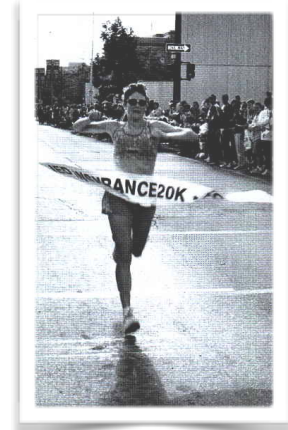


# Dam to Dam 37 years - 10 special moments

#1 Bonnie Sons was the ultimate Dam to Dam runner. An ISU top runner and many years later a top master's runner. She won the race 5 times - 1989, 1992, 1994, 2000 and 2001. Bonnie commented after the 2011 race, "It truly is one of my favorite races. There's just something mystical about it that makes me return year after year. Even though I'm slowing with age, I still love to run and take part in the race". Bonnie has won the hearts of Dam runners.



#1 Bonnie Sons the heart of the Race

#2 Many can start a race, few can see it mature for all 37 years. John Leonhart and Joe Kobes are the founders of Dam to Dam. They traveled the country in the late 1970s running the best races in the US, hoping to bring a truly great race to Des Moines. They did and it grew from 375 finishers in 1980 to over 10,000 in 2016. John and Joe still remain a vital part of the Dam to Dam - John the official announcer of the race and Joe the treasurer.



#2 John & Joe - special DAM guys

#3 Is there a runner more lowan than Phil Coppess? He aspired to be the best and he was, with hard work and a driving ambition. His best year was in 1985 when he became the best marathoner in the US. Phil's season started out with an all-time record of 59:23 at the Dam to Dam 20k. From there it just got better, running a 1:02:14 half-marathon in Philadelphia just a few weeks before a 2:10:05 at Twin Cities Marathon. At Dam to Dam, he stated, "After the first water break I just tried to get ahead". Phil was always modest about his abilities.



#3 Phil Coppess, Iowa's best

#4 It's hard to believe that for 37 years Dam to Dam has been organized by volunteers. It was not uncommon for volunteer directed races during the 1980s and 1990s. But as races became more complicated and mega-sized they became full-time jobs. Profit companies are becoming the norm today with thousands of dollars to be made. Dam to Dam has stayed true to its roots, a rarity - it shows in the care and community support of the race. Kurt Schaeffer has been the director for 19 years, leading 37 committee members and a total of 1000 race weekend volunteers.



#4 Volunteers, a dam tradition since day 1

#5 Dam to Dam is about water starting on a Dam, running adjacent to the Des Moines River and finishing downstream from the river it started on. While Saylorville Dam assures less flooding, it's no cure as water has been a Dam issue downstream. Only once did it not start on the Dam, 1991. Many times it has needed to be re-routed due to flooding around mile 10. Regardless, the race holds a special appeal, running downstream like spring downpours.

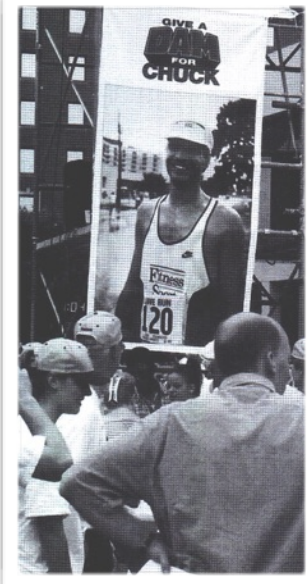


#5 Water everywhere, starting on the dam and along the route

#6 The 35th year was celebrated in record fashion with a new twist. The race became a Half-Marathon, .7 miles longer than the past 34 years as a 20 kilometer. The change was well received. Just a few years earlier (2012)

the race moved from Nollen Plaza to the Western Gateway Park. The race had outgrown traditions, and change was almost the only way to match the growth of Des Moines and the downtown. Thousands continued to love the race.

#7 The 20th year of a 20 kilometer is noteworthy. One of the Dam founders remarked, "There aren't 2000 long distance runners in Iowa". His words didn't jinx the race, as exactly 2000 finished the race. Actually 2000 and one, fittingly, there was one wheelchair finisher. The honorary race director was Chuck Jipp, longtime Des Moines runner and Dam to Dam organizer. He had Lou Gehrig's disease and was confined to a wheelchair, greeting runners at the finish line.



#7 20th year, Chuck greets 2001 finishers



#6 Geez, not a 20 kilometers, a Half-Marathon (.7 mile longer)



#8 Iowa's Distance Classic showing off Iowa's rich soil

#8 During the 1990s it became apparent that Dam to Dam was more than just another area race. It was quietly called "Iowa's Distance Classic". The name stuck and decades later it is the long distance race that Iowans have come to call their race. The first part of the Dam to Dam represents Iowa's best, with cornfields beginning their journey toward harvest. The last part of the race is all city with traffic and tall buildings. There isn't a better race in Iowa to show off the distance prowess of runners.

#9 The longer distance of Dam to Dam was joined by a timed 5 kilometer in 1995. All family members are included at Dam to Dam with the traditional longer race, 5 kilometer and youth runs. The 3.1 mile race grew up, now larger in size than the first 21 years of the longer race.

#10 Dam to Dam really was getting big, especially during the decade starting in 2010. On-line registration was required and the race was capped. 9000 entrants entered the 2014 Half-Marathon in 20 days. A far cry from it's younger days when squeaking out 1000 runner was the norm. Women finishers were definitely leading the way outnumbering the men in 2010.



#9 5 kilometer along with youth runs - a perfect family morning



#10 Dam to Dam the biggest distance race in Iowa

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 37 years of a great race started in 1980, ten moments to remember and cherish. Thank you runners for making Dam to Dam Iowa's Distance Classic