



15 / WHERE EVERYBODY KNOWS YOUR NAME

PARK TO PARK HALF-MARATHON
Waterloo, Iowa, September 7 > ☺ ⚡ \$

In order to recruit volunteers for his small race, Dave Lipinski decided to give cash awards for the loudest, zaniest teams. The Water Station Spirit Contest has become so popular that nonprofits must apply to get in, detailing just how they intend to entertain runners. The creative themes and the designation of "shouters"—volunteers whose sole job is to call runners by name (printed on bib)—has shot the race's festive feel skyward. "It's the best course support I've seen at any race, bar none," says Kathy Flickinger, 29. The 800 half-marathoners—led by a pack of East Africans—dash through a lightning-fast route on a woody, paved bike path. A post-race runner survey determines the five winning teams (top prize \$400). Runners go home with a Dri-Fit long-sleeve shirt, a four-inch medal, and a belly full of made-there pizza. trekmanracing.com/id6.html

16 / CANADIAN SPLENDOR
CANMORE ROCKY MOUNTAIN HALF-MARATHON
Canmore, Alberta, Canada, September 8 > ⚡ ☺

Sometimes runners need a racing carrot to lure them to bucket-list destinations. Consider the Rocky Mountain Half-Marathon a bushelful. Canmore sits at the base of the Rockies, just a few minutes east of Banff National Park, and the majority of the course is run

on a gravel path in the shadow of soaring 10,000-foot peaks. "You literally are staring down wonderful mountain vistas throughout the race," says Calgary resident Greg Medwid. Runners routinely spot elk and mountain goats—and clock fast times on the mostly flat course. canmorehalfmarathon.ca

18 / PRESIDENTIAL COURSE
WOODROW WILSON BRIDGE HALF-MARATHON
National Harbor, Maryland, October 6 > ☺

It was love at first running for fans who wrote in about this four-year-old gem. "The course! The course!" they shouted from the survey. The point-to-point route begins in front of the mansion of George Washington at Mt.

Vernon, takes over all four lanes of the GW Parkway, which passes Fort Washington (mile three), and offers phenomenal views of the Potomac. The pinnacle comes midway through mile nine, when you're atop the race's namesake bridge looking upriver at the Washington Monument and other D.C. memorials. The finish is on the waterfront at the shiny new National Harbor. Bonus: Get the VIP treatment for an extra \$75. wilsonbridgehalf.com

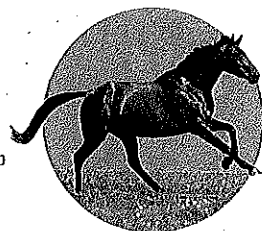


20 / LEAF-PEEPING PLEASURE-RIDE WHISTLESTOP HALF-MARATHON
Ashland, Wisconsin, October 12 > ☺ ⚡

This 2,000-runner race boasts a gentle, downhill, point-to-point course on hard-packed gravel—meaning you can PR here. Bonus is the bright yellows and deep reds of the tree-lined trail during peak foliage. The half passes wetlands, trout streams, and dairy farms en route to a Main Street finish on the south shore of Lake Superior. Local runner Beth Probst's advice: Don't miss the prerace dinner: a fish boil, pure northern Wisconsin. whistlestopmarathon.com

21 / SOUTHERN BEAUTY IRON HORSE HALF-MARATHON
Midway, Kentucky, October 13 > ☺

Runners journey through the heart of Kentucky bluegrass country, over gentle hills on roads awash in fall colors. On the out-and-back course, you'll likely hear the sound of



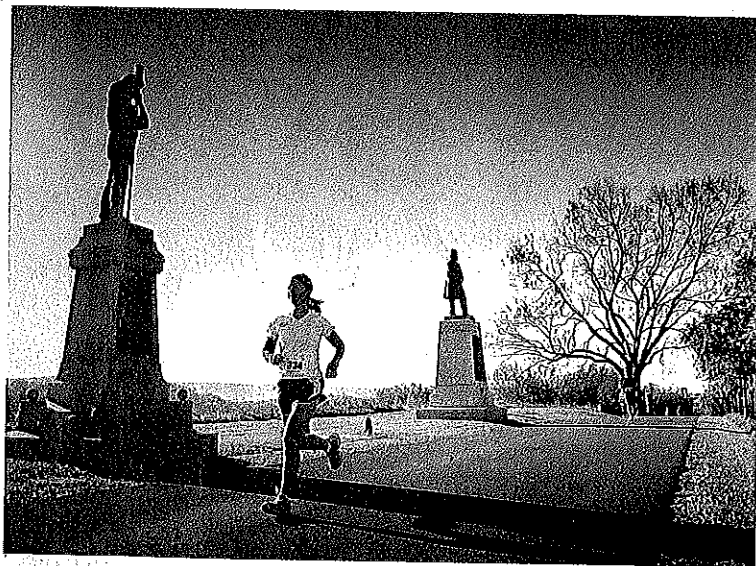
the state's famous thoroughbreds as you pass horse farms framed by rock walls built in the 1800s. The race partners with a local restaurant each year to provide a hot, hearty post-race meal (2012 was barbecue beef). Afterward, stroll the streets of this small tourist town (pop. 1,640) and take in some of Kentucky's best horse races at nearby Keeneland Race Course or bourbon tasting at Wild Turkey or Woodford Reserve distilleries. ironhorsehalfmarathon.com



Historic Wonder

Freedom's Run

Shepherdstown, West Virginia, October TBD > ⚡ ☺



Usually when runners write in about a race, a theme emerges. But this small, much-loved event was described as moving, fun, inspiring, and tough. Much of the half-marathon course loops through Antietam, a Civil War site that was home to the bloodiest battle in U.S. history. Runners pass canons and memorials, and the rolling green hills are scenic, calming—and frequent. But as race director and Air Force Reservist Mark Cucuzzella, M.D., says, "Remember, freedom wasn't easy either." Your efforts are rewarded at the merry finish-line Oktoberfest: a pint glass and three live bands. freedomrun.org

