

For Immediate Release

Coloradoans Receive USATF Awards

Four Coloradoans received USA Track & Field awards for their outstanding contributions to the sports of ultra, mountain, and trail running. These awards were presented to the recipients at the 2002 USATF Convention in Kansas City, Missouri December 5 through 8.

President's Award Recipient, Nancy Hobbs

Citing her achievements and dedication that inspired the members of USATF and her efforts and leadership that played a vital role in the fruition of our purposes and programs, Nancy Hobbs was awarded the prestigious USATF President's award. The award presented by USATF President, Bill Roe at the opening session of the 2002 USATF Convention recognized Hobbs' service as the mountain team representative to USATF since 1995 and the new Chair of USATF's Mountain/Ultra/Trail Running Council.

Hobbs (42) of Colorado Springs, Colo serves on the WMRA (World Mountain Running Association) Council. Hobbs was instrumental in the effort to bring the World Mountain Running Trophy to American soil for the first time with the race scheduled for Alaska in September 2003. About her award, Hobbs says, "This honor came as a complete and very welcome surprise. I am delighted that the U.S. Mountain Running program and the efforts of MUT (USATF Mountain/Ultra/Trail Running Council) were recognized through my work. Hopefully people who were unaware of the mountain running discipline in USATF as well as internationally will be more aware of our discipline."

USATF Men's Ultrarunner of the Year, Chad Ricklefs

Boulder ultrarunner Chad Ricklefs was named ultrarunner of the year for his racing performances in the USATF's open men's ultrarunning division.. Ricklefs' racing performance that earned him this award include his 2002 100K champion title won at the USATF 100K National Championship at the Edmund Fitzgerald in Duluth, Minn in October and his course record at the Leadville Trail 100 mile race in Colorado Rockies in August. Ricklefs also won the JFK 50 Mile, America's largest ultra race, in Maryland late in November 2001.

Ricklefs was presented the Ted Corbitt Award at the Awards Breakfast during the USATF Convention in Kansas City, Missouri on December 7, 2002.

USATF Women's Mountain Runner of the Year, Anita Ortiz

For the best place finish by an American female mountain runner since the U.S. first fielded a women's team in 1995 at the World Trophy Mountain Race, Anita Ortiz was awarded the USATF Mountain Runner of the Year in the open women's division. Racing on the Teva US Mountain Running Team, Ortiz (38) of Eagle, Colo placed 11th in the World Mountain Running Trophy race in Austria on September 15. The following day, Ortiz won the women's division in the amateur open race that was run on the same 11K course as the men's Trophy race.

To earn her spot on the Teva U.S. Mountain Running Team and race at the world event, Ortiz competed at all three of the mountain running team selection races winning both the Vail Hill Climb and Wolverine Hill Climb and finishing as the first American at Mount Washington. Says Teva teammate Julie Bryan, "Anita performs to top standards while being a school teacher, wife, and mother of four young children. She does what it takes to be the best in many areas of her life." Ortiz was the North American Snowshoe Champion and U.S. National Snowshoe Champion in 2002. Ortiz was presented the USATF Women's Mountain Runner of the Year Award at the Awards Breakfast during the USATF Convention in Kansas City, Missouri on December 7, 2002.

USATF Women's Mountain Runner of the Year, Kari DiStefano

USATF named a 43-year old mapper for San Miguel County, Colo as the Women's Masters Mountain Runner of the Year. Kari DiStefano, last year's USATF Mountain Runner of the Year, earned a spot on the Teva U.S. Mountain Running Team after her second-place finish at the Vail Hill Climb in July. A week after she finished as the third U.S. woman at the World Mountain Running Trophy, DiStefano earned a silver medal in the 40 to 44 year age division at the second annual WMRA World Masters Mountain Running Championships on the same course shaving more than 1 minute off her finish time from the week before.

DiStefano was victorious in the inaugural running of the Telluride 360 Hill Climb edging out former U.S. Mountain Running Team members Lisa Goldsmith (1997) and Rene Frazee (2000). Equally impressive on the roads, DiStefano set the course record in the hilly Rim Rock 37K last November with a time of 2:28:07.

DiStefano has three children and resides in Telluride, Colo.

For information about USATF MUT runner of the year awards, see

<http://www.cerritos.edu/lgersitz/MUT/Home.html>

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