

# EQUINOX MARATHON

**FAIRBANKS**—What has been described as one of the toughest marathon races in the country will have its 14th annual running in Fairbanks in mid-September.

The University of Alaska, Fairbanks, Equinox Marathon will be held on Saturday, Sept. 18, at 8 a.m. starting at the Patty Gym on campus.

The event is designed to accommodate both runners and walkers. Coordinator Bill Smith of the UAF Department of Health, Physical Education and Recreation says about 700 entrants are expected with about 150-200 of them going as runners. Runners must preregister for the race by Wednesday, Sept. 15. Hikers may register just prior to the race Saturday morning.

Smith said the race is thought to be second in marathon difficulty only to the famed Pike's Peak race in Colorado. A true marathon race, incidentally, is 26 miles, 385 yards.

The record time for the Equinox Marathon is just under three hours (2:58:19) set by Chris Haines in 1973. Haines also holds the second best time, (2:59:01) set in 1970. The women's record is held by Mel Langdon at slightly under four hours (3:51:39) set in 1974.

Smith said the race is unique because it is "a combination of intense competitors along with the many recreational-fitness participants, a mixture which makes it a community affair."

He said there were no major course changes from last year's race. He noted that there is an altitude differential of about 2,000 feet from the lowest to highest point in the race. Temperatures at the early-morning start can be as low as +30 F. It gets considerably warmer as the day wears on.

Participants will be briefed just prior to the starting gun. Smith said minor trail changes will be explained at that time along with other instructions.

In the running class there are five Divisions: Youth (ages 10-19), Collegians (20-29), Junior Veterans (ages 30-39), Veterans (ages 40-49), and Centurians (on the way to a century, ages 50+).

There will be special awards and ribbons for top runners in each class. All finishers will receive the University of Alaska marathon patch.

Smith said he looks for a new record and a new winner in the race this year. Showing as a favorite is Ole Kristensen, cross-country ski coach for the Fairbanks campus last year.

Smith did not speculate on what other runners would be showing up for the event but noted that he has had a higher than usual number of inquiries from outside Alaska.