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Weather Cooperates at the Teva Vail HalfMarathon



A soothing rainstorm on Saturday afternoon July 23 which lasted well into the evening helped lower the mercury by more than 15 degrees in the Vail Village and certainly was a reprieve from the previous week's soaring and record-setting temperatures. At the 8 a.m. start for the Teva Vail HalfMarathon the following day runners were greeted with cool temperatures in the 50s and overcast skies.



Competitors from the Front Range hoping to escape the heat in their own communities included Denver resident Julie Hudetz, "It has been over 100 degrees in Denver. This is such a

welcome change and great weather for a race." Hudetz who finished seventh in her age group is a seasoned adventure racer and former pro cyclist and no stranger to tough conditions on race courses. "I was prepared for the heat because it can get really warm at 10,000 feet especially when the sun is blaring down on you, but today was perfect. I never got over heated and had a great, relaxing run."

In addition to seasoned veterans, of the 220 race finishers there were also some first timers including Houston, TX resident Bruce Mansur who finished seventh in the competitive 50-59-year-old age group. "The weather was excellent at the start of the race and the service roads and trails were in great shape despite the rain on Saturday. I was not as confident and experienced as the other runners on some of the rocky downhill roads and trails. They flew by me but I did enjoy the scenery at the top of the mountain and down some of the valleys. The volunteers offered words of encouragement as we passed the water and Gatorade stations. The food and drinks at the finish line were very well received by everybody. The shirts are keepers! I appreciate the advice that race organizers gave me before the race and I wore my trail shoes which offered the stability that I needed on the last part of the trail with the rocks and roots. I carried my bottle with water and I drank from it between the water stations. Thanks to all the sponsors and volunteers that made the Half Marathon a memorable experience for me."

Many competitors including Mansur are affectionately dubbed "flatlanders" since they reside in areas that are either at, or just above sea level and certainly not even close to the 8,200-foot elevation in Vail. Nick Eugster, 29, Minneapolis was leery of the altitude and the amount of climbing on the course, but after getting advice from race officials how best to tackle the course Eugster was reassured and he and his best friend's wife, Adrienne Allotta, 28, also a flatlander, agreed to run the race together and signed up on race morning. "I was sure skeptical about the run beforehand and took the night to think about whether or not I should run. I was planning to run a 12 to 14 miler and one of the race officials said that if I was already planning to run that distance that I should go ahead and run the race since I'd get aid and support along the way. I'll tell you what, when we finished the race I couldn't have been happier with my decision to run. It was a great course and so scenic."



Run entirely on Vail Mountain, the course provided runners with outstanding vistas including a view of Mount of the Holy Cross from the finish line, a 14,000 foot peak which is

blanketed in snow year round. The variety of terrain included single track and service roads as well as 3,100 feet of elevation gain. “The course gives the runners an opportunity to see a great deal of the mountain. They were on the front side of the mountain for much of the run including the start and finish and they also experienced the back bowls where they enjoyed an abundance of wildflowers,” said race director Mike Ortiz. “The climbs are steep and included some technical terrain during miles four to seven. There’s no question this is a tough run, but it’s certainly one of the favorites of the series’ competitors.”

Some of the best finishes on the day were by the Eagle Mountain Runners based in Eagle, CO located 31 miles west of Vail whose members won several of the age groups and also claimed the women’s overall crown. Anita Ortiz, 41, a four-time member of the Teva U.S. Mountain Running Team was unchallenged in her victory stopping the clock at 1:53:37 and the only woman to break two hours. Ortiz will travel with the mountain team to Wellington, New Zealand in September to compete in her fourth World Mountain Running Trophy race. For Ortiz the race was a good training run. “My goal today was to enjoy the course and push the uphill. My downhill strength is coming along, but I’m still not 100 percent on the descents,” said Ortiz who is well on her way to recovering from an early season plantar fascia tear. “A friend suggested that I should stop and smell the wildflowers during the run so I’d be sure to slow down and not push too much too soon. I sure thought about stopping a few times to enjoy the colors and I would guess just thinking about it slowed me down a little and kept my race in perspective.”



Ortiz



Leon



Mazzia

Vail resident and former HalfMarathon competitor Aurora Leon, 36 finished second to Ortiz in 2:01:14 and Eagle Runner Kattie Mazzia, 37, Eagle rounded out the top three in 2:03:04.

Other Eagle runners who had great efforts included Melissa Larkin and Erin Ressler who finished one-two in the 20-29 year age group and Sean Larkin who was second for the men in the same age group. Irv Ray, Eagle was runner up to Breckenridge’s John Swartz in the 50-59 year age group.



Ray (#168)



Siemers

The men's top three had much closer finish times than the women. First time HalfMarathon competitor Art Siemers, 32, Golden ran a solid 1:34:40 to win by just 34 seconds over second place finisher Bill Fanselow, 38, Denver followed closely by third place finisher Ryan Padilla, 27, in 1:35:58.

After the race Siemers was heard explaining to some spectators that the race was much more challenging than a road half marathon and times were typically much slower. Siemers, a proven track and road specialist having placed eighth at the 1999 USATF indoor nationals in the



Fanselow



mile and qualifying for the 2004 US Olympic Trials Marathon in his debut at the California International Marathon, certainly know what he's talking about. This fall Siemers enters his fourth season as Co-Head Cross-Country coach and his first year as Head Track Coach at Colorado School of Mines.

Top masters finisher was Bernie Boettcher, 42, Silt, Colorado who arguably races more than any other runner in Colorado and in his spare time is an accomplished artist.

Boettcher ran three races this week winning the Wednesday



Siemers and Fanselow

night Summit long series trail race in Breckenridge and was third in the Grin and Bear It trail race in Crested Butte on Saturday. "I think I would have to handcuff Bernie to the furniture to get keep him from racing so much," said long-time girlfriend Jeanne Blatter, 47, who also ran the Half finishing in 2:22:15 and eighth in her age group. Blatter is training for the Pikes Peak Marathon to be held on August 21 in Manitou Springs.



Boettcher

Like Blatter, 54-year-old Gary Curmode used the Half in his Pikes Peak training. "I've done the Peak more than 30 times and this is a great tune-up for me." Curmode first ran Pikes Peak in 1978 when he was a 27-year-old and a resident of Avon, CO. His best finish in the Pikes Peak Marathon came in 1985 when he ran a time of 6:03:25.

Keith Wood, 76, Seattle, used the race as a precursor to his third Pikes Peak Ascent. Wood runs many long distance trail events and finished the 2001 White River

50 Miler in Crystal Mountain, WA at the age of 72. "That course was fabulous," said Wood who sported a fading finisher shirt from the White River race while registering for the HalfMarathon on Saturday afternoon . Wood finished sixth in the over 60 age group at the Half bettering some of his younger counterparts by more than one hour. "This is a great training run for Pikes Peak," said Wood who planned to travel to Manitou Springs to practice on the course prior to the race.



Vosbeck

A four-time Pikes Peak Ascent winner ('89, '90, '92, '93) and first time Vail Half competitor J'ne Day-Lucore, 44, Aurora had a great day at the half finishing fifth among the women. As Day-Lucore emerged from the single track trail she said to a race official, "Is that the finish line? I can't believe I'm already here. What a great course!"

Not having as good a day was Heidi Vosbeck, 43, Glenwood Springs a perennial finisher in the Vail Mountain series and third-place finisher in last year's half. "I shouldn't have tried this today,"



Day-Lucore

said Vosbeck as she painfully limped to the finish line. Vosbeck had injured her leg a few weeks ago and admittedly got back into racing too soon.

The HalfMarathon 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. Following the HalfMarathon there are two more events to include the the Teva Berry Picker (5K/10K) on August 14 and on September 11, the Teva Extremsports.com EverGold 10K. Register for upcoming events at www.active.com or visit Christy Sports in the Vail Village on Saturday before each race from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. to register for the early fee of \$25 and to pick up runner race numbers. Race day entry fee is \$35.

Participants are assured accurate results, commemorative T-shirts, and great prizes. Awards will be presented to overall and age group winners and new this year will be 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, both retailers serving as registration points for the series. 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 view complete results visit www.vailrec.com.

Top finishers, 2005:

1. Art Siemers, 1:34:40
2. Bill Fanselow, 1:35:14
3. Ryan Padilla, 1:35:58

1. Anita Ortiz, 1:53:37 (16th overall)
2. Aurora Leon, 2:01:14 (22nd overall)
3. Katie Mazzia, 2:03:04 (26th overall)





Charlie Wertheim



Race Director Mike Ortiz with his wife Anita

