

For Immediate Release – March 17, 2005 – Happy St. Patrick’s Day

Contact:

Nancy Hobbs,
PO Box 9454
Colorado Springs, CO 80932
(719) 573-4133
Fax (719) 573-4408
E-mail: trlrunner@aol.com

US Mountain Runners to Compete on the Trails in Japan

Six athletes will represent the United States in the inaugural 100-kilometer Japan mountain race, the “Challenger’s Race 2005,” which is to be held in the suburban mountains of Tokyo on April 29 2005. According to organizer and Japanese businessman Todd Itezono, “The event will be used as a tool to pinpoint and emphasize the wonderfulness of the natural and physical world and will serve to stress the importance of how human beings need to live symbiotically with nature, to preserve them by running through a trail, under trees, and next to plants and flowers, so to avoid any further man-made natural disasters. By inviting runners from other countries, we want to stress that such an action needs combined effort from everybody on earth, because nature does not belong to only one country but to all humanity.”

The race will be run on the Okutama Mountain range outside Tokyo and will offer courses at 10km, 50km, and 100km as well as relay competition. More than 1500 runners are expected and an estimate of 10,000 spectators. US team members will compete in the 10km event, the 50km, and the 100km. The course ranges in elevations from 200 meters to more than 2000 meters.

“On behalf of USA Track and Field and the World Mountain Running Association, I am delighted to be a part of this mission and look forward to competing on the trails in Japan. Establishing a relationship with our Asian friends is important to our worldwide mountain running movement,” adds Nancy Hobbs.

Team leader Adam Chase adds, “We are thrilled with the opportunity to compete in this first-ever mountain race in Japan and share our experiences and goodwill with our hosts, especially given the environmental and educational charities that will benefit from the races.”

Sponsoring the US contingent is Mont-Bell, a Japanese apparel and gear company with a regional presence in Boulder, CO

Team members include:

Adam Chase, 39, Boulder, CO



Chase is an accomplished multi-sport athlete competitive on the roads, trails, and in adventure racing. Some of his recent athletic accomplishments include 14th team at the 2004 Raid World Championships, Patagonia, Argentina, first team overall at the 2004 AdventureXstream Expedition, Moab, UT, and first team overall at the 2004 24-hours of Frisco, Running Relay. Chase has competed in more than 100 ultramarathons, marathons, adventure races, and triathlons and is the president of the All American Trail Running Association, captain of Team Salomon USA (2002-present), captain and manager, Atlas Snow-Shoe Company Racing Team (1996-present). His sponsors include Salomon, Atlas Snow-Shoe Company, MontBell, Clif, SmartWool, Craft, Buff, Emer’gen-C, Rudy Project, and Litespeed Bikes. He is gifted writer and serves as the Trail Editor of *Running Times* magazine, editor of numerous gear reviews, sought-after clinician and speaker, and coauthor of *The Ultimate Guide to Trail Running*. He is a tax attorney and the father of two young and very active boys.

Ethan Hemphill, 32, Freeport, ME



Hemphill is a seasoned athlete who over the course of his career has excelled on the track, roads, trails and on snow. Selected by *New England Runner* magazine as the 2004 State of Maine Runner of the Year, Hemphill had a very successful season highlighted by his finish as the top Maine resident (15th overall) in the world-renowned Beach to Beacon road race. (A race begun by 1984 Olympic Marathon gold medalist, Joan Benoit-Samuelson.) He is an athletes representative to the United States Snowshoe Association and one of the original members of the Atlas Snow-Shoe Company Racing Team (1998-present). A 1994 graduate of St. Lawrence University, he was the captain of the Division I alpine ski team and earned a double major in English and Environmental Science. Hemphill is married to Erika and is the very proud father of Oliver age 1. A 10 year veteran of the sporting goods industry, Hemphill is currently a Ecommerce Project Manager for L.L.Bean Inc..

Nancy Hobbs, 44, Colorado Springs, CO



Hobbs was the top masters finisher (third overall) in the 2004 Barr Trail Mountain Race, second woman overall in the Double Dipsea, third overall in the Summer RoundUp 12km, and past winner of the Gold Leaf Half Marathon in Aspen, CO, second place in the Kendall Mountain Race. She has worked in the running industry since 1985 with such events as the famed Pikes Peak Marathon and the international FSA Skyrunning circuit. She is the founder and executive director of the All American Trail Running Association, on the council of the World Mountain Running Association, chair of USATFs Mountain Ultra Trail Running Council, manager of the Teva US Mountain Running team, and promotions director for the Teva Vail Mountain Trail Running Series. Along with Chase, Hobbs coauthored *The Ultimate Guide to Trail Running*.

Paul Low 31, Amherst, MA



Low is a five-time member of the US Mountain Running Team (1999, 2000, 2002 - 2004) where he has placed as high as 15th at the World Mountain Running Trophy. He was named USATF Mountain Runner of the Year 2002, 2003, and 2004. He has represented the US internationally in 19 mountain running competitions in Great Britain, Malaysia, Alaska, and throughout Alpine Europe. In 2004, Low was the top American finisher at the Mt Washington Hill Climb (USA Mountain Running Championships). He also was the top US finisher at international events including Sierre Zinal (6th overall) and the WMRA Grand Prix race in Susa, Italy (7th overall) where Low and teammate Simon Gutierrez finished fourth place in the team competition. Additional top finishes in 2004 included 19th at the World Mountain Running Trophy race in Sauze d'Oulx, Italy (2nd American) and 3rd at the Teva Vail HillClimb, host of the first NACAC Mountain Running Championships where Low

and teammates Simon Gutierrez, Peter de la Cerda, and Mark Werner were the winning team. In 2003 he won the New England Mountain Running Championship and Barr Trail Mountain Race (Manitou Springs, CO) for the second consecutive time, finished fifth in the Challenge Stellina (Susa, IT) with the fastest ever time by an American on the course, and managed top-ten finishes at Thyone-Dixence and Sierre-Zinal (CH) and 15th at the World Mountain Running Trophy. Low is currently a research assistant and graduate student in geoscience at the University of Massachusetts studying high temperature geochemistry. Low represents the Central Massachusetts Striders (CMS) running club and is sponsored by LaSportiva, GoLite, 180s, PowerBar, Redfeather, and Polar Beverage. Low is married to team member Kelli Lusk.

Kelli Lusk-Low, 35 Amherst, MA



Lusk is a two-time member of the Teva US Mountain Running Team (2003 and 2004 as alternate). She set a course record at Mt Kearsarge Hill Climb in 2004 and was the 2004 USATF New England Mountain Running Series Champion. She was 8th at the WMRA Grand Prix Challenge Stellina in 2004 and 7th at Sierre-Zinal. Lusk is a two-time winner of the Barr Trail Mountain Race (2002, 2003). A seasoned snowshoe racer, Lusk was the 2003 US National Snowshoe Racing Champion. In addition to her mountain and trail finishes, Lusk qualified for the 2000 US Olympic Marathon Trials and has won the Fox Cities Marathon in Appleton, Wisconsin two-times. In 2004, she was 2nd overall female in the USATF New England Grand Prix Road Race series, 10th American at the New York City Marathon, and 10th American at the US National 25k Championships in Grand Rapids, Michigan. She races for Central Massachusetts Striders and La Sportiva Mountain Running Team. Lusk works full-time for USA Cycling as the National Off-Road Bicycle Association Eastern Regional Manager and is married to team member Paul Low.

Anita Ortiz 40, Eagle, CO



Ortiz is a three-time member of the Teva US Mountain Running Team and top US finisher in the past three years of competition placing 11th in 2002 an 2004 and 8th in 2003 – top finish on record for a US woman in the World Mountain Running Trophy. She is a two-time USATF Mountain Runner of the Year (2002 and 2003), USATF masters mountain runner of the year 2004, and Teva Spring Run-Off winner 2002. Ortiz dominates the uphill racing circuit posting victories at the inaugural USA National Mountain Running Championships in Vail, CO in 2003 (also winning the race in 2002), four wins in as many years at the Pikes Peak Ascent (2001-2004 with the masters record set in 2004), and a victory at the WMRA Masters Mountain Running Championships in September 2004

in Sauze d'Oulx, Italy, and runner up at Mt. Washington in 2002. Ortiz recently won the 2005 North American Snowshoe Championships in Beaver Creek, CO and is also the 2002 NA Snowshoe Champion. Ortiz is sponsored by Teva footwear, 180s Innovative Sportswear, CWX, Beaver Creek Resorts, Power Bar, and Northern Lites Snowshoes She is a graduate of Colorado State University and received her Master in Education at Florida State with an impressive 4.0 average. Married to Mike Ortiz, Director of the Vail Resort District, the couple is raising their four children Amelia age 12, Amanda age 10, and twins David and Acacia age 8. Ortiz is the Media Specialist at Eagle Elementary School.

#####

Websites of interest:

- www.trailrunner.com – All American Trail Running Association
- www.usatfne.org/trail - USATF New England Mountain Running Website
- www.cerritos.edu/lgersitz/MUT/Home.html - USATF Mountain Ultra Trail Running Council
- www.wmra.info - World Mountain Running Association
- www.usatf.org – US Track and Field
- www.montbell.com – Mont Bell
- www.sportsentry.ne.jp/event.php?tid=6551 – Challenger's Race 2005 (in Japanese)