

GVH Shines At USATF National Mountain Running Championships

- **Tim Chichester Makes World Mountain Running Championships team**
- **Jessica Snyder finishes 6th woman**
- **GVH Open Men's Team finishes 4th**

By Coach Michael Reif

Six Genesee Valley Harrier athletes traveled to the scenic White Mountains of New Hampshire to participate in the 2012 USATF National Mountain Running Championships on Saturday June 16th. With their friends, family and coach serving as cheer leaders and transporters; the team of five men and one woman made an big impression on the event organizers and participants with their great performances. The individual and team goals were clear and we're proud to say, "Mission accomplished".

Hard work, determination, confidence and an uncanny toughness on hills in heat earned **Tim Chichester** a spot on the 2012 **USA National Mountain Running Team**. Chichester ran a spectacular race at the Mount Washington N.H. Road Race. It was the 52nd running of the 7.6 mile uphill race on the MW Auto Road which has an average grade of 12%, finishes at 6220 feet . . . and has no level spots or downhill. The race, designated as the USATF National Mountain Running Championships, was also the World Team selection race for US men. With temperatures in the mid 70's Tim ran a very fast time of 1:02.06, which brought him across the finish line in 7th place overall and 6th place American. Not intimidated by the elite field that included several former race winners and World Champions, Tim led over two dozen potential contenders through the first mile in 6:04 which was the course record pace (see photo#1). In mile two he backed off a bit and trailed eventual winner **Sage Canaday** of Colorado who went on to run a phenomenal time of 58.10. His time was the third fastest ever on the mountain. Tim and five other men will represent the USA in **Ponte di Legno, Italy** to compete in the **28th Annual World Mountain Running Championships** on September 2nd.

See: http://www.wmra.ch/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=740&Itemid=2

What makes Tim's accomplishment amazing is that this was his first mountain running race ever. In the process he beat over a dozen experienced elite mountain runners and the **2011 World Mountain Running Champion, Max King** of the US. Such extraordinary accomplishments have become Chichester's trademark. He finished 11th overall at this years' Boston Marathon, 2nd American in 2 hours and 21 minutes . . . in blazing heat. In that race he beat many elite African runners as well as **2010 USA National Marathon Champion Sergio Reyes**.

In his pre-race strategy talk with me, the last thing Tim said was "Coach, I have a good feeling about this one". Indeed, **Coach Reif** was not surprised, but was elated to see Tim round the corner in 7th place at mile 6.6 on the treeless mountain top, only a short distance behind **six time World Mountain Trophy Champion Marco de Gasperi of Italy**. Tim was able to hold off Max King of Oregon in the final mile to clinch the final spot on the team.



GVH's Tim Chichester, on right in the lead, grabbing water at mile 1. To the far left is 2011 World Mountain Champion Max King.



Chichesters' final ascent - 100 meters to go at 22% grade.

Jessica Snyder, just coming off recent wins at the McMullen Mile and JP Morgan Chase Corporate Challenge was highly motivated to improve on her previous two efforts on Mount Washington . . . and did just that. In the process she placed as 6th woman for the USATF National Championship. What an amazing accomplishment for Jess as National Championship medals went to the top ten women and men. Always in the hunt and confident, Jess stayed right with 2011 Women's World Mountain Running Champion, **Kasie Enman**, for the first mile. Wisely, she backed off a bit, but kept an even pace the balance of the journey; which is key to finishing this race at all. Jess and her team-mates had rehearsed many times over on Stemple Hill Road and Gannett Mountain Road in South Bristol just how to maintain a good turnover and pace on the unrelenting hill. To cap off her great run she and boyfriend Graham, hiked down the mountain with some friends, just to make the whole experience "over the top". Jess's next challenge is the Women's USA World qualifier at Loon Lake Mountain next month where the top four will go. This past year Jess has proven she is fast, durable and competitive at virtually any distance. Anything can happen in a mountain race, and as her coach-- and to use Tim's phrase, "I have a good feeling about this one".



Jess Snyder on the final ascent finished with a PR of 1:19.32 – a half-minute improvement on a very hot day.

The **GVH Open Men's Team** finished 4th out of 22nd other USATF teams, which is a remarkable accomplishment especially considering three of the five scoring members were masters or veteran age runners and only two had previous experience in mountain running. Not long after Chichester finished, **Nick End** (age 28) dashed across the finish line in a very respectable 1:10.34. Nick who currently lives in Pittsburgh, had rehabbed an injury over the last few months and while in good shape overall he was not at his peak. He had run a 2:19.44 marathon last December in California in an effort to qualify for the Olympic Marathon Trials. He missed qualifying by a mere 44 seconds. Typically his performance this day on the mountain would put Nick in the top 10-15 spots but given the World Team selection process, and because this was deemed a National Championship, the field was loaded. Nick was the 34th male finisher and really helped the team scoring which is a cumulative total time of the team's five men.

Next in was **Jim Cornell**, (age 45), a two-time Ironman finisher, North American Marathon Speed Skating Champion and this was his 2nd year running the MWRR. Jim was just coming back into shape after some knee surgery this past winter and so his finish was particularly noteworthy. His time of 1:24.09 was about 5 minutes slower than his debut on the mountain last year when he ran a fast 1:19. Jim's resilience in being able to complete the race is a testament to his dedicated year round training in multiple disciplines and positive attitude.

GVH VP **Bruce Wilkins** followed Jim, and once again set a PR with a very fast 1:28.58 which earned him 5th place in the 55-59 age group. Bruce will be 60 next year so he's looking forward to placing even higher in the standings. Every year for the past four years Bruce and I have attended the race and he has PR'd each time. The faster times are the result of consistent year round training and focused mountain training the last two months.

Rounding out the team was **Gary Radford**, (age 55), one of our many National Age Group Champions this past year. Gary, while in great running shape, came back from a hip pointer injury just a week before the event, and was unable to perform at his best. If you know Gary, however, you know he never gives up and will give 100% of what he has on any given day. And so he did. Despite having to walk at times due to severe pain in his hip, his time was a very respectable at 1 hour

and 30 minutes. On a good day, I believe Gary would have won the national championship in his age group and would have run about 15 minutes faster. As the true champion that he is, he said “I’ll be back to conquer this mountain next year.” Indeed, I believe he will. We thank Gary for finishing and giving one for the team in order to have a complete 5-person team and place so well.



Team GVH: (left to right) Jim Cornell, Jessica Snyder, Tim Chichester, Coach Reif, Gary Radford, Bruce Wilkins, Nick End.

The GVH family of friends and relatives were there to cheer the gang on at a pre-race dinner the night before, throughout the race and at our nice post race meal together outside of “Genevieve” (GVH headquarters - the Reif RV – named by Mrs. Coach Reif).

The coach and team couldn’t be more proud of the effort put forth and the camaraderie shared. We’re hoping more GVH members will join us next year for one of the most challenging adventures of a lifetime. . The Mount Washington Road Race. Past years have seen club members Michelle Weiler, Jen Malick, Jordan Zwick, Dave Biscoff, Mark Rabinsky and Ryan Pauling all attack this “hill.”

Team GVH would like to thank our many sponsors and all our members who help make participation in these national events possible. Our race sponsors include: Medved Running and Walking Apparel, Innovative Edge Sports; cash donations by Highlander Cycle Tour, Dr. Mike Reinhardt, Keith Yeates’ Bristol ID Technologies, Gcnese Valley Physical Therapy and Sports Rehab, as well as the many volunteer efforts of our members. Thank you all!



Coach Reif congratulating Tim Chichester



2012 USA Mountain Running Team: Left to right: Richard Bolt (Coordinator), Tim Chichester, Eric Blake, Tommy Manning, Glenn Randall, Joe Gray, Sage Canaday (Champion), Delta Dental Sponsor CEO

Full results at:

http://coolrunning.com/results/12/nh/1un16_52ndNo_set2.shtml