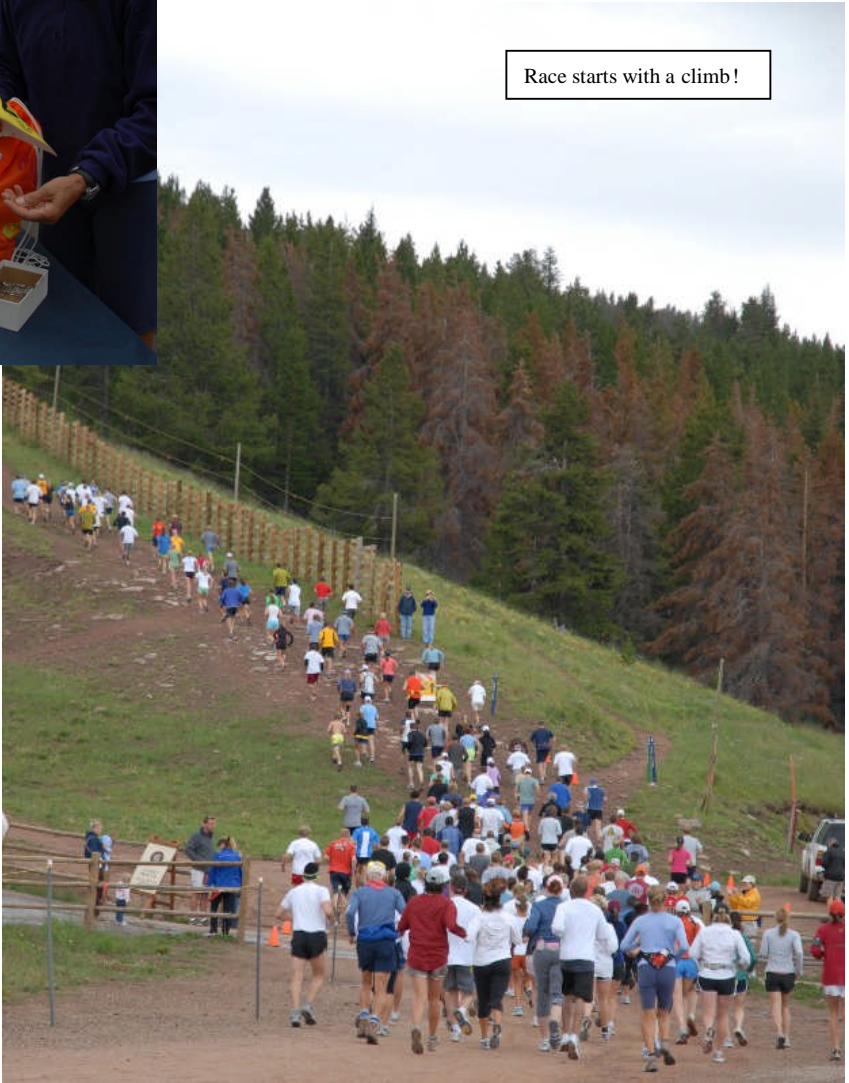


Rain Doesn't Dampen Spirits of Hearty Runners at Sunday's 10K at 10,000 Feet



Vail, CO ---- As runners gathered at the base of Vail Mountain on Sunday morning, August 10, for a ride to the summit for the fourth event in the La Sportiva Vail Mountain Trail Running series, the La Sportiva 10k at 10,000 feet, skies were overcast and clouds were rolling in. However, it wasn't until race start that a damp mist started to fall which turned into a steady rain midway through the event.

Race starts with a climb!



The cool temperatures were great for the runners, even those clad only in lightweight singlets. It wasn't until they crossed the line, gathered their finisher shirt and goody bag, that the effects of the rain and dampness truly set in. In spite of the conditions, quite a few runners stayed until the last finisher crossed the line.



Jonny Stevens

Race winner, Bernie Boettcher, 45, Silt, CO, out sprinted Vail local Jonny Stevens, 18, to the finish line in a time of 40:46 and then went back out on course to cheer the other runners. He remarked at the lushness of the course and said the wildflowers were truly incredible. Camera in hand, he took pictures during his race and then of other race finishers. Boettcher has become famous for sporting his camera in all of his races. Often his race photos appear in running publications.

The first woman to cross the line was 30-year-old Kelly Couch placing ninth overall. Her time of 47:25 was less than one minute ahead of the second woman, Anita Ortiz, 44, Eagle, CO, who finished in 48:15. Rounding out the top three women was Caroline Walden, 33, who was timed in 51:32.



Erica Hinchcliffe,
fourth place 19 and
under

There were nearly 200 finishers, among them 15 members of the Greeley West High School cross country team all under the age of 19 making the junior age categories very competitive.

The men's 30-39 age category had the most finishers with 26 led by William Desportes, 33, who finished in 46:10, a time good enough for sixth place overall. For the women, the 40-49 category had the most finishers with 24. Ortiz, second overall, won the age group and was the first masters' finisher. Boettcher was not only the winner, but the first masters' runner. His finish equally impressive since he had just returned from Utah where he raced and won the 16 mile Jupiter Peak Trail Race.

Awards were presented shortly after the first racers finished by Vail Recreation District Director Mike Ortiz who wanted to be sure the runners made it off the mountain and got into warm clothes as soon as possible. Quite a few runners huddled for warmth underneath the chairlift as the prize winners were announced.

The entire race course was above 9,000 feet of elevation with the high point at nearly 11,000 feet. The average grade was seven percent with an elevation gain of 1,172 feet. There were two aid stations, one at 2.3 miles and one at 4 miles. Terrain included service roads, dirt paths, and single-track trail.

“This run is unique in our series because it started at a higher elevation and remained above 9,000 feet for the entire route. With a mix of forests and open meadows, the trails provided a cool and refreshing place to run and the opportunity to enjoy a variety of wildflowers still in bloom on the upper reaches of the mountain,” said VRD Sports Director Joel Rabinowitz.

Second-place finisher Anita Ortiz concurred with Rabinowitz and related after the run, “It was really fun out there today. I think the cool temperatures and the rain just added to the event.”

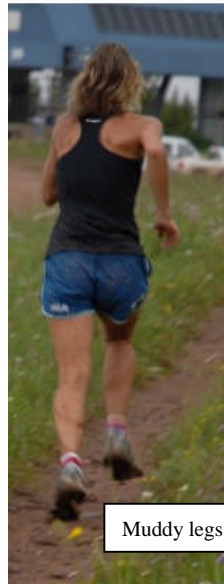


The five race La Sportiva Vail Mountain Trail Running Series finishes up with the La Sportiva Evergold 10k on Sunday, September 7. The race starts behind Golden Peak Children’s Center located at the base of Vail Mountain, and traverses the mountain on some of the most beautiful trails at a time of year when the colors are sure to include gleaming gold and bright yellow Aspen leaves. Series prizes are awarded after the Evergold to runners who compete in at least four events. Last year’s series boasted more than 1100 participants with 25 runners completing at least four races in the series.

Joining series title sponsor La Sportiva (www.mountainrunning.com) will be First Bank of Vail, Vail’s Mountain Haus, SmartWool, Tiga Advertising, Howard Head Sports Medicine Centers, Steadman Hawkins, Joint Juice and Gatorade.



Last minute instructions



Muddy legs for the finish



Race T-shirt dotted with raindrops



Scoring personnel at finish



Mark Muehlethaler, sixth place 40-49



Kathleen Soldano, 10th finisher 40-49



Brian Johnson, third finisher in the 30-39 age group