**Media contact:**

Tom Boyd

Vail Valley Foundation

tboyd@vvf.org

c. 970.376.3707

o. 970.748.5935

**\*\*\*For immediate release\*\*\***

**\*\*\*Release-specific photos available at:** [**http://bit.ly/2rQfuvE**](http://bit.ly/2rQfuvE) **\*\*\***

**GoPro Mountain Games brings the Rocky Mountains alive in possibly its biggest year yet**

Vail, Colo., June 13, 2017 — Summer has officially arrived in the Colorado Rockies and you can feel it in the air.

At the 2017 GoPro Mountain Games, you could also see it, smell it, taste it and live it all the way through the four-day event that organizers are calling the best yet of this 16-year-old kick-off to summertime in the mountains.

“Everywhere we looked people were enjoying the event, the sunshine, and all the action at our athletic events, our free concerts, and our sponsor activations,” said Mike Imhof, president and CEO of the Vail Valley Foundation, which hosts the event. “In several weeks we will know far more clearly what the actual metrics are, but in terms of athlete registrations and spectator attendance, we are on track for a record year.”

“The energy in town was absolutely phenomenal. At the GoPro Mountain Games there is something spectacular to do no matter if you are 2, 20, or 82,” said Vail Mayor Dave Chapin. “People were having a good time and the event was extremely well-run ... it just doesn't get any better than this.”

In 2016 the GoPro Mountain Games set a record with more than 67,000 overall spectators, more than 3,300 unique athletes, more than 120 sponsors and a more than $7 million economic impact. Organizers say that the 2017 version of the event is on course to continue a remarkable, steady, 16-year growth trend.

Organizers say they are expecting more than 70,000 spectators attended the event over four days, with Saturday’s attendance looking to make for one of the biggest days in the history of Vail.

But consistent growth is not the one-and-only goal for the non-profit Vail Valley Foundation and its partners as they plan for the future, Imhof said.

“As the GoPro Mountain Games continues to substantially grow every year, what becomes very important to our team and our partners, Town of Vail, Vail Resorts and U.S. Forest Service, is how we continue to ensure that, with continued growth and more spectators, athletes, media, and sponsors every year, the experience remains exceptional,” Imhof said.

The Vail Valley Foundation took noticeable action in that regard at the 2017 event. A new website and an interactive, mobile-friendly map, better signage, more shade, more access to water and a variety of food options were among countless improvements to the experiential aspects of the Mountain Games.

The Vail Valley Foundation also hosted three nights of free concerts at the Gerald R. Ford Amphitheater Thursday, Friday, and Saturday night for the first time.

“Something I noticed was that there was an amazing representation of so many walks of life at this event, from rock stars at our free concerts to Olympic gold medalists, to big wave surfers and even famous dogs,” said Dave Dressman, vice president of sales and sponsorship for the Vail Valley Foundation. “And all of us get to go compete right alongside them, watch from the bank of the river, or cheer for the music at the Ford Ampitheater.”

Among the highlights was a moment when 5-time Olympic gold medalist Missy Franklin learned to cast from Costa 2 Fly X-Stream overall champion Camille Egdorf to a standing-room-only crowd at the I-Bridge venue. Elsewhere, world-renowned slackliner Mickey Wilson flipped and balanced in rhythm with a Nahko and Medicine for the People set at the Amp, and legendary kayaker Eric Jackson showed he’s made of metaphorical iron as he became the oldest person (at 53) to ever run the Coors Light Homestake Steep Creek Championships.

“At its heart, this event is fueled by the underlying passion that so many people have for this event,” Dressman said.

In 2017 more than 140 brands came on board to be part of that passion, not only by activating on the event footprint in Vail Village, Lionshead, Red Cliff and Eagle but by creating an engaging and entertaining atmosphere at the L.L. Bean Gear Town, which winds throughout the venue.

Record crowds were able to spread out and enjoy an expanded footprint into Lionshead, allowing the sure-to-be-record crowds plenty of room to stretch out in shaded hammocks, learn to rock climb or kayak, try out fly casting or find a place to recuperate for that next athletic event.

“The weather was perfect and the quantity of beautiful imagery that will come out of the #GoProMtnGames over the next few weeks and into next year is going to be incredible,” Dressman said.

The next GoPro Mountain Games are tentatively scheduled for June 7-10, 2018. Stay a part of it year round with hashtag #GoProMtnGames, Facebook @mountaingames, Instagram @MountainGamesVail, and Twitter @MountainGames.

**About the GoPro Mountain Games**

The GoPro Mountain Games, now heading toward its 17th year, is the country’s largest celebration of mountains sports, music, and culture. It has long been known for its ability to bring pro and amateur athletes together at the same event and welcome summer to the Rockies. The multi-venue, multi-sport extravaganza is an annual nexus for all walks of mountain life.

For more visit mountaingames.com, follow on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/mountaingames/) and Twitter @MountainGames and on Instagram @MountainGamesVail | #GoProMTNGames

**About the Vail Valley Foundation:**

Since 1981, the non-profit Vail Valley Foundation has fulfilled its mission: To enhance and sustain the quality of life in the Vail Valley by providing leadership in educational, athletic and cultural endeavors. By working together with private, government, and corporate entities, the Foundation is responsible for providing Eagle County, Colorado, with some of its most treasured annual events, such as the Mountain Games, Birds of Prey World Cup Races, American Ski Classic, Free Summer Concerts and the Vail Dance Festival. It also operates the Gerald R. Ford Amphitheater and the Vilar Performing Arts Center, and serves more than 4,000 children annually through its YouthPower365 education enrichment programming.

Visit [www.vvf.org](http://www.vvf.org/) to learn more.

# # #