hill City.

For questions, contact race director Emily Schulz-Wheeler at Emily@RunCrazyHorse.com or 605-390-6137.

New life members in 2024

Prairie Striders would like to thank the following 12 persons for becoming life members in 2024:

Dave Bartling, Paula Carson, Randy Hanson, Paul Hanusa, Reyna Martin, Brittany McKnight, Mary Jo Minor, Brad Olinger, Lisa Raetz, Colene Reiser, Richard Smith, Laurie Stiegelmeier, and Justin Sell.

Prairie Striders now has 139 life members. New life members are welcome by making a single payment of at least $125 with a new or renewed membership.

For more instructions, go to: www.prairiestriders.net/join

James Niehaus gets a "low five" from 4-year-old Maddy Mills at this year's Predictor Mile July 31. The best predictor for the night was Anna Mills of Brookings while her brother Max was the best predictor in the 400-meter run.

Billy Mills to speak in advance of Jack 15

For 60 years, American distance runners have dreamed of repeating the Olympic 10K victory that Billy Mills notched in 1964.

As the XXXIII Olympiad opens July 26 in Paris, Mills remains the only U.S. champion in the history of the longest track event. To mark the anniversary, Mills has written a children's book — "Wings of an Eagle" — and the native South Dakotan will be in Brookings Sept. 20-21 as part of the South Dakota Festival of Books and the annual Jack 15 road race.

He will hand out medals to finishers of the Prairie Striders event, which was first run the year before Mills' Olympic triumph; speak to runners and the general public the night before the race; and then speak on Saturday afternoon as part of the Festival of Books — organized by the South Dakota Humanities Council.

Dave Graves, co-director of the Jack 15, said, "Having an Olympic legend and South Dakota hero speak the night before our race will make the 62nd running of the Jack 15 an historic year. There's not many runners who can say they were handed their finisher's medal by an Olympic champion, much less one as iconic as Billy Mills.

"Prairie Striders and the Jack 15 are greatly indebted to the South Dakota Humanities Council for making it possible for Mills to join us."

Each September the humanities council, with corporate and philanthropic support, brings in dozens of writers in a wide array of subject areas to the South Dakota Festival of Books.

Mills, who is well known as a motivational speaker, has taken his first crack at writing a children's book with "Wings of an Eagle." He wrote about being an orphan on the Oglala Lakota Pine Ridge Reservation. Before his father was called to the ancestors, he told Billy how to conquer his suffering:

"You have broken wings, son. You have to dig deeper, below the anger, the hurt, the self-pity. The pursuit of a dream will heal you."

Mills dug beyond poverty, racism and severe health challenges and raced toward the goal of becoming an Olympic athlete, inspired by his indigenous ancestors who stood strong when the odds were against them. Though at times he felt like his wings were clipped — a lone bird falling from the sky — he adapted and overcame, finally earning his place at the 1964 Olympics.

Mills will talk at the South Dakota Art Museum auditorium at 7 p.m. Friday, Sept. 20. No admission will be charged, and the event is open to Jack 15 participants as well as the general public. The time and location for Mills' Saturday afternoon talk hasn't been finalized.

In addition to the Jack 15 road race, there will be a free kids run at 10:45 a.m. Sept. 21. There will also be a drawing for copies of Mill's "Wings of an Eagle."

"Wings of an Eagle" is illustrated by S.D. Nelson, a noted Lakota artist of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, whose art works are included in the collections of the South Dakota Art Museum. Copies of the book are available for purchase at the art museum store.

For information on registering for the Jack 15, go to prairiestriders.net/jack-15

Pacer Tom completes 50 State trek for 8th time

Tom Perri, or Pacer Tom as he is known on the marathon circuit, has completed the 50 State challenge for the eighth time.

Perri, 62, of Maple Grove, Minnesota, paced the 5:30 marathoners at the May 11 Brookings Marathon and was featured in the Brookings Register prior to the race.

On July 20, Perri finished the Mesa Falls Marathon in Ashton, Idaho, in 5:21:36. Three days earlier he topped an 11-runner field at the Summer Day Camp marathon at Quarry Park and Nature Preserve in Waite, Minnesota, with a time of 5:00:35. It was his 701st marathon or ultramarathon.

Perri now has run 207 marathons or ultras since Stage 4 cancer diagnosis on July 30, 2019.

On Dec. 26, 2018, he was initially believed to have prostate cancer. By July 30, 2019, he learned the cancer had spread and he was in Stage 4. But Perri was still running. In fact, the longest absence from running for the retired mental health therapist was 10 days after he had his initial prostate surgery July 3, 2019.

"If you're struggling with depression, if you're struggling with weight issues, if you're struggling with alcoholism, of some kind of substance abuse, the self-confidence you can get from running, I've seen it so many times how it's changed a person's life," Perri said in the Register article.

He has taken some of the successes he has seen and put them in a self-published book — "Running: My Salvation from Stage 4 Cancer." The 352-page paperback is broken into 27 chapters with each chapter telling the story of someone who has overcome obstacles. Not all the stories are about runners, he said.

The book just came off the press April 1 and is available on Amazon.

Tom Perri after finishing the 50 State marathon adventure for the eighth time.

Broken shoulder doesn't stop streak

Longtime Prairie Striders member Andriette Wickstrom, 69, of Storm Lake, Iowa, wasn't about let her Boston Marathon streak come to an end despite breaking her shoulder two days before the race.

Two days before she was to run the historic race on April 15, she tripped and fell while coming to meet a friend for coffee in Boston. The retired teacher had a decision to make: Let her streak of running 32 consecutive Boston Marathons come to an end or gut it out.

Wickstrom choose the later. "I wore a sling on my left arm and hugged myself with my left hand so my broken shoulder did not move. I ran the Boston Marathon in 5 hour and 10 minutes, so it was not a world record, but it puts me at 33 and I did not injure myself further by running so slowly," Wickstrom said.

The injury did keep her out of the Brookings Marathon, but she reports she is recovering nicely. Wickstrom said she started running again several days later, but VERY slowly as a form of transportation because riding her bike or driving a car were not safe options. She hopes to run in the Jack 15 Sept. 21.

Member Spotlight

Name: Katie McNeary Jones
Age: 31
Residence: Brookings
Occupation: Registered nurse, nutrition coach & gym owner (Synergy)
Family: Husband – Cam; Lincoln, 4; daughter - McKenna, 2; and No. 3 on the way!

Years as a Prairie Strider member: 4

Why you're a member: Because of my passion for fitness, especially running. Runners have a unique sense of camaraderie, and it's wonderful to be part of a community where people truly understand and share this passion.

It's not always easy to find others who are interested in discussing the details of our training and mileage, so being in a group like this is fantastic.

Beyond my personal appreciation for running, I love that the Prairie Striders give back to the community through various programs and events. One of my favorite events is the "Run4Fun," where it's inspiring to see kids of all ages get out there and give it their best. My own son has found running enjoyable through this program, which has been a joy to witness.

I also value the motivation we gain from each other as runners. I enjoy hearing and reading about other runners' experiences, which fuels my own passion.

Additionally, being part of this community has allowed me to build relationships and connect with other runners in the area. Since I'm not originally from Brookings, learning about the local history and running culture has deepened my appreciation for running in this town.

Thank you for fostering such an incredible community!

What you enjoy about running: The mental aspect. There are days when I wake up doubting that I'll have a good run, but once I'm out there, it often turns out to be one of my best. Similarly, during a run, I might feel tired in the first few miles, but pushing through and finishing strong in the last few miles is incredibly rewarding.

Overcoming these mental challenges has not only enhanced my running but has also helped me tackle obstacles in my daily life and boosted my confidence.

In the past five years, what has truly sparked my joy for running is the relationships I've built with fellow runners, who have become lifelong friends. These connections have made running even more fulfilling and enjoyable.

Katie Jones runs with her children, Lincoln, then 3, while pushing McKenna, then 1, at the 2023 Beef and Eggs 5K.

Favorite running memory: One of my favorite running memories is from 2020, during the COVID pandemic, when I first joined a group of five runners to train for the Brookings Marathon. Starting out with a group of strangers, we finished that marathon as friends.

The summer training was particularly memorable. Amid the uncertainty and lack of regular schedules, our running routine became a reassuring constant, which at that time is exactly what I needed!

Since then, our group has continued to train for other marathons and even traveled together to Boston and Big Sur (other favorite memories). We're already excitedly planning our next adventure together!

Your favorite Prairie Striders race: Beef & Eggs 5K or Hobo Day 5K

Favorite workout: My favorite running workout is a 5 a.m. crisp morning run with no specific goal in mind. I simply focus on being present and running based on how I feel.

There's something incredibly refreshing about starting the day early and running without any pressure, allowing myself to fully enjoy the moment and embrace the start of a new day.

Your running goal: I would love to run in all 50 states, but my long-term goal is to take care of my body so I can continue running for as long as possible. I'm also hopeful that one day I'll have the opportunity to run a race with my kids!

Shoe revolution

Taking the pounding out of pounding the pavement

By Chuck McCullough DPT

I have been often asked by fellow runners "what are maximum cushioning shoes and are they right for me"?

While we know the general characteristics of these types of shoes, there are many different versions and different companies producing this style of running shoe. Subsequently, they are not all the same. Like any type of running shoe, there are pros and cons of usage of the maximum cushion shoe.

Maximum cushion or maximalist shoes are often characterized by a large thick sole and are often promoted as a type of shoe that provides a high level of shock absorption. Maximum cushion, enhance comfort, and extra cushioning to help injury recovery are often the main attributes that are advertised for these type of shoes.

HOKA was one of the first companies to promote a maximum cushion shoe and they have many different model types. Today there are other shoe companies that have created a maximum cushioning shoe model. For example, Brooks Ghost has a max cushion version. If you can remember many years ago, Nike produced and promoted an Air 360 max cushion running shoe and still has versions of this shoe available today.

The women's Ghost 15 is an example of a maximum cushioning shoe.

The creation of this style of running shoe has been good for the running shoe industry. It has brought more research and development into running shoe production.

We have seen this type of shoe go from straight full cushioning to now seeing the addition support structures like carbon plate technology and other type of foot bridges integrated with the sole of the shoe.

Shock reduction important for many

Adding plates and plastics into the midsole changes the cushioning and the way your foot lands or rolls forward as you move from the landing phase to pushing off phase during your run. All these new innovations help all the industry as a whole improve all the products.

The thick and plush midsoles absorbs the shock of foot strike and aims to be beneficial for long-distance runners, those with joint issues like osteoarthritis, and people who stand and work on their feet all day.

It is thought that the enhanced cushioning provides extra joint protection and distributes the force of impact evenly throughout the lower body reducing stress on lower body joints. In theory, reducing impact should help reduce fatigue.

There has been high-quality research on this type of running shoe. Technically in the healthcare industry, we have not seen lower levels of impact injury with this version of a highly cushioned shoe versus a traditional running shoe. There are some technical studies that show you can get a higher vertical load rate with an extra cushion shoe.

Could they lead to other injuries

Higher load rates are also associated with injuries like stress fractures and plantar fasciitis. Irene Davis, a professor the department of physical medicine rehabilitation at Harvard Medical School, has done a number of studies finding that people land softer and have lower load rates when they have less cushioning.

Thus we saw the innovation of minimalist type shoes based on this research. Athletes also need to understand that if the running shoe has too much cushion your response time during the push-off phase when your foot is on the road will be decreased. It can be comparable with running in sand. The harder you have to push off the more you have to use your calf muscle, which can lead to calf and Achilles tendon injuries.

As you can see there are pros and cons with this type of shoe. Whether this type of shoe is best for you depends on your foot type, how stiff or flexible your foot and lower body presents, the mechanics of your running, and past or present injuries. Working with an experienced running shoe store or medical provider knowledgeable with foot mechanics can help sort through these considerations.

One size (or style) doesn't fit all

Lastly, there is a certain amount of trial and error when a runner tries to find the best shoe that works for their specific situation.

Because I do not subscribe that there is only style of shoe or one shoe company that is the best for all runners, it benefits us all that the running shoe industry has developed maximum cushion running shoes.

The best shoe is the one that works for you. I have seen people absolutely love the max cushion with carbon plates and some runners love extra cushion added to their favorite running shoe brand or shoe version.

Editor's note: *Chuck is a physical therapist at the Avera Medical Group Brookings clinic. He graduated with his bachelor's degree in physical therapy from the University of North Dakota in 1992.*

His education continued through the years with various degrees and certifications leading to his terminal degree of Doctor of Physical Therapy from the University of North Dakota in 2007.

At his practice in the Brookings clinic, he assists runners to get back on the road, treadmill or trails. His love of running is not just in the clinic as he keeps moving with his best running partners, his daughter and his dog.

McCullough also directs the Scotty Roberts 5K, assists with the Brookings Marathon and is the 2023 Harvey Mills Friend of Running presented by Prairie Striders.