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Nearly 100 Enjoy the Berry Picker Trail on Vail Mountain



At yesterday's Teva Tiga Advertising Berry Picker races 56 competitors finished the 10km course while 40 completed the 5km. Both races started in Lionshead near the Eagle Bahn Gondola on the Berry Picker Trail at 9 a.m. with the 5km route on a completely uphill course and the 10km course heading past the 5km finish to climb another 3km and then 2km of downhill to the finish. Both courses finished at Eagle's Nest at the summit of Vail Mountain providing spectators an opportunity to cheer 5km finishers and encourage the 10km runners as they continued uphill and then applauding their finish.

Last year's Berry Picker was a 5km only race with 60 finishers. Returning champions Andy Ames and Anita Ortiz opted for the 10km this year and both won their respective divisions. Ames, 42, Boulder, CO was a member of last year's Teva U.S. Mountain Running Team. At race registration Ames was asked whether he'd defend his 5km title, or run the 10km. His enthusiastic response was, "Today I think I'll do the 10km. I want to get a longer run in today and the 10km will be fun with some downhill thrown in."



Kloser at 5km

At the 5km point Ames was in the lead just over one minute ahead of champion adventure racer Michael Kloser, 45, Vail who rode his bike to race registration, signed up, put his gear in a bag to be transported to the summit, and was off with the other racers. Kloser received an elite entry into the Pikes Peak Ascent to be held on August 20 and was using this race as a tune up as were many other runners including Anita Ortiz, 41, Eagle who is going for her fifth straight victory in the women's division. Last year Ortiz set the masters record with her 2:44:58. Ames is passing on the Peak this year, but has finished as high as second in the

13.4 mile uphill race.

Ames kept his lead over Kloser and finished in 1:05:06 with Kloser just under one minute behind in 1:06:03. Rounding out the top three was 57-year-old Breckenridge resident John Swartz timed in 1:13:14.



Ames



Swartz stops his watch at finish



Stevens

Jonathan Stevens who turns 16 this fall will make his debut on the world mountain running scene at this year's World Mountain Running Trophy as a member of the Teva U.S. Mountain Running Junior Team. The Battle Mountain High School student was cheered on by his fellow cross country runners who volunteered at the race finish line. Stevens showed his prowess for the sport by winning his age group by more than 15 minutes and finishing fifth overall with a time of 1:15:28. Anita Ortiz will certainly offer Stevens some pointers before traveling to the World Mountain Running Trophy next month in New Zealand since she has made her fourth Teva U.S. Mountain Running Team.

The World Trophy competition will be held on Sunday, September 25 in Wellington, New Zealand. Stevens will participate in the 9km up/downhill course with the three-member junior men's team while Ortiz will compete over the same course in the open women's division with her three teammates.

Ortiz led the women from the start clocking just over 41 minutes at the 5km and 1:16:57 for the 10km victory and a top-ten finish overall (eighth place). In second and third place respectively were Vail Valley residents Megan Boord, 28 in 1:19:01 and Erin McGovern, 26 in 1:26:20. McGovern is a member of the Vail Ski Patrol and was

one of several ski patrol finishers on the day.

"I trained through the race this year which is a bit different for me. Usually I take it easy right before a race, but with Pikes next weekend I decided to use a different tactic and run a tough workout today and take tomorrow a bit easier and do at least one more hard session before Saturday. I am happy with my effort today and I'm really looking forward to defending my title next weekend," said Ortiz at the finish line.



Ortiz

In the 5km it was no surprise to see Bernie Boettcher, 42, Silt leading the way. Boettcher is arguably the most raced athlete in Colorado typically racing twice each weekend and often doing a race in the middle of the week...if he can find one. Perhaps Boettcher's uphill race Saturday in Aspen was just a precursor to his 5km victory as he posted a 36:24 to win by more than two minutes over second-place finisher Dan Nielsen, 43, Avon who ran 39:37. Third place was junior competitor Everet Minett, 19 who ran 40:09.

"I'm taking this week off from racing to rest up a bit for Pikes Peak," said Boettcher following the race. In the past Boettcher has raced both the ascent and marathon, but this year he will only be racing in the marathon on Sunday, August 21.



Andros

In the women's division Illinois transplant Lynda Andros, 29, who now calls Vail her home won in 44:07. Jeanne Blatter, 47, Silt finished second in 46:42 while Battle Mountain High Schooler Molly McGee, 16, ran 53:02 for third place.



Ortiz at 5km



Boettcher

Andros has the advantage over most flatlanders as she has acclimatized over the spring and summer, but many who live at sea level have a tougher time adjusting to the altitude and often sit out races until they

Linder at finish



get used to the rare air. Not Toby Linder, 40 who won the masters division in the 5km. Linder who runs with a group near his home in Dallas, TX ran with four of his flatlander friends including his wife Teresa, 44, who was second in her age division and Lisa Tully, 39 who placed third in her age division.

The Dallas contingent raced last fall in a 180+ mile relay in New Hampshire starting in the mountains surrounding North Conway and finishing near the coast in Portsmouth. “We travel a lot for races and thought while we were in Vail we’d enjoy running up the mountain,” said John Hammarley, 53, one of the Dallas five who finished the race in 1:29:14. “A couple from our group ran the San Francisco Marathon recently and we’re heading to Portland for Hood to Coast later this month.

I’ve run it before, but for the past few years I’ve done race announcing,” said Hammarley who works for Fox News as a medical correspondent and on-air talent.



Nancy Stevens

In addition to the competitors, volunteers are a big part of the running series. Several parents and family members were on hand to assist the runners including Jonny Stevens’ parents Jerry and Nancy who helped out with the timing and directing the runners on course. Members of the Battle Mountain High School Cross Country Team were also assisting at race registration with sweat check and at the finish line. Jobs range from serving water and Gatorade at aid stations located on course to pulling runner number tags in the finish chute to handing out goodie bags, T-shirts, and refreshments to all finishers.



The Berry Picker is part of Colorado’s premier trail running series which runs June through September and includes events from 5k to the half marathon (13.1 mile) distance. The first race in the series was held on June 12 with the Teva First Bank 8K at 8,000 feet. The second race was held on July 3 with the 27th annual Teva Vail HillClimb followed on July 24 with the Teva Vail HalfMarathon. The final event in the race series will be held on Sunday, September 11 with the Teva Extremsports.com EverGold 10K. Runners can register for the EverGold at www.active.com or by calling VRD Sports at (970) 479-2280. On Saturday, September 10, the day before the EverGold, runners can visit Christy Sports in the Vail Village on from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. to register in person for the early fee of \$25 and to pick up their runner race numbers. Race day entry fee is \$35.



Participants in the Teva Vail Mountain Trail Running series are assured accurate results, commemorative T-shirts designed by runner and artist Bernie Boettcher, and great prizes. Awards are presented to overall and age group winners and new this year are raffle prize drawings at the race awards ceremony featuring products from area merchants and national companies including Aqx Sports, Lenticular Pictures, and Gerber headlamps.

Series title sponsor Teva footwear introduces their lightweight X1 trail racer available at Boulder Running Company and Christy Sports. Series sponsors include First Bank, Extreme Health Care, Vail Daily, Vail’s Mountain Haus, Tiga Advertising, Howard Head Sports Medicine Centers, and Gatorade.

For more information and to see complete race results visit www.vailrec.com.

Photos from race day:

BMS XC members demonstrate finish strategy



10Km runners John Arnot (left); Irv Ray (Right); Jeanne Blatter 5km

Jim Romero 5km



Kloser and Ames



Checking results



Jonny Stevens at finish; Molly McGee finishes 5km

