



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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COASTER RUN 5K DRAWS RECORD FIELD

Kick-off to 2009 SCA Road Championships & Grand Prix Series



BUENA PARK, CA—A record number of Southern California USATF runners assembled early Sunday morning, March 15, for the Coaster Run elite and open 5K races. It was less than a year ago that this race launched the **2008 Southern California Road Championships** on the grounds of the famous Knott's Berry Farm theme park. This year's USATF entrants more than doubled those of last year with 40 runners in the open division and another 35 runners in the elite division.

Another reason to race the flat, fast Coaster Run 5K course was that it was also the first race of the new **2009 Southern California USATF Road Running Grand Prix series!**

Southern California USATF elite runners were eligible to collect prize money awarded to the top-5 men and women finishers. And open division runners who placed in the top-3 in their respective 5-year age groups earned gold-silver-bronze USATF Association Championship Medals. What's more, both elite and open runners were automatically entered in the 2009 Road Running Grand Prix series with their finish times generating age-graded individual and club team scores.

In the Elite 5K Race, **Tove Berg** was the first woman across the finish line in **17:21**. Tove also captured the 2008 Road Championship 10K title at Dana Point last November and was an age-group winner at the 2008 Road Championship Half Marathon. Close behind Tove were **Candice Chavez** and **Tania Fischer** of The Janes Elite Racing team.

In the Elite Men's 5K Race, **Aucencio Martinez** from Alamosa, Colorado ran **14:14** to record a :02 second victory over **Jimmy Grabow** from the newly formed International City Racing Team. Though Jimmy won 2nd place prize money, membership in the Southern California Association is required to participate in the Grand Prix Series, so Jimmy was the high point-scorer in the Grand Prix. Following Jimmy was his ICR teammate **Michael Chavez**, helping the new club to serve notice that they are going to be a force to be reckoned with in Southern California distance running.

If there was a theme to Sunday's races, it was the strength of Southern California Association youth athletes in both the elite and open 5K races with no less than twenty runners under age-18 and 6 youth division runners competing in the challenging Elite 5K Race. In the 5K Open Division Race, 16-year old **Nicholas Lopez** of Hemet was the first runner to cross the finish line, running **16:35**—an impressive 5:19 pace for 3.1 miles. Meanwhile, 15-year old **Kristen Ustariz** led the open division women's field with a winning time of **20:19**. Kristen was joined on the award podium by her grandparents, James and Jo Ann Petersen, who also won gold medals by placing 1st in the men's and women's age 60-64 division.

Three Southern California USATF running clubs had the required 5-finishers in the 5K race to accrue club scoring. Leading the club scoring were the USATF Masters Championship winners, **Team Runners High**. In a near statistical impossibility, members **Tyrus Deminter** (M45/16:19) and **Perry Forrester** (M56/17:50) scored an identical 869 points in the age-graded scoring! With a total score of 4147, the average score for Team Runners High was an impressive 829.4!

Following Team Runners High were Santa Monica-based **Track Club LA** (3819 points) and Culver City-based **Elite Health Track Club** (3353 points), as both clubs fielded teams with both men and women finishers ranging from age 24 to 54.

With 5 kilometers of racing behind them, Southern California USATF runners re-fueled with free boysenberry pie courtesy of Knott's Berry Farm and looked forward to our next Grand Prix Series races: the **Avia OC Marathon** on Sunday, May 3, and the **Brentwood 10K** on Sunday, June 7. The newly redesigned OC Marathon will also be the 2009 Southern California USATF Marathon Championship, while the Brentwood 10K will be a Grand Prix scoring race only. As a reminder, to be eligible for cash prizes and awards at the conclusion of the 2009 year, runners must finish a minimum of 4 of the 7 Grand Prix Series races.

RESULTS SUMMARY:

Elite Women's 5K

1. Tove Berg (F31), Los Angeles 17:21
2. Candice Chavez (F23), Fullerton 17:32
3. Tania Fischer (F42), Santa Monica 17:40

Elite Men's 5K

1. Aucencia Martinez (M25), Alamosa, CO 14:14
2. Jimmy Grabow (M24), Running Springs 14:16
3. Michael Chavez (M23), Fullerton 14:38

Open 5K Race: Overall Winners

- Men- Nicholas Lopez (M16), Hemet 16:35
Women- Kristen Ustariz (F15), Riverside 20:19

Club Scoring

1. Team Runners High 4147 pts
2. Track Club LA 3819 pts
3. Elite Health TC 3353 pts

For more information, please visit:

Road Championship Series: www.scaroadchampionship.org

Road Running Grand Prix: www.scagrandprix.org

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