



Athletes to Watch – Male

Joseph Gray

- Residence: Colorado Springs, CO
- Originally from: Lakewood, WA
- Birkie Trail Run Festival Event: Half Marathon
- Birthdate: 1/20/1984
- Career Highlights:
 - 5 consecutive North American Central American Mountain Running Titles.
 - Xterra Trail Running World title in 2012, 2016
- Running achievement, I am most proud of:
 - Winning the World Mountain Running Championships in 2016
- Why I run:
 - I love the freedom and adventure it brings
- Future Goals:
 - Represent Team USA for the 22nd time in my career
- Why I am running in the Birkie Trail Run Festival:
 - I've heard for many years about the awesome trails there and finally made the decision to experience them for myself!



Photo by Christy Gray

Hayden Hawks

- Residence: St. George, UT
- Originally from: St. George, UT
- Birkie Trail Run Festival Event: Half Marathon
- Birthdate: February 22, 1991
- Career Highlights:
 - 2017 CCC 101k Champion
 - 2016 Speedgoat 50k Champion
 - 2017 Red Hot 55k Champion and CR
 - 4th individual 1st team 2016 Mountain World Championships
 - 2nd TNF Endurance Challenge 50 2016
 - Zion Traverse FKT 2017.
- Running achievement, I am most proud of:
 - Gold Medal World Mountain Running Championships for USA National Team
- Why I run:
 - I love to run. It keeps me real!
- Future Goals:
 - Move into 100 mile ultras and compete for wins in all the major ultra marathons around the world. Win Western States, UTMB, TNF, and other prestigious ultras. Keep running the rest of my life and stay healthy!
- Why I am running in the Birkie Trail Run Festival:
 - I have enjoyed competing at US Championships in the past and wanted to compete in the Trail Half Marathon Championships against the nation's best at this distance. I have also never been to Wisconsin and want to see what it's all about!



Photo by Jason Hatfield



2017 BIRKIE Trail Run Festival

Tyler Sigl

- Residence: Seymour, WI
- Originally from: Seymour, WI
- Birkie Trail Run Festival Event: Half Marathon
- Birthdate/born: February 23, 1986
- Career Highlights:
 - Competed on the 2016 & 2017 US Trail World teams
 - Qualified for the 2012 US Olympic Marathon Trials
 - 2:17:28
 - 2016 US 50 Mile Trail National champion
 - 2014 US 50 Mile Road National champion
 - Ran the top two 50 mile times in North America in 2014
 - 5:27:55 and 5:32
- Running achievement, I am most proud of:
 - Winning the 2016 US 50 Mile Trail Championship in course record time, leading start to finish and qualifying for my 1st US world team.
- Why I run:
 - I run because it is something that I enjoy doing. There is nothing quite like the feeling of losing yourself in a great run.
- Future Goals:
 - Finish on the podium at The North Face ECS CA event.
 - Compete in the Western States 100 mile.
 - Qualify for the 2020 US Olympic marathon trials
- Why I am running in the Birkie Trail Run Festival:
 - I am running for the competition. It's hard to pass up a race that will be competitive, is a national championship, and is within driving distance.

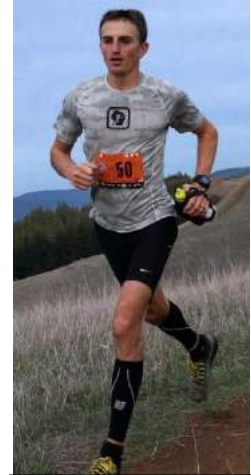


Photo by Nate Dunn

Jeffrey Quednow

- Residence: Ogdensburg, WI
- Originally from: Westboro, WI
- Birkie Trail Run Festival Event: Half Marathon
- Birthdate: October 20, 1991
- Career Highlights:
 - 4 years of competing for UW-Eau Claire Cross Country and Track and Field
 - 2X United States Snowshoe Team Member
- Running achievement, I am most proud of:
 - the first time I made the United States Snowshoe Team which occurred in the national championship race out in Bennington, VT.
- Why I run:
 - Running is my hobby. I find it fun and love competing.
- Future Goals:
 - Long term I plan to run a full or half marathon in every state.
- Why I am running in the Birkie Trail Run Festival:
 - I ran in the Birkie Trail Run two years ago, and it was a great event. This year, with the Birkie hosting the USATF Half Marathon Trail Championship, it should bring in some great competition making the event even better.



Jeffrey Quednow



2017 BIRKIE Trail Run Festival

Justin Grunewald

- Residence: Minneapolis, MN
- Originally from: Brainerd, MN
- Birkie Trail Run Festival Event: Half Marathon
- Birthdate/born: November 15, 1985
- Career Highlights:
 - 2012 US Olympic Trials qualifier in marathon
- Running achievement, I am most proud of:
 - I am most proud of qualifying for marathon trials in the midst of medical school.
- Why I run:
 - The main reason I run is because it gives me a chance to reset my day and spend quality time with my wife
- Future Goals:
 - Qualify for and place well at Western States
- Why I am running in the Birkie Trail Run Festival:
 - I've always loved Hayward, WI and the ski race. It seemed like a good year to check out the trail race with the US champs occurring.



Photo by Star Tribune

Brian Gregg

- Residence: Minneapolis, MN
- Originally from: Winthrop, MA
- Birkie Trail Run Festival Event: Half Marathon
- Birthdate/born: June 27, 1984
- Career Highlights:
 - 2014 Olympian in Cross Country skiing
- Running achievement, I am most proud of:
 - Running a sub 16 min 5k
- Why I run:
 - The main reason I run is to help me to train to ski faster.
- Future Goals:
 - Compete in the 2018 Winter Olympics in the 15k freestyle cross country ski race
- Why I am running in the Birkie Trail Run Festival:
 - I love the Birkie Trail and Birkie community. I started my professional career in Hayward and love the opportunity to come back to the North woods. It is so much fun to see how the trail Festival has grown. Looking forward to the run.



Photo by ABSF



2017 BIRKIE Trail Run Festival

Athletes to Watch - Female

Dani Moreno

- Residence: Santa Barbara, CA
- Originally from: Los Angeles, CA
- Birkie Trail Run Festival Event: Half Marathon
- Birthdate: June 23, 1992
- Career Highlights:
 - 4th USA Trail Half Marathon Championships 2016
 - USA Long Distance Mountain Team Member 2017
 - 2nd La Sportiva Mountain Cup Final 2016
- Why I run:
 - I run because it's fun! I love racing and running with my friends, and exploring new places. I think the moment it becomes something else I should step away, but honestly, I don't see that day ever coming.



Photo by Michael Blake (Hoka One One)

Ashley Brasovan

- Residence: Westminster, CO
- Originally from: Lakeland, FL
- Birkie Trail Run Festival Event: Half Marathon
- Birthdate/born: December 28, 1990
- Career Highlights:
 - 55th at 2016 US Olympic Marathon Trials
 - 3x National High School champion in cross country and track
 - PRs of 2:41 (marathon) and 1:14 (half marathon) on the roads
 - 2017 Brooks sponsored athlete
- Running achievement, I am most proud of:
 - I went through 5 stress fractures in college and pretty much didn't run for 3 years. I moved out to Colorado after grad school and qualified for the 2016 Olympic trials 8 months later. It was the most rewarding race after 7+ years of injuries and people telling me that I would never be able to compete again.
- Why I run:
 - I love it and it and the people/experiences that come along with it.
- Future Goals:
 - improve my finish in the 2020 Olympic Marathon trials and more trail racing!
- Why I am running in the Birkie Trail Run Festival:
 - I wanted to get into trail racing this year and this seemed like a great event to do so!
- Additional comments/thoughts:
 - I am excited to compete in my first trail race and see what I can do. Thanks for including me in the experience!

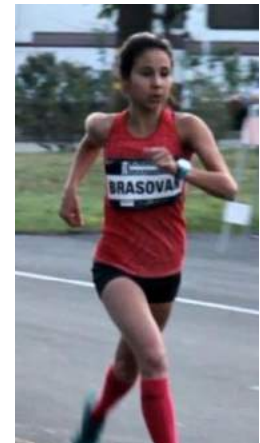


Photo by Wendy City Productions



2017 BIRKIE Trail Run Festival

Ladia Albertson-Junkans

- Residence: Issaquah, WA
- Originally from: Stillwater, MN
- Birkie Trail Run Festival Event: Half Marathon
- Birthdate: November 25, 1985
- Career Highlights:
 - 2nd Place 2016 USATF Half Marathon Trail Championships
 - All American XC at University of Minnesota
 - Winner 2017 Chuckanut 50k; Bellingham WA
 - 13th Place World 50k Trail Run Championships
- Running achievement, I am most proud of:
 - Being part of the Gopher cross-country team that won the 2007 Big Ten conference title (the first women's XC conference title in school history) because it was truly a team effort
- Why I run:
 - It is my absolute favorite way to experience life
- Future Goals:
 - Keep running with joy and appreciation
- Why I am running in the Birkie Trail Run Festival:
 - Growing up in the Midwest with parents who Nordic ski, the Birkie trails evoked equal parts awe and fear (you ski HOW far?! For HOW long?! In WHAT temps?!?!). I have fond memories of my stepdad training for the Birkie with his buddies and I finally experienced the race for myself in 2015 (it's still the hardest athletic endeavor I've ever done!). I'm super excited to return to this special place to RUN these legendary trails, and I can't think of a better host for the 2017 USATF Trail Half Marathon Championships. Thanks to all who are making it possible!



Photo by Steven Mortinson

(Pursuit Films)

Brandy Erholtz

- Residence: Dillon, CO
- Originally from: International Falls, MN
- Birkie Trail Run Festival Event: Half Marathon
- Birthdate/born: 8/22/1977
- Career Highlights:
 - Represented the US 13 times Internationally in mountain running.
 - -2x Winner of Mt. Washington Road Race
 - 2008—National Mountain Running Champion
 - -2x Winner of Pike's Peak Ascent
 - -3x US Snowshoe National Champion
 - -Numerous podium finishes locally, nationally & Internationally!
- Running achievement, I am most proud of:
 - Winning Mt. Washington in 2008 was a break-through performance for me. I had narrowly missed qualifying for the Olympic Marathon trials that spring. It verified my hard work and opened up a whole new love of running and opportunities I had never dreamed of.



Photo by Shannon Payne

-continued-



Brandy Erholtz (continued)

- Why I run:
 - I run for the love of it. I don't feel like "me" without getting my daily run in. It's my "me" time and prayer time. I also run because it's a gift, and an opportunity to explore and travel. My stepdad passed away from ALS about 1.5 years ago, and each day I'm healthy and able to run I don't take it for granted.
- Future Goals:
 - I'd still like to run faster at Mt. Washington and Pike's Peak and eventually get into longer distances. In addition, I see myself getting more involved on the coaching side and would like to influence/help others reach their potential.
- Why I am running in the Birkie Trail Run Festival:
 - I grew up in MN, lived in Duluth for 10 years and have family close by. It's a great excuse to come back and explore new trails and see family/friends. I am also turning 40 in August so it'll be my first opportunity to compete as a master's runner in a national championship.

Masters Athletes to watch

Chris Grauch

- Residence: Nederland, CO
- 2016 USATF Half Marathon Trail Master Champion

CJ Hitz

- Residence: Colorado Springs, CO

Nancy Hobbs

- Residence: Nederland, CO
- Trail running legend and advocate