



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

2009 Southern California USATF Road Race Grand Prix Series

July 11, 2009

Santa Barbara Runners Make Strong Showing at Semana Nautica 15K



Start of the 55th annual Semana Nautica 15K. Elite Health Track Club members Vicky Ford and Oliver Gallego

GOLETA, CA—On a beautiful 4th of July holiday weekend, Connor Mellon, 53:30, was the first USATF runner to cross the finish line, and the second runner overall, at the **55th annual Semana Nautica 15K** held just North of Santa Barbara. Making a strong showing were local runners **Scott Deardorff** (M46) and **Maggie Mason** (F52) who took first place in both the overall USATF age-graded competition and the masters men's and women's divisions.

Under perfect overcast running conditions provided by the coastal marine layer, Deardorff's age-graded score was 808 points, while Mason's was 799 points. The 15K marked Mason's and Deardorff's first entry to the inaugural 2009 Grand Prix series. Their high scores mark them as solid contenders for overall honors if they compete in the next three races to meet the 4-race minimum for prizes and awards. As a member of the USATF club *Santa Barbara Athletic Association*, Mason must have felt at home on the beautiful course of tree-canopied gentle hills. But close behind her point-wise was **Lydia Salinas** of Track Club LA who scored 798 points.

While some runners favor one distance or event, Salinas has proven to be a remarkably consistent competitor, scoring 798 points at the Coaster 5K, 796 points at the Brentwood 10K, and 798 points at the Semana Nautica 15K. Her current goal? "I just want to break 800!" she said with a laugh after the race results were posted. Salinas's consistent scores also demonstrate the value of age-graded scoring, which enables the Grand Prix to easily compare runner's results from different distances.

One runner already guaranteed to be a finalist for 2009 honors is **Rosalva Bonilla**, the 3rd place age-graded finisher, and the only runner to compete in each of the first four Grand Prix races this year. While struggling with a cold, her score of 779 points marked the first time the 2000 U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials participant has scored less than 800 points. As the current point leader in the Grand Prix standings, Rosalva has the luxury of aiming to improve her final score in the next 3 races. The Grand Prix scoring takes a runner's best four age-graded time scores and ignores the lower ones.

The well-organized, popular Santa Barbara area race, directed by USATF member **John Brennand**, also featured age-graded scoring results posted immediately after the race. A quick look at USATF runners revealed quite a battle in the master's division, where 2nd and 3rd places went to Culver City residents **Oliver Gallego** (791pts) and **Wayne Joness** (747pts).

Oliver was also there to represent the *Elite Health Track Club*, and Wayne to represent *Track Club LA*, both of which had the minimum 5 finishers needed to participate in team scoring. Track Club LA has now completed 3 Grand Prix events and the Elite Health Track Club has completed two. While *Team Runners High* and *The Janes Elite Racing* have fielded teams in one race each with an astonishing average score of 829 for each team, they will have to compete in all the remaining Grand Prix races to catch up with Elite Health and Track Club LA in terms of overall points.

Congratulations **Connor Mellon** and **Lisa Davis**, fastest USATF runners at the Semana Nautica 15K, and honors to **Scott Deardorff** and **Maggie Mason**, high scorers in the age-graded 15K Grand Prix competition.

Southern California USATF members will now get a 14-week break before the next Grand Prix Series race—the **Run Forest Run 5K**, to be held on Sunday, October 11 as a part of the 25th annual Long Beach International City Bank Marathon and half Marathon. The Grand Prix will then return to scenic Santa Barbara again on Saturday, November 7, for the **Santa Barbara Half-Marathon**, the **2009 Southern California USATF Half-Marathon Road Championship**. The Grand Prix Series concludes with the **Dana Point Turkey Trot**, the **2009 Southern California USATF 10K Road Championship** race, on Thanksgiving Day, November 26.



**USATF top runners: Connor Mellon 53:30, Scott Deardorff 56:04, and Maggie Mason, 1:07:48.
Photos by Santa Barbara Pix**

For more information, please visit:

Road Championship Series: www.scaroadchampionship.org

For current Grand Prix Point Standings, please visit:

www.scagrandprix.org

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