



**May 2016  
Season Finals Update**



The Start Haus for the Mammoth Season Finals  
Photo by Randall Sussek

## From the President's Corner...

By Dan Simmons  
president@farwestmasters.org

The 2015-16 race season is in the books. We got off 21 races, finishing with the fantastic six race finals at Mammoth. Eight competitors managed to start all 21 races. Congratulations to all of the season winners. The Far West Division was second in the Division cup at the Masters Nationals. Combined class champions from the Far West included Carol Levine, Deb Lewis, Pierre Jeangirard, and Mihai Filimon. Special congratulations to Gaet Demattei who brought a globe from Europe for the FIS Masters Cup. Also special congratulations to Deb Lewis who was presented with the Teddy Cantanho Spirit of Masters Award, and Nora Urdi and Ray Tulloch who were named the most improved racers for 2015-16.

Good news from the National Committee Meeting at Big Sky. Mammoth Mountain will host the USSA Masters Nationals March 13-18, 2017. The FIS Masters Cup and Western Regionals will be at Park City, February 3-5, 2017. Mike Braun is already hard at work on the 2016-17 season schedule, which may include more events at Northstar where they are developing a new race arena off the Vista chair, and speed events at Mammoth.

Many thanks to the members of the Board who made the season happen. We would not have a program without the hard work of Deb Lewis, our technical director and program wizard, Dian Laing who selflessly showed up early on every race day to get everyone organized, and Mary Feddis, our membership director who held everything together. No races would have happened without the scheduling efforts of Mike Braun. Mark Mirviss made sure we had the required officials at every event and was tremendously helpful to me as an advisor on how to keep things on track, not to mention his help in arranging social events in the Tahoe region. Also thanks to Randall Sussek for making party arrangements for us in the Mammoth area. Our treasurer Ray Tulloch kept our finances on sound footing. Finally thanks to Hamish Butler for his terrific job putting together our newsletters.

I hope everyone will take an opportunity to thank the race departments at Mammoth, Squaw Valley, Alpine Meadows, Northstar and Sugar Bowl (and pass it on to management) for their efforts in putting on our events this year.

Another piece of important news—I obtained rulings from the Internal Revenue Service and California Franchise Tax Board that Far West Masters Ski Racing, Inc. is a tax-exempt charitable organization, contributions to which are deductible charitable donations.

Don't forget to buy a FIS stickered helmet to race GS and faster next year.

Dan



Randall Sussek "on course"  
Photo by Michael Uy

## *Far West Masters Scholarship Program -* *by Sandy Hogan*

The following thank you notes were received earlier this season from three of our scholarship recipients. The first is from **Cole Matteson**, who skis out of Squaw Valley. He says, "Thanks for your support and belief in me. I will try to represent Far West with integrity. I am looking forward to a good winter. Sincerely, Cole Matteson."

**Isabelle Johnson**, from Diamond Peak, wrote the following: "Dear Eddie & FW Masters scholarship committee. Thank you for choosing me to be one of the scholarship recipients. I am honored that you feel me worthy to represent the program and will do my best to uphold the high standards required of a recipient. I am grateful for the generous amount of money that you awarded me. This will help my family especially for travelling to Mammoth for the upcoming GS race before Christmas. It is so nice to know that I have your support, both financially & as mentors. Thank you, again, for your vote of confidence in me. Sincerely, Isabelle Johnson."

Mammoth 's **Elizabeth Heit** wrote: "Dear Eddie and the Far West Masters, I would like to personally thank you for the money you have given

me this season. The support you have showed me over the past few years has been greatly appreciated. I wish you all the best this season and many others. Sincerely, Elizabeth Heit."



Here is a link to an excellent article in Ski Racing.com, including photos, about our program and others in the US:

<http://www.skiracing.com/premium/how-juniors-can-cash-in-on-300000-in-scholarships>

Lisa Densmore Ballard, our National Masters Program Chair, wrote the article.

### USSA News

Last week at the USSA Congress awards banquet Mihai Filimon was named the Al Sise Masters Skier of the Year. Lisa Densmore Ballard was the Womens winner this year. Congratulations to Mihai and Lisa!!



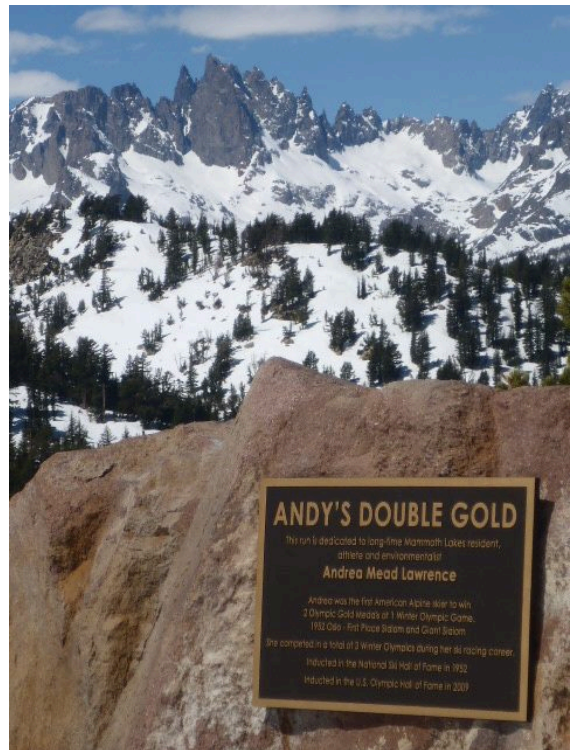
Looking down on the SG course.  
Photo by Lors Pimentel Spicher

### Season Finals

By Deb Lewis

The 2016 season finals were held at Mammoth Mountain on Thu-Fri-Sat, March 31<sup>st</sup> through April 2<sup>nd</sup> with spectacular spring racing conditions to wrap up the 2016 race season. With several age classes still locked in tight battles for season positions and both the men's and women's season bib standings still undecided going into the final event, there were plenty of opportunities to pick up points with the addition of two makeup races and a total of 6 races in 3 days.

Thursday featured 3 SG races on the World Cup/Terry's speed track and sunny, warm weather. The third SG was added to the original event schedule as a makeup for the cancelled Northstar SG weekend. Racing continued Friday with 2 long GS races on World Cup/Terry's from the Redelsbergers start above the base of Chair 23. The second GS was added to the original event schedule as a makeup for the cancelled Mt. Rose McKinney Cup GS weekend. The beautiful spring conditions continued with another day of warm, sunny weather.



"ADG"  
Photo by Randall Sussek

The final day of racing was the SL Saturday on ADG (Andy's Double Gold). With the women's #1 season leader bib clinched by Linda Crowell on Saturday, the men's #1 bib and several age class winners were still up for grabs on the final day. The season-long battle in M11 featuring a see-saw battle between Jim Dugan and Don Smith was settled by Dugan's SL victory – leaving the two fierce competitors tied after 21 races with 1460 points each! The M06 class was also decided on the final race with Kirk Swanson winning the day to move into a tie with Mark Hlubucek. All eyes were on the race hill as the last man stepped into the starting gate for his second run. The men's overall season #1 bib wasn't settled until the last racer on the last run of the last race of the 2016 season! Pierre Jeangirard held a slender lead over Wojciech Lis going into the last race. After Pierre

went out on his second run and lost the opportunity to collect any additional points, Wojciech needed to finish 1st or 2nd in MOP to pick up enough points to take the season lead. And he coolly did just that, finishing 2nd overall on the day behind Brian Welch and taking the season points lead.

The season wrap up banquet was held on Saturday evening with a buffet dinner at Canyon Lodge. In addition to dinner and presentation of race and season awards, a silent auction to benefit the Far West Masters scholarship fund for FW junior athletes provided opportunity to bid on some great items. Raffle items included Elan skis and a grand prize of Rossignol race skis.

Many thanks to all our sponsors and donors, as well as those who supported the scholarship fund with their auction bids and raffle tickets.

The final announcements at the banquet were the presentation of the Most Improved racer awards to Nora Urdi (W05) and Ray Tulloch (M08). These awards recognize racers who've been working hard, sometimes for many years, and have demonstrated significant improvement throughout the season. The Teddy Cantanho "Spirit of Masters" award recognizing competitive spirit as well as contributions to our program was presented to Deb Lewis.

The Season Standings page includes the season awards report with all the class and special awards:

<http://farwestmasters.org/raceinfo/current/standings>  
<http://farwestmasters.org/reports/results/2016/FWM2016-SeasonAwards.pdf>



Post race celebrations.  
Photo by Lora Pimentel Spicher

## Far West Masters Scholarship Program - by Sandy Hogan

**Luke Giordano** raced for Heavenly as a scholarship recipient in 1993 and 1994. In Luke's words, "My parents come from humble hard working places. Neither of them finished college with only my Dad going to college for a year before dropping out to start a family and to be the ultimate Tahoe native. I say this, because I remember how important these scholarships were to me, in order to allow me to pursue my dreams." Luke graduated from South Tahoe High School in 1996, taking a year off to pursue a ski racing career. During that time he realized that he wanted to do more than just ski race, so he went to UNR to race for their team and had a successful academic year. For the next three years, he attended Westmont College in Santa Barbara, playing tennis for them for two years, and in his senior year, he "surfed and surfed". Even so, his strong focus on academics allowed him to complete a double major with a B.A. in Philosophy and a B.A. in Business Economics in four years. This led him to a 15+ year career in Financial Services, where he is currently a co-owner in a Wealth Management firm in Woodland, CA. He plans on doing this for another 30 years, saying "I enjoy helping people make good financial decisions. It's always fun to problem solve their financial goals or figure out how to get people to retirement". He was appointed to serve on the Board of Directors for the League to Save Lake Tahoe ("Keep Tahoe Blue") almost four years ago.

Speaking of his family, Luke says, "My parents and friends have been great support for everything in my life. It has allowed me to travel all over this great world. And I only want to travel and experience more with family and friends. My parents and sister are all still up in Tahoe so we go to visit them often. I still love to ski, but I do more backcountry skiing when I get up to the mountains these days. But I'm very active (with wife and kids) wherever I am, and have recently been running half-marathons as much as possible. I try to spend as much time as ever with my kids and family just as my parents did for me. I met my beautiful and talented wife (Erin) in 2003, and we've been married ten years. We have two kids, a four year old boy, Cruz and a one year old girl, Jade. We live in Davis CA, and life is good".

Speaking of his early decision to focus on academics, Luke stated: "All the things associated with ski racing taught me so many things, but the biggest being how to focus on what I want and go after it no matter what. There are so many people including the Far West Masters that helped me in life to get me to that point, it was a hard decision to make, but looking back now, it was definitely the smart choice". We of the Far West Masters congratulate Luke on his successful career and family!



Vera Savage powering out of the start.  
Photo by Randall Sussek



Emily Andrews inspecting the start.  
Photo by Randall Sussek



Photo by Randall Sussek



Pierre, Mike and Wojciech.  
Photo by Lora Pimentel Spicher

**From: Far West Masters Racing Series**

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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,

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