

Labor Day running events are a tradition in Caribou.



Races for children and adults are a Labor Day Tradition in Caribou. (wagm)

By [Rene Cloukey](#)

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CARIBOU, Maine (WAGM) -It's a Labor Day tradition in Caribou. Youngsters from Pre-K to 8th grade converge on the Caribou track for the Viking Fun Run. This event has been around for over 40 years.

"This is since 1976. Mr. Walton started this as part of the Joggnauts back then," said Roy Alden, "At first it was just a couple of races and then Mr. Cyr took over and then in the late 80's I started doing it so it has been a long time."

Alden has been the boy's Cross Country coach for over 30 years and it is important to get the youngsters running because many of them will continue to run throughout high school.

"It gives them a little bit to learn about what the track is like and to experience it. Also to experience the atmosphere of what it means to be part of the program," added Alden.

This is a service project of the boy's and girl's Cross Country team and this gives them a chance to spend time with younger children in the area and to pass on their love of the sport.

"It's a big thing to me, I didn't start running until I got to high school and the earlier you start the better off you will be and the more fun you will have," said Caribou High School senior Harrison Landes.

"It's more about running and you get friendships for life," said Caribou senior Jacob Viollette.

"Each year they organize it and set it up," said Alden, "Everything runs smoothly to get through 150 kids or so in an hour. It takes some organization and people doing the right things. Also they raise the money to play for the ribbons and trophies and Aroostook Savings and Loan has been the sponsor for over 20 years."

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In the half mile race for 1st and 2nd graders, Viviann Bourgeois and Rafe Peterson finished first.

In the third fourth half mile race, Ella Bard and Warren Beckum were the top finishers.

The fifth and sixth graders ran a mile and Scarlett Beckum and Easton Graves were the winners. In the 7th and 8th grade races it was Lily Johnson and Pierce Gorneault taking the titles.

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it was then the adult's turn to lace up the sneakers and run a five mile race. This was the first time since 2019 that the Labor Day 5 miler was held and organizers wanted to bring this race back because it has been a big part of the running history in the Caribou area.

"A symbol of the end of summer and transitioning to fall. Most people have Labor Day off you could have their children run and then they could stay and watch the 5 mile race," said PJ Gorneault.

The Labor Day race was one of the oldest races held in the County. The course has not changed, it still starts and ends on the Caribou Track and then the runners hit the road and run nearly 5 miles before returning the track for the finish of the event.

"It's one of our oldest races pre-covid. Everyone enjoyed it and even during covid we had people ask if it was going to be coming back," said Gorneault, "This year we were able to start a new Crown of Maine Racing Series. Our numbers have been fantastic and that prompted us to bring back this race."

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The race director says that he has noticed an increase in participation in races and a wide variety of ages.

"We are seeing a running boom here in the County, which is very nice to see. I think our youngest is 11 years old and our oldest is 80 we have the whole age gamut," said Gorneault.


Michael Downing won the five mile race today. He finished in a time of 29:05, Seth Dubay was second and Alex LeClair ended up third.

On the women's side, Marie Strouse picked up an 11 second win over Mandy Draper and Aleah Rideout was third.


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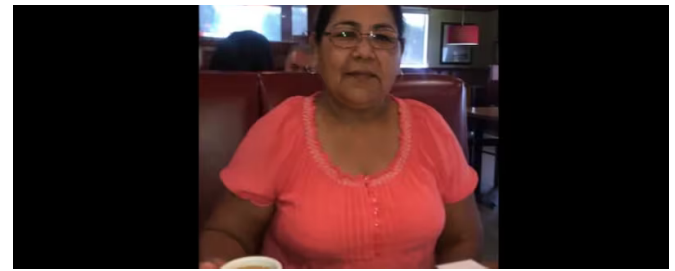
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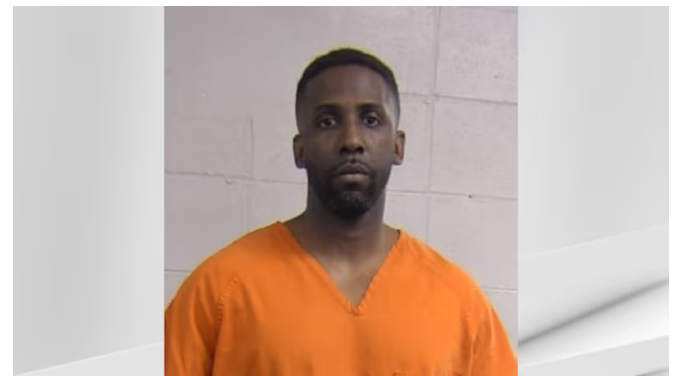
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