



**2004 USA National Trail
Running Championship,
June 5, Vail, Colorado**

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www.cerritos.edu/lgersitz/MUT/Home.html

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Gutierrez and Haefeli National Trail Champions



(Haefeli and Gutierrez)

VAIL, Colo. — On a cloudless Rocky Mountain morning more than 200 competitors took to the trails on Vail Mountain for the inaugural USA National Trail Championships on Saturday June 5. The championships were a race within a race celebrating the Teva Mountain Games annual four day festival which included kayaking, paddling, rock climbing, inner tubing, mountain biking, and rock concerts.

Simon Gutierrez, 38, Taos, NM won the men's division and USA National Trail Championship honors. Gutierrez earned \$1000 for the win. Laura Haefeli, 36, Del Norte, CO was the USA National Trail Champion in the women's division with her second-place finish to Mexican national Zoila Gomez, 25, who currently trains in Alamosa, CO. Haefeli won \$500 for her second place finish overall, while Gomez earned \$1000 as the first women's finisher.

The breathtaking 6.4-mile singletrack trail course started and finished in Vail Village and included more than 3,000 feet of elevation change on Vail Mountain. With several former national mountain running team members registered and some road race converts, the race was sure to be competitive.

Registered on the men's side were former mountain team members Matt Carpenter, Simon Gutierrez, and Bill Raitter. For the women Rene Frazee, Danelle Ballengee, Lisa Isom, and Kari DiStefano. Joining this group were mountain specialists Josiah Middaugh (snowshoe national champion and nationally ranked triathlete), Ben Nephew (New England mountain race specialist), Michael Tobin (former Pikes Peak Ascent winner and professional duathlete and adventure racer), Bernie Boettcher and Andy Ames (top masters competitors). Boulder BolderTeam USA member Katie Blackett had entered along with Kelly Ryan (2nd at last year's Teva Vail HillClimb and member of Team USA for this year's HillClimb on July 4) and Canadian Syl Corbett (member of Team Canada for the July 4 Teva Vail HillClimb). Gutierrez and DiStefano were defending champions having won the 2003 edition of the Teva Spring RunOff.

Early race leader Matt Carpenter, 39, Manitou Springs, CO took a wrong turn approximately two miles into the race unbeknownst to Gutierrez who thought he was racing for second place. "Matt was about 15 seconds ahead of me after the first mile and then I lost sight of him in the woods. I figured he was out in front and I was racing for second because I never saw him again," said Gutierrez whose winning time was 42:57 followed by Josiah Middaugh in 44:02 and Bill Raitter in 45:02.

The women's race lead changed several times during the event with DiStefano powering the uphill and the road race specialists charging on the flats and gentler downhills. "It was a tough race, a lot different than the roads that is for sure," said Blackett after the race.

Gomez was delighted with her win, "I just went out to have fun and I did. My training is pointed toward the road, but this was a nice break for me." Gomez's winning time was 51:33 followed by Haefil in 51:55 and Blackett in 52:17.

Next up for mountain and trail runners is the June 19 Mt Washington Road Race in Gorham, NH, the USA Mountain Championships. The event is the first of two selection races for the Teva US Mountain Running Team. The second and final selection race is the Teva Vail HillClimb on July 4.

For more information on the Teva U.S. Mountain Running Team selection races and team sponsors, please visit the websites listed below:

www.vailrec.com/adult/running_races/spring_runoff.html

www.usatf.com

www.teva.com

www.wmra.info

www.gsrs.com (Mt Washington)

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