

Salvatore Monforte

Olympic Valley CA

Accepted:

UC Davis

UC Santa Barbara

University of Vermont

University of New Hampshire

University of Utah

University of Nevada Reno

Cal. Poly. San Luis Obispo

University of Colorado Boulder

University of Denver

Scholarships:

UNH- Presidential Scholarship

UVM- Presidential Scholarship,

CU- Presidential Achievement Scholarship,

Cal Poly- Academic Scholarship

For the past five years I have been fortunate enough to be involved with the Far West Master's Scholarship program. The experiences that I have had within the program have been nothing but positive, supportive, and fun natured. I first applied for the scholarship program when I was a J3. At the time, the scholarship application was the first application I had ever filled out. Questions of what to write, and how personal the personal essay should be flowed through my eighth grade mind as I worked my way through the application. Completing this application was the first time I had gotten the chance to reflect on my young career and what skiing meant to me. Five years has now passed since then. I have had numerous successes and setbacks in those five years. Putting the triumphs and hard times aside, the biggest impact skiing has had on my life has had nothing to do with results. It has been the values I have learned and the friends I have made that have impacted me the most.

What makes the Far West Master's Scholarship program so great is that it embraces the side of ski racing that is not about results, but rather the entire individual. By requiring scholarship recipients to attend and speak at a master's event, the program stresses the importance of being able to communicate with an audience and interact with a group of older peers. Another example of this emphasis on having a good time both on and off the hill is the athlete-produced skit that is performed at the banquet during the Copper Mountain camp. Experiences like these have become some of my favorite memories in ski racing. From my point of view, there is nothing major that I would change about the scholarship program based on the fact that it has been so successful and continues to promote being a ski racer as a whole.

As I finish up my last year in high school and look to the future, I cannot help but reflect on the experiences that have made me who I am today. Ski racing has been an extremely huge part of my life and always will be. Regardless of if I continue to race competitively, for fun, or at all; the values that the scholarship program promotes, and that ski racing has taught me, will allow me to be a contributing member of society. The Far West Master's Scholarship Program has done an excellent job in encouraging the lifelong values that young individuals need to be successful in ski racing and in life.

Colleges and universities around the world strive to admit a student body that will bring both educational and social diversity to their campus. This diverse student body brings new views and experiences into the educational mixing pot that is higher education. While searching for the right college, I have many a time stumbled upon admissions figures. I look at these numbers and ask myself: "What sets me apart from the other thousands of kids who are applying?" I haven't grown up in poverty. My activities haven't been greatly limited by financial barriers and I do not have a specific hardship that I have had to deal with everyday. But, I believe that through the activities in which I spend my time, I have experienced unique situations that have made me the person I am today.

I have grown up in a mountain community and I have been skiing since I was two years old. When I was nine years old, I started to race competitively and I loved it instantly. Since then, I have been a ski racer. It has been my passion and also a great source of successes and failures. By pursuing my passion, I have traveled the world, encountered many interesting people, and worked through the greatest challenge of my life thus far.

Through ski racing, I have been able to travel a great amount more than other competitive sports teams my age do. I have raced in eight states across the western U.S. and I have also traveled to New Zealand twice for summer training camps. By traveling, I have been able to see new places. While in New Zealand, I experienced many things that I would never have in the states. For example driving on the left hand side of the road and bungee jumping. I have also become more independent by traveling to a foreign country without my parents. Another aspect of traveling that has affected my life is the

schoolwork that I have missed while skiing during the school year. At times I've missed up to two weeks at a time. In order to stay current in my classes I had to communicate with my teachers before, during, and after my trip to make sure that I not only completed the work but also understood the material I missed. I completed numerous assignments independently and learned how to work through questions when I did not have a teacher to ask. Through traveling, I have gotten to experience new places and work independently on everything from catching international flights, to staying by myself, to completing schoolwork on my own.

I have made many new friends at various ski events and competitions. We are all from different states, and even different countries but we all share the common interest of ski racing. In New Zealand, I met a brother and sister from England. To ski, they would go to either France or Switzerland for a couple of weeks at a time. Here in the states, most people live within a couple of hours of the mountain that they ski at. I also met a skier from Spain. He spoke pretty good English and I was able to practice my Spanish with him because he could correct me. Other than skiing his life is very different than mine but we were able to connect because we both loved to ski. There are also friends who I have grown up with who also ski with me. My best friend and I have been skiing together for ten years and every time we are on the mountain together, we have the time of our lives.

The greatest challenge that I have had to overcome was and still is related to skiing. During my second trip to New Zealand, during summer of 2009, I severely broke my left leg in a crash. Having just come back from a knee injury, I laid on the snow with my leg twisted below me thinking: "Why me? Why me?" All I wanted to do was ski. As I

was taken down the mountain in a ski patrol sled, I wondered how long it would be until I was able to ski again. I wondered if I would ski again. I was flown in a helicopter to a hospital and operated on that night. I had no idea how bad my injury was until the doctor told me the next day that I could have lost my leg if the surgery had not gone as it did. But the surgery went well and I now had a titanium rod with four screws in my lower left leg. I spent the next four days in the hospital and I had a lot of time to think. My leg hurt, but not as much as possibly losing my life's passion to an injury. To add to the situation, I was alone, 16 years old and in a foreign country. My coach came down to the hospital the day after the surgery but there were still times when I was completely alone. I felt like I grew up a lot during these four days in the hospital. After getting home about two weeks later, I faced an immense challenge. I wanted to ski that season. The only way I would be making turns during the winter was with hard work and dedication. I went to physical therapy three times a week and also worked out on my own. During this time, I also took extra classes through my local community college so that I would have a lighter load second semester. There were many times when giving up seemed like the only answer. The late CR Johnson, a professional skier, suffered and came back from a severe head injury before he died last year. He said: "It's too easy to give up on something that is hard to accomplish." I hung this quote in my bathroom and read it every night before bed and every morning. I found that this quote symbolized my endeavors and struggles. With commitment to my goal I skied again four months after my injury. Once on snow, I still had many obstacles to overcome and it took another two months after that before I was training again. I improved throughout the season and was once again pushing my limits and challenging myself.

When asked what I can bring to a college campus, I can't help thinking about the experiences in my life and what I have learned. No I am not a blind orphan who taught himself to read but I have had the chances and misfortunes of partaking in many things that most kids don't get to experience. I have been on the top of the world in terms of success and worked my way back from a severe injury. I will bring insight, determination and passion to a college because I have been through difficult situations that have made me a stronger person and given me perspective on diverse scenarios.