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2002 Teva U.S. Mountain Running Team - Junior Squad Announced

The 2002 Teva U.S. Mountain Running Team will travel to Innsbruck, Austria to compete in the 18th WMRA World Mountain Running Trophy in September. Although the U.S. has competed at the worlds since 1987 (senior men) and 1995 (senior women), this is the first year the U.S. team will include juniors.

The junior men's course at the World Trophy will be 9.2 km with 1,044 meters of vertical gain, the same course as the senior women. The junior women will run 3.3 km and climb 334 meters. Both junior events will be staged on Saturday, September 14.

Athletes under the age of 20 in the year of competition are eligible to compete as juniors. Representing the U.S. will be Trevor Hanlin, 16, Grants Pass, OR, Eduardo Pasko, 17, Colorado Springs, CO, Matt Winter, 17, Billings, MT, Nicole Hodgson, 19, Grass Valley, CA, Melissa Marts, 17, Nederland, CO, and Jessica Pitzer, 16, Nederland, CO.

Athletes were selected based on road, trail, track, and cross country results and since this year's courses are uphill-only (in odd-numbered years courses are uphill/downhill), an additional consideration was the proven ability to run well uphill. Each athlete was required to submit a letter of recommendation from his or her coach and each athlete must be a current member of USA Track and Field.

Hanlin enters his junior year at Grants Pass High School this fall and hopes to attend University of Oregon in 2004. Hanlin's best times include 4:12 in the 1500-meter run, 9:07 in the 3000-meter run, 16:29 for 5km, and 34:30 for 10km. According to coach Carl Sniffen, "Trevor will be working on strength and endurance this summer including a week of running in Grand Lake, Colorado in June, a week at Steens Mountain Running Camp in July, and four days on the Oregon coast in August." An enthusiastic Hanlin says, "I want to help my team to a first place finish, no matter how far fetched it is."

Pasko will be a senior this fall at Harrison High School where three-time U.S. Mountain Running Team member Scott Gall coaches him. In 2001, Pasko placed second at the Colorado State Cross Country Championships. His personal bests, all run at elevations above 6,200 feet, include 4:02:22 for the 1500-meter run, 4:25 for the mile, 9:40 for two miles, and for cross country 15:55 for 5km. Pasko says, "I hope to place well at Worlds and start the USA Junior Mountain Running program on a good note for future runners." Winter enters his senior year this fall at Billings Central High School. Coached by John Devitt, Winter finished his sophomore year in track with a fourth at the state meet in the 3200 with a season best of 10:22 and a new school record. Devitt convinced Winter to come out for cross country his junior year and Winter set a PR of 15:28 for three miles, the fourth fastest in the state. Winter holds the school record in the 1600 with a time of 4:28, and at the 2002 Montana State Track Championships he won the 3200 title with a time of 9:33. Devitt relates, "I've coached a lot of State Champions, but Matt is by far the most exciting runner I've had."

Hodgson enters her sophomore year this fall at Humboldt State College, CA where she is coached by Dave Wells. Hodgson attended California's Notre Dame High School and Bear River High School and holds the 800-meter record at both schools. While at high school Hodgson qualified for the Cross Country State Championship four times, twice qualified for the State Championship in the 800-meter run, was cross country team captain for three seasons, and captain of her track team for two seasons. She made all-conference in college at the GNAC Championships at 800 meters. Her personal bests include 2:13 for 800 meters, 5:19 for 1600-meters, and 19:10 for 5km.

Marts was salutatorian at Nederland High School with a 4.1 GPA and will enter her freshman year at

Colorado School of Mines this fall. Coached by Darrin Eisman, Marts qualified for the Colorado High School Cross Country State Championships in 2001 and was a three-event qualifier at the 2002 Colorado High School State Track Championships at 3,200 meters, 1,600 meters, and the 4 x 800-meter relay. She holds school records at 1,600 meters and as part of the 4 x 800-meter relay team. Marts says, "My goal for Worlds this year is to be a valuable asset to the team where I hope to run the race of my life."

Pitzer enters her senior year this fall at Nederland High School. Pitzer has been running since she was 10 years old competing in local road and trail races. According to coach Darrin Eisman, Pitzer is competitive on the track, but excels at the longer and more mountainous events. Pitzer is a two-time qualifier for the Colorado High School Cross Country State Championships (2000 and 2001), a qualifier for the 2001 Junior Olympics National Championships, and finished 10th at the 2002 Colorado High School Track State Championship in the 3,200-meter run with a time of 12:27.

The senior members of the Teva US Mountain Running Team were announced on July 15 and include for the men Simon Gutierrez, 36, Albuquerque, NM, Eric Morse, 37, Berlin, VT, Paul Low, 28, Amherst, MA, Dave Dunham, 38, Bradford, MA, Richard Shelley, 40, Albuquerque, NM, Dan Verrington, 40, Bradford, MA, and Rich Bolt, 32, Manchester, NH. The senior women's team includes Anita Ortiz, 38, Eagle, CO, Kari DiStefano, 43, Telluride, CO, Julie Bryan, 34, Jackson, WY, Nikki Kimball, 31, Watertown, NY, and Suzy West, 39, Putney, VT. Nancy Hobbs is the senior women's team manager, Dunham is the senior men's team manager, and Jeff Adams is the junior team manager.

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Websites of interest:

www.alaskamountainrunners.org - Wolverine Mountain Run

www.gsrs.com - Mount Washington Hill Climb

www.vailrec.com - Vail Hill Climb

www.tlv.at/worldtrophy2002 - World Mountain Running Trophy 2002

www.usatf.org - U.S. Mountain Ultra Trail Running Council

www.wmra.info - World Mountain Running Association