



For Immediate Release

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“ROOKIE” SPORTS CELEBRITIES DEBUT AT 2007 COUNTRYWIDE AMERICAN SKI CLASSIC MARCH 23-24 IN COUNTRYWIDE FORD CUP CELEBRITY TEAM COMPETITION

VAIL, Colorado—A distinguished crop of NFL legends, Olympic hockey goalies, track and field stars, gymnastics Hall of Famers and reality television bachelors will undergo the traditional “rookie” indoctrination process March 23-24 as six first time celebrities join forces with stars from all walks of life for the 2007 Countrywide American Ski Classic.

Comprised of the Countrywide Legends Giant Slalom, Volvo Legends Downhill, Paul Mitchell Future Legends Race and the Countrywide Ford Cup celebrity team competitions, the annual Countrywide American Ski Classic celebrates its 25th anniversary with the 2007 festivities. Originally known as the Jerry Ford Celebrity Cup, the pro/am race element was the first piece of the Ski Classic puzzle to be put in place.

“Over the course of the past 25 years,” explained Ceil Folz, president of the Vail Valley Foundation, “the Ford Cup has been a tremendous source of enjoyment and entertainment each year at the Countrywide American Ski Classic. The event has drawn a tremendous amount of high profile people to our community since its inception and the Vail Valley has benefited from many wonderful friendships that have been forged as a result of the races.”

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Countrywide Ford Cup Celebrities

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Heading up the 2007 Countrywide Ford Cup rookie class will be pro football stars Jim McMahon and Merrill Hoge. McMahon, the enigmatic quarterback of the 1985 Super Bowl champion Chicago Bears, became the first quarterback in the history of the Super Bowl to rush for two touchdowns, while former Pittsburgh Steeler running back Hoge, now a NFL commentator for ESPN, is one of only two Steelers to rush for more than 100 yards in back-to-back playoff games. The other is Franco Harris.

Joining McMahon and Hoge will be 1984 Olympic gymnast Peter Vidmar, World Championship track and field medalist Carol Lewis, 1994 New York Rangers Stanley Cup-winning goalie Mike Richter and ABC's 2006 Bachelor, Prince Lorenzo Borghese.

The U.S. men's gymnastics team captain at the 1984 Los Angeles Summer Games, Vidmar led his teammates to America's first team gold medal with their stunning upset of the defending world champions from China, while Lewis, one of the United States' best long jumpers, claimed the bronze in the 1983 World Championships.

In addition to his Stanley Cup exploits, Richter also represented the U.S. as the goalie of the 1998 and 2002 Olympic teams, winning a silver medal in Salt Lake, while Borghese, along with his romantic exploits, also counts numerous storied paternal ancestors, including Pope Paul V, Carmillio Borghese, who helped to finish St. Peter's Basilica in Rome in the mid 1600's.

"We are very pleased to be able to welcome these new celebrities to the Countrywide American Ski Classic," Folz continued. "They will be joining a great group of friends and we look forward to seeing how they fare on the racecourse."

The 2007 Countrywide Ford Cup competitions will get underway on Friday, March 23, as the 40 five-person teams go head-to-head in an effort to move through their respective pools and qualify for the bracket rounds on Saturday, March 24. A total of eight teams will advance, based on their cumulative won-lost record over the course of the two days of racing, but only one will emerge victorious.

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Countrywide Ford Cup Celebrities

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The Countrywide Ford Cup teams are comprised of a Legend of Skiing as captain, along with four pro/am racers, including the celebrities. The 2007 Countrywide Ford Cup will feature a field of 25 celebrities.

The 25th Anniversary celebration of the Countrywide American Ski Classic will run from Wednesday, March 21, through Saturday, March 24.

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

<http://www.vvf.org/athletic/skiclassic.php>

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