Passant Wins Second USSMA Race in a Row

Contributed by The Editors
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Crested Butte, CO; Crested Butte Ski Patrolman Ethan Passant won his second Life-Link Randonnee Rally Race in a row by taking the grueling Crested Butte race in a time of 2 hours 7 minutes and 18 seconds just three seconds ahead of second place finisher Pete Swensen from Boulder, Colorado. Jackson Hole Ski Patrolman Chris Kroger finished third in a time of 2 hours 8 minutes and 16 seconds.

Passant had won the Arc'teryx Sunshine Village Race in Banff, Canada just one week earlier. This is also the second straight year that Passant has won the Crested Butte Race. With his second win Passant has vaulted into first place in the overall series points race with 60 points followed by Scott Coldiron with 47 points and Swensen, Cary Smith of Jackson Hole, Wyoming and Dave Lamb of Jackson, New Hampshire with 25 points.

The Women's Race Division was won by Monique Merrill of Breckenridge, Colorado in a time of 2 hours 32 minutes and 35 seconds this is also the second year in a row that she has won this race. Second place was taken by Karen Kingsly of Ophir, Colorado in a time of 2 hours 37 minutes and 13 seconds Karen also took second last year. Amy Fulwyler of Jackson Hole, Wyoming finished third in a time of 2 hours 47 minutes and 17 seconds.

With her second place finish Kingsley is the overall series points leader for the women's division with 55 points followed by Merrill and Emily Johnson of Moretown, VT with 30 points and Melanie Bernier of Canada and Katy Meyer of Burlington, VT with 25 points each.

"This race is one of the very hardest races of the whole series. Starting at over 9,000 feet and going to over 12,000 feet the altitude alone makes it a hard race when you add in the vertical and Crested Butte's terrain then it becomes a real test for these very strong athletes," said John Scott, Executive Director of the United States Ski Mountaineering Association (USSMA) which both sanctions and organizes the race series.

Crested Butte was the third stop of the six race Life-Link Sponsored Ski Mountaineering Race Series. Next is the Marmot Race on March 3rd at the Kirkwood Mountain Resort in California, and then it is on to the Outdoor Research Race at Alpental, Washington on March 18th. Racers can also garner series points at the Black Diamond Powder Keg held in Utah on March 17th. The final stop is the North American Championships that will be held at the Jackson Hole Ski Resort in Jackson Hole, Wyoming on March 24th.

Money from the races goes to benefit the local avalanche forecast centers or the search and rescue organization in the local communities where the races are held.

Sponsoring the series this year are: Life-Link, Marmot, Mountain Hardwear, Arc'teryx, Outdoor Research Couloir Magazine, Back Country Magazine, Off-Piste Magazine, Buff, Croakies, Clif Bar, Suunto, Adventure Medical Kits

For more information and complete results go to www.life-link or www.ussma.org or call 800-443-8620