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2004 Teva U.S. Mountain Running Team Announced



Simon Gutierrez

The open team members have been selected for the 2004 Teva U.S. Mountain Running Team, which will travel to the renowned Italian ski resort town of Sauze d'Oulx and compete in the grueling 20th World Mountain Running Trophy in early September. Sanctioned by the World Mountain Running Association (WMRA) and under the patronage of the IAAF, the men's course at the World Trophy is all uphill and will be held on mixed terrain over 10.1 km with 1017 meters of net vertical gain. The women will start higher on the course, run 8.4 km and climb 862 meters. Both finish at the same summit. The women's race will be staged on Saturday, September 4, 2004. The men's race will take place on Sunday, September 5, 2004.

Simon Gutierrez, 38, (Taos, NM)

Gutierrez was a member of the Teva US Mountain Running Team in 2002, 2003, and now in 2004. He finished third (second American) at the Mt. Washington Hill Climb and is the 2004 USATF Trail Running National Champion. In 2003 he was on the winning team (with Paul Low and Mark Werner) at Challenge Stellina in Italy. He was runner up at the 2003 Teva Vail HillClimb and is the defending champion at the Pikes Peak Ascent. He will miss Pikes Peak this year as he will compete at Challenge Stellina with Low hoping to defend their team title. Gutierrez is a Physical Therapist in Taos.

Anita Ortiz 40, (Eagle, CO)

Ortiz earned her spot on her third Teva US Mountain Running Team armed with an impressive resume. A two-time USATF Mountain Runner of the Year (2002 and 2003), Ortiz owns bragging rights to an incredible 8th place finish at the World Mountain Running Trophy in 2003. This was the best finish by a US woman since 1995, the first year the US sent a women's team to the Worlds, and the only time a US woman has cracked the top 10 (Ortiz finished 11th at the 2002 WMRT in Austria). In 2003 Ortiz showed her dominance in uphill racing with a victory at the inaugural USA National Mountain Running Championships in Vail, CO and her third win in as many years at the Pikes Peak Ascent. Ortiz is coming back from an early season stress fracture which prevented her from racing on the trails. Fortunately she has been able to maintain her fitness through elliptical training, versa climbing, pool running, and mountain biking and plans to race the Pikes Peak Ascent and the WMRA World Masters Mountain Running Championships before this year's trophy event. Ortiz is a graduate of Colorado State University and received her Master in Education at Florida State with an impressive 4.0 average. Ortiz teaches kindergarten at Eagle Valley Elementary and has four children.



Anita Ortiz



Paul Low

Paul Low 30, (Amherst, MA)

Low qualified for his fifth US Mountain Running Team by winning the USATF National Mountain Running Championship at Mt. Washington. In 2003 he won the New England Mountain Running Championship and Barr Trail Mountain Race (Manitou Springs, CO) for the second consecutive time, finished fifth in the Challenge Stellina (Susa, IT) with the fastest ever time by an American on the course, and managed top-ten finishes at Thyone-Dixence and Sierre-Zinal (CH). Low has been the top US finisher at the past two World Mountain Running Trophy races finishing 32nd in 2002 and 15th in 2003. Low was named USATF Mountain Runner of the Year for both 2002 and 2003. He has represented the US internationally in 15 mountain running competitions in Great Britain, Malaysia, Alaska, and throughout Alpine Europe. He has also has the course record at the 7sisters trail race (a local race with 5,100 feet of climbing and descending over 12 miles) which he has won in each of the last three years. Low is a graduate student in geoscience at UMASS studying high temperature geochemistry.

Laura Haefeli 36, (Del Norte, CO)

Haefeli earned her spot on the team as the second US finisher at Mt Washington. She is the 2004 USATF 10K Trail National Champion and winner of the 2004 Teva Vail HillClimb. Equally talented in summer biathlon (running and marksmanship), Haefeli is a seven time National Champion in the sport ('90, '94, '98, '00, '01, '02, '03) and a nine-time National Team Member. Running since the sixth grade, she competed in the 800m, 1600m, and cross country in high school, was an All-American during her senior year in college at the University of Dayton and was twice named All-Ohio Runner of the Year. Her PRs include 34:47 for 10K, 8K - 27:33, 5K - 16:50. Laura and her husband Tom are beekeepers and sell honey and wax. She is the mother of three young children.



Lisa Isom

Lisa Isom 31, (Vail, CO)

Isom earned her spot on the team with her second place finish at the Teva Vail HillClimb. She was an alternate on the mountain team last year. Isom is a talented multi-sport athlete having won the US Qualifier for the UTI Winter Triathlon (snow running, snow biking, skate-skiing) World Championships in Wildhaus, Switzerland in March. She is a professional off-road triathlete, wife, and mother of a three-year-old daughter named Wilder. She works full-time as the Director of Recreation for a private golf resort in Colorado.

Eric Blake 25, (Plattsburgh, NY)

Blake was an automatic qualifier to the team with his finish at Mt. Washington (third American). He was 34th at the 2004 US Olympic Marathon Trials and winner of the 2003 Steamtown Marathon. He is a graduate of Central Connecticut State University and completed his masters at Adams State. He is the head men's and women's cross country coach at Plattsburgh State University where he also coaches track.

Races

Erica Larson 32, (Los Alamos, NM)

Erica's running experience includes races on both trails and roads. As the first female American finisher at the Mount Washington Road Race, she became the 2004 Women's USATF Mountain Running Champion. She is a four time women's winner of the Pikes Peak Marathon and the women's course record holder at the Leadville Marathon. Other 2004 highlights include a 35th place finish at the 2004 US Women's Olympic Marathon Trials and a 1st place finish at the inaugural Rock



Eric Blake

'n Roll Arizona half-marathon. Her PRs are 2:41:42 for the marathon and 1:17:51 for the half-marathon.



Tim Parr

Tim Parr, 22 (Gunnison, CO)

Parr won the 26th annual Teva Vail HillClimb to earn his spot on the team. He is a business and kinesiology major at Western State College where he competes on the cross country and track teams. He has represented WSC at three national meets. He is a two-time State Champion, a two-time All-American, and was a member of the 2002 National Champion Cross Country Team. He has climbed all 55 Colorado Fourteeners, as well as one in California.

Andy Ames, 41 (Boulder, CO)

A long time mountain runner, this is Andy's first time to be named to the US Mountain Running Team.

He had strong showing this year in the Mount Washington Hill Climb and Teva Vail HillClimb as well as the US Trail Running Championships. He is a two time winner of the Vail HillClimb as well as twice US Skyrunning Champion in the Vertical Kilometer. Also, an accomplished Duathlete, Andy is a two time medalist in Duathlon World Championships and was named Male Duathlete of the Year by USAT in 2000. Ames is a buyer for the bicycle mail order company Excel Sports. Andy will also be participating in the WMRA Master's World Mountain Running Championships the week preceding the WMRA Trophy Race.



Andy Ames

Matt Levassiur, 23 (Alamosa, CO)

Levassiur was named to the team after his second-place finish at the Teva Vail HillClimb. He is a three-year varsity member and team captain of the Adams State Cross-Country and Track teams and eight-time NCAA Division II All-American. His PRs include 4:28 for the mile, 14:07 for the 5000m, 28:53 for the 10000m and half-marathon (1:11:05.23). He completed twelve half-marathons and one marathon (2:48:45) before his eighteenth birthday.

Kelly Low 33, (Amherst, MA)

Low was a member of the 2003 team and was named second alternate to this year's team. She set a course record at Mt Kearsarge Hill Climb and was the 2004 USATF New England Mountain Running Series Champion. She is a seasoned snowshoe racer and was the 2004 Western Massachusetts Athletic Club (WMAC) Snowshoe Series Champion. She tried stair climbing for the first time in 2003 finishing seventh at the Empire State Building Run-up. Low is a special event manager for USA Cycling's NORBA.

Kelly Ryan 35, (Lakewood, CO)

Ryan was named as an alternate for this year's team. She finished fifth at the US Trail Running National Championships and third at the NACAC Mountain Running Championships (Teva Vail HillClimb). Her PRs include 36:09 for 10K, 1:16:37 for the half marathon, and 2:52:06 for the marathon. She is a running coach and Pilates instructor.

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Websites of interest:

www.vailrec.com - Teva Spring Runoff and USA Mountain Running Championships

www.wmrt2004.org - World Mountain Running Trophy 2004

www.usatfne.org/trail - USATF New England Mountain Running Website

www.cerritos.edu/lgersitz/MUT/Home.html - USATF Mountain Ultra Trail Running Council

www.wmra.info - World Mountain Running Association