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Media Contact: John Dakin, (970) 949-1999
jdakin@vvf.org

2007 Countrywide American Ski Classic Celebrates 25th Year, Mixing Up Ideal Formula For Spring Skiing Fun And Festivities

VAIL, Colo. -- It doesn't take a mad scientist to figure out the ideal formula for spring skiing fun and festivities. One need look no further than Vail Mountain's Golden Peak March 21-25 as professional and amateur skiers from around the globe convene once again to celebrate the 25th anniversary of America's original celebrity ski event.

The creation of President Gerald R. Ford and the Vail Valley Foundation, the 2007 edition of the Countrywide American Ski Classic will feature the Legends of Skiing Giant Slalom and Downhill competitions, along with the Countrywide Ford Cup celebrity team races as ski racers and wannabes from all walks of life crank down the bindings and turn up the competitive intensity meter.

"We always look forward to March," offered Ceil Folz, president of the Vail Valley Foundation, "not only for the great spring skiing, but primarily for the Countrywide American Ski Classic. Being the first event the Vail Valley Foundation ever hosted, it obviously holds a special place in all of our hearts and this year will be a wonderful celebration of 25 years of great memories and great friends."

That celebration will get underway March 21 as the Legends Giant Slalom competition joins forces with the Bud Light Street Beat free concert series, featuring rock icons Soul Asylum, to form an entertaining evening of music and racing. Contested under the lights at Golden Peak, some of the greatest technical skiers of all times will race head-to-head for top honors, while national recording artists provide the free musical accompaniment, capped off by a special fireworks display.

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Speed will be the order of the day March 22 as some of the world's most renowned speed merchants take center stage in the Legends Downhill. Featuring a two-run format and unique handicapping system, former World Cup, World Championships and Olympic champions, will once again stir the embers of the competitive fires that captivated five decades of ski racing fans.

“The Legends portion of the Countrywide American Ski Classic is truly a ski racing history lesson,” explained Folz. “It’s incredible when you stop to think of how these men and women have shaped the nature of the sport we know today. Their total medal and victory count is amazing in and of itself.”

The frantic pace will subside once the Legends Downhill action has concluded as the focus shifts from the fastest time on the racecourse to the amount of money raised for charity as the Mountains of Hope benefit dinner and auction, presented by Princess World Jewelers, serves as a fundraiser for the Vail Valley Foundation's numerous educational initiatives and programs, which benefit the entire Vail Valley.

The Legends will move into the role of team captains for the final two days as Countrywide Ford Cup celebrity team competition moves to the forefront of the action at Golden Peak March 23 and 24. The five-member teams will attempt to work their way through a maze of head-to-head competition over the course of the two days, emerging with not only the team title, but a year's worth of bragging rights to boot.

A very special ceremony will round out the Countrywide American Ski Classic social festivities March 24 as the founding father of the American Ski Classic will be honored as the late former President Gerald R. Ford, along with his widow Betty and the entire Ford family, are inducted into the International Ski Hall of Fame at the Legends Banquet. The Fords will be honored for not only their tremendous contributions to the Countrywide American Ski Classic, but also for their significant impact on the sport of skiing.

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“Without President Ford’s vision, commitment and sheer enjoyment of the sport,” concluded Folz, “we most certainly would not be celebrating the 25th anniversary of the American Ski Classic. He has been a tremendous ambassador for skiing, as well as the Vail Valley, and it is truly appropriate that he and his family be recognized as the Legends of Honor on this special occasion.”

The 2007 Countrywide American Ski Classic is a project of the Vail Valley Foundation. For additional information, contact (970) 949-1999 or visit www.vvf.org.