



January 2016



Far West Scholarship recipients at the Copper training camp 2015

Front row left to right Eddie Mozen, Master; Zack Staudenmayer, U-12; Stacey Cook, USST; Sydney Snelbaker, U-19
second row: Francesca English, U-19; Mo Lebel, U-19; Isaac Mozen, U-16; Scotty Lebel, U-19
Back row: Pierre Jeangirard, Master and Coach; Mark Engel, USST; Nico Monforte, University Nevada Reno; Calvin Wilson, U-19
Photo by Dan Simmons

From the President's Corner...

By Dan Simmons
president@farwestmasters.org

Sadly, I begin this column with the news of the death of Buck Thys, a stalwart of Far West Masters Ski Racing and a good friend to many in the program. Buck suffered a heart attack on Monday January 25 as he was cleaning the snow off of his skis following a beautiful morning of skiing at Squaw Valley. He passed away on the 28th. We will all miss Buck.

On a positive note, there's snow on the ground in the Far West and our racing season is in full swing. We've completed ten races, with thirteen more on the schedule. With early coverage, the two day Mammoth GS's were excellent. The Alpine Meadows event got moved to Squaw Valley because of the lift break-down on Kangaroo, and low coverage forced us into a shortened slalom course on both days. Sometimes it's a tough sport, but we got two races off, even if exigencies made the event less than perfect. Nonetheless, the Alpine and Squaw race departments worked hard to be flexible provide the best conditions possible. In January at Heavenly Valley conditions were wonderful for the two Viva Italia slaloms on Friday—congratulations to Deb Lewis and Pierre Jeangirard for winning the Viva Italia trophies—and we ran GS on the World Cup course re-inaugurating the race hill after over a decade. The slaloms at Sugar Bowl were a little tough with weather on Saturday and soft snow on both days, but as always the best skiers came out on top of the awards. It is a winter sport and we are subject to the vagaries of weather. We did manage a grand party at Pizza on the Hill at Tahoe Donner.

The good news is that Gate De Mattei returned from the injured list to race at Sugar Bowl. Welcome back Gate. The bad news is that Bob Davis is out for a while from a tumble at Heavenly Valley. We wish Bob a speedy recovery.

A few of us are off to Aspen for the FIS Masters Cup and Western Championships February 4-7 and USSA/Rocky Masters Speed Series February 7-9. Our next event in the Far West is the Bernard Cup at Squaw Valley with two slaloms on Saturday and a GS on Sunday. Conditions at Squaw to date are terrific. This event is always a highlight on the schedule so I hope everyone plans to compete and bring a friend. The following weekend will find us at Mammoth again for the Woolly's Challenge Super-G series.

March will be a full month of racing with super-G's at Northstar followed by a weekend of GS racing at Mt. Rose. Mid-month will have many travelling to Big Sky for the U.S. Masters National Championships. Big Sky is a great venue. Plan to go and bring the whole family. The last weekend in March brings us back to Mammoth for the season finals. Our last day of racing is my last day in the U-70 class, the day on which we celebrate the Simmons/Tanzman birthdays.

Don't forget the bring-a-friend program that will refund your race fees for bringing a new competitor. This year we have welcomed several new racers, including a couple who are giving the guys at the top of the open class a run for their money. The open class changes seem to be working well with over 20 competitors entered. The competition for leader bibs is tight.

Best of luck to everyone at the FIS Cup, and see you at the Bernard Cup.

Dan

A beautiful day at Mammoth



Photo by Randall Sussek

Far West Masters Scholarship Program - by Sandy Hogan

2016 Scholarship Recipients

Forty-six Far West Masters 2016 scholarship recipients have been announced, representing six ski teams, including Diamond Peak, Mammoth, Mt. Rose, Northstar, Squaw Valley, and Sugar Bowl. Athletes, displaying good citizenship, good scholarship, and strong race results, apply during the summer, and awards are announced in the fall.

The award is deposited directly into a USSA account to pay for entries, travel, and lodging. Returning recipients may receive a larger award, depending upon their performance and need.

The *Jeff Wattenmaker scholarship* is a \$10,000 college scholarship (\$2,500 each year), and this year's recipient is Nico Montforte, an outstanding alpine and skier-cross racer. This scholarship is the result of one Masters racer's love of our sport, our support of young racers, and his untimely death in February, 2010. Jeff Wattenmaker admired the Far West Masters Scholarship Program, and the November before he died he went with other Masters and some of our young scholarship awardees to Copper. He was so impressed by the camaraderie between the Masters and the young racers that he approached Eddie Mozen with a proposal to set up an endowment for a college scholarship for deserving racers. Nico is attending University of Nevada, Reno.

Far West Masters Scholarship Program recipients: Where are they now?

Lila Lapanja: Here is the latest e-mail and letter from US Ski Team member Lila Lapanja:

Hi Eddie!

I'd like to take an opportunity to thank the Master's deeply for the amazing support throughout my budding ski career. I had the opportunity to meet a Master racer named Deb (from Mammoth) in Park City and seeing her inspired me to share my final update with you.

Also, the announcements have been made and I am eager and ready to bring my best in 2015-16!

<http://ussa.org/news/2015-16-alpine-team-nominations>

Please forward the letter to the Masters community - Thank you! Lila

Dear Far West Masters:

The 2014-15 ski season gave me a special opportunity to learn about myself and expand my vision for my ski career: since I was unable to ski because of a back injury, I took the time to learn about how to optimize my health for many more years of competitive racing.

I had many difficult decisions to make, especially in February when I was named to the 2015 World Championship Team (this was a season goal and

even without racing the U.S. Ski Team believed in my ability). A day before the slalom race, after meeting with doctors and coaches, I made the decision to take the remainder of the season off and prepare a strong foundation for next year. Since then, I have healed well and have set short-term and long-term goals for my comeback season and I am completely devoted to accomplishing that mission. (editor's note: On 1/12/16, Lila compiled her first World Cup points under the lights in Flachau, Austria, placing 23rd in the slalom)

Because I am no longer a Junior, this season was my last as a Master's Scholarship recipient. I have been part of your community for the last 10 years and your support has helped me reach many goals I had as a young racer: I represent our country internationally as a member of the U.S. Ski Team, I won a NorAm Overall slalom title in 2014, and I was named to the 2015 World Championship Team. These achievements are possible for athletes like me because of the financial and communal support I receive from organizations like that of the Far West Masters.

I am ready to take this next step into ski racing "adulthood" and blossom as an individual. To begin my new journey, I am very proud to announce that I am beginning to "give back": I was named an official ambassador for the Snow Leopard Trust and am bridging my passion for snow leopards with my skiing (my article can be found at www.snowleopard.org/lila-lapanja-snow-leopard-ambassador-on-the-slopes). As I state in the interview, my career goals have been the same since I began racing at age six: Win World Cups and medal at the World Championships and Olympics. However, when I reflect on these goals, I realized I want to achieve something even more in my life: I want to play at the highest level of ski racing, master my skiing, achieve personal excellence and inspire people to do the same. I look forward to joining the FW Masters at any events in the future to continue to support the ski racing community. Thank you so much for believing in me all these years. I will see you on the ski slopes!

*Sincerely,
Lila Lapanja, U.S. Ski Team*

Diana Higman (now Ingalls) received Far West Masters scholarships in 2000 and in 2001 while racing for Heavenly Resort. She graduated from South Tahoe High School in 2002, and Diana next

attended UNR. She trained with the UNR ski team while racing independently in her freshman year, and she also coached the Mighty Mites at Sugar Bowl during her time at UNR. Her major was Health Ecology, which took in many credits of athletic classes, and it was in one of those classes where she met her future husband, Jed Ingalls. He coached the indoor cycling class, and he also coached Diana in triathlon. However, she states that "... it was a challenge keeping up with him as he is a three-time Ironman finisher!" Diana graduated in 2007 with a BS in Health Ecology and married Jed, and shortly after in 2008 they had a son, Jack. She went back to school to become a cosmetologist, getting her license from Paul Mitchell in Reno, and is now a hairstylist in Reno. Diana, Jed and Jack enjoy being active outdoors and getting up to the lake and mountains whenever possible. Jack started skiing at 3 years old, and they usually ski at Mt. Rose, sometimes with Jack's cousins Maggie and Eva Rassuchine, daughters of FWM scholarship recipient Christie (Higman) Rassuchine.

Passing of Eduardo "Buck" Thys

By Mark Mirviss

Far West Masters, and the ski racing community, lost a great friend and devoted ski racer. Buck Thys died January 28, 2016, at the age of 86.

True to his love of our sport, Buck was out skiing on his slalom skis Monday, January 25th, a gorgeous sunny day on his home mountain of Squaw Valley. As Buck took off his skis, on the deck of the locker room, he suffered a heart attack. Ski patrol, paramedics, and Doctor Rick Ganong, immediately attended to Buck.

Buck was flown by air ambulance to Reno, where he passed away, peacefully, at 6:30 PM, January 28, 2016. His entire immediate family had gathered in Reno, and was at his side at the time of his passing.

As sad as we all are, let's remember how much we loved Buck, and how much his love for skiing and ski racing brightened all of our lives. He has left a true and everlasting legacy in this sport, not only by his lengthy participation in it, but by introducing his wife, Nina, and all of their offspring, to this wonderful sport. Please take a moment to remember Buck, and keep Nina, Ann, Beatrice, Barry and Edith in your thoughts, and in your hearts.

Some of the usual suspects at Heavenly!!



Photo by Randall Sussek

Hey, Referee!

By Ray Tulloch

(or as we say in Scotland, "Haw, Ref, were you actually at the race?")

"Why don't I have a time posted on the board, I definitely finished"

"No one told me I was DQ'd – that's ridiculous!"

"Can you tell me what my time was for the first run?"

These are just some of the comments/questions that the race referee may hear on a typical race day. So what actually is the role of the referee in our races?

First and foremost the referee is there to represent the interest of the competitors. He is also a member of the race jury. The ref is responsible, in conjunction with the Technical Delegate (or "TD"), for checking the course prior to the start to ensure it complies with the technical requirements for the discipline; to ensure that fall zones are safely protected with B-netting if necessary and that the course is not unfair or unsafe for competitors. At the completion of each run the referee is responsible for checking all the gatekeeper cards to identify any DSQs; signing off on the provisional run results for posting; and reviewing, as part of the jury, any protests regarding times or DSQs.

Now, as our referees are also racers themselves, life on race day can become quite hectic as, in addition to the above duties, the referee would also

like to inspect the course and get to the start in time for the race runs.

So, how can you as a competitor minimize unnecessary burden on the referee to allow him/her to both race and to keep the event on schedule?

There are a few things racers should understand and remember.

When you cross the finish line for your run, your time may or may not be announced over the public address system. It will also normally be marked up on the finish board. Alternatively the times on the board may be sourced from live timing on a smart phone. ***It is important to understand that these times on the board are not official times and as such may not be accurate.*** The person marking the times will try to catch them all but sometimes may mishear or not hear a time. There is always a chance that the time posted may be incorrect. If there is no time shown for you, it does not necessarily mean you have been a DNF, or not been given a time. Also, just because there is a time posted on the board does not mean that you have successfully completed the run, you may still be subject to a DSQ if you have missed a gate.

So, what to do? Well, please don't, as a first option, harangue the referee to find out why you don't have a time - the referee does not normally have direct access to the times or DQ list prior to completion of the run. Easiest option, if it is available, is to get out your smartphone and look at Live-Timing for the event. Live timing gets its feed direct from the timing system so will have a higher level of accuracy.

When the run is completed the referee will review all the gatekeeper cards and confirm with the timing crew the DNFs and the DSQs for the run. The (yellow) sheet detailing these will then be posted on the timing board as soon as possible after the run is completed.

NOTE! It is the responsibility of the competitor to check this list to ensure he/she is not subject to a DSQ/DNF. When the DSQ sheet is posted you have **15 minutes** to protest if you believe you have been wrongly DSQ'd. It is **NOT** the role of the referee to search you out and advise you of a DSQ. So, if you do not check the board and you only find out from the starter before the second run, it is too late to protest or change the decision.

The process of checking and posting DSQs and DNFs is the same after the second run. Again, barring any protests, the provisional results will become final 15 minutes after posting so it is important to check within this period if there is any doubt.

So, please remember to check the board after each run is completed, this ensures you get an opportunity to submit a protest (along with the required protest fee) if you feel you are the subject of an incorrect decision. It is much easier to resolve it then, than trying to protest retrospectively!

With regard to DSQs, one other thing I would ask all our members to consider. This season we have seen a shortage of gatekeepers at some of our races. As a result some straddles/missed gates, particularly when it occurs close to the finish and the racer crosses the finish line and receives a time, may not always be captured by the gatekeeper. So, when you know you have DSQ'd, but have still crossed the line, please confirm with the race officials so it can be recorded, don't just assume it has been caught by the gate keeper. Your input on this is very much appreciated to ensure we do not need to make adjustments to results and season standings.

So, now we have outlined the role of the referee, what is the qualification and training process. To become a referee, which is the starting point rung on the race official's qualification ladder, it is necessary to attend a short course and pass a written USSA examination. Normally USSA Far West Region organizes a training session and test for this in November, prior to the season start. Mark Mirviss, our Head of Officials on the FWM board is always looking for additional volunteers to become referees and will be pleased to provide more information.

[A snowy start to the day at Sugar Bowl](#)

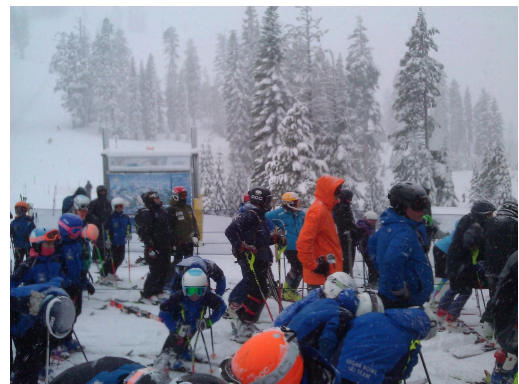


Photo by Tom Bullard

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Forerunner

<http://www.farwestmasters.org>

To:

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The Forerunner

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Your submissions or photos to this publication are always welcome. Please send articles and/or photos to Hamish Butler, forerunner@farwestmasters.org

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