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U.S. Mountain Running Team Members Earn Gold at the VAC Vail Mountain Winter Uphill



Vail, Colorado – Wearing a pair of lightweight racing spikes, three-time Teva U.S. Mountain Running Team Member Rickey Gates, 27, bested a competitive field at the two-plus mile VAC Vail Mountain Winter Uphill Race by nearly four minutes to set a course record of 30:49.

Said former course record holder Matthew Cull, a member of two mountain teams - 1993 and 1995 – and ninth place finisher today, “I finished faster than last year, but lost quite a few places (to faster runners).”

Coming from sea level, 2009

mountain team member Matthew Byrne, 33, Philadelphia, PA, gave a great effort on the oxygen-deficient course to finish second to Gates posting a time of 34:00. Prior to the race Byrne contacted race organizers asking what type of footwear to use in the race having never done a race uphill on snow. He settled for Yak tracks as did third-place finisher and veteran snowshoe racer Charlie Wertheim, 46, Glenwood Springs, who posted a time of 34:10.



On the women’s side, 2009 mountain team member Brandy Erholtz, 31, Bailey, finished seventh overall winning her division by nearly ten minutes with a time of 35:30. Second place was Carol Pattison in 44:02 with Lynda Andros in third place posting a time of 45:24.



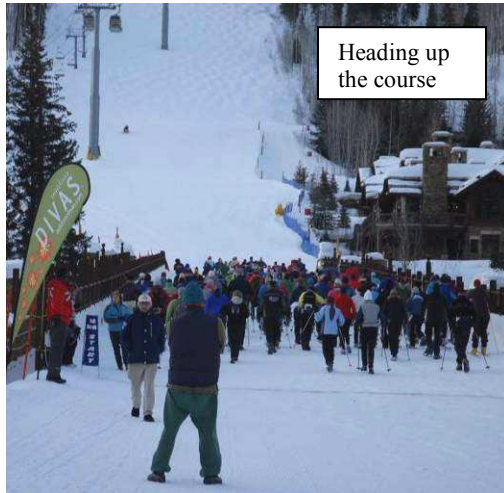
In addition to the snowshoe/open division there were also track skis and heavy metal options. Vail Valley local Mike Kloser, 49, won the track ski category with a time of 36:28 finishing in eighth overall. Josiah Middaugh, 30, Vail, was the first finisher in the heavy metal division placing tenth overall in 38:12.

Marie-Christine Carel was the top track skier on the women’s side finishing in 53:26 while Katie Jones raced to a time of 1:01:26 in the heavy metal division.

There were 130 finishers of all ages and abilities competing in this second annual event which ran from the base of Vail Mountain to the summit at Eagle’s Nest and gained nearly 2,200 feet of elevation.



The event was organized by Vail Valley locals Ellen Miller and Hooker Lowe to honor the memory of Vail's own Lyndon Ellefson who died in 1998. Ellefson was a foreman on the Eagle Bahn Gondola and was instrumental in starting the U.S. men's mountain running program and was a member of the U.S. Mountain Running Team which is one of the beneficiaries of race proceeds. The event is also a fundraiser for Jack's Place, a cancer caring house at the Shaw Cancer Center.



Results are posted at www.trailrunner.com and at www.vaildaily.com.

