



May 2018



Liesl Panke out of the start at the 2018 Farwest Masters Season Finals
Photo Randall Sussek

From the President's Corner...

*By Dan Simmons
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This is my last column after two terms and four years as your President. I hope that I have contributed a little to maintaining our great organization. Full credit goes to our hard-working Board of Directors who have maintained all aspects of our race program during the last four years, among other things, we have qualified as a section 501(c)(3) charitable organization for Federal and State tax purposes, introduced the expanded open class, re-organized race registration, and increased our membership. Also over the last five years we have not lost a single temporary bib (thanks Diann). Congratulations to Ray Tulloch who was elected President at the membership meeting in Mammoth. Same to Tom Bullard who is becoming Treasurer and Tricia Wall, elected Secretary. I'm am confident that Far West Masters will be well served by our new leadership and the continuing Board Members, Mike Braun, Hamish Butler, Mary Feddis, Deb Lewis, and Mark Mirviss. We would not have a program without the commitment of the Board members and many others who have stepped up to help with the multiple details involved in making our events happen.

We had a successful season of racing this year with 22 races. We lost one weekend in January for lack of snow, and one day of SG racing in March because of too much snow. Several of our GS events were changed to SL because of conditions, but we were able to make up for the imbalance by substituting GS for SL at the season finals in Mammoth. Our scheduling guru Mike Braun did a tremendous job working with ski areas and juggling events. We are grateful to the race departments at Mammoth Mountain, Squaw Valley, Mt. Rose, Northstar, and Heavenly Valley for supporting our events.

Our membership numbers were up this year and we had close to 170 individual competitors throughout the season and over 200 members due in no small part to the efforts of Mary Feddis, our membership chair and our guru of all things technical who keeps the whole program on track, Deb Lewis.

Andrea Levy and Mike Braun were the overall winners for the season in our open class. Andrea won all three of our named trophy events this year, the Bernard Cup, the Viva Italia, and the McKinney cup, a first in the Far West. Tom Bullard was recognized at the Finals Banquet as the most improved racer for the year. Rick Moberly was awarded the most improved new racer, with Shawn Mason recognized as the very close runner-up. Emily Andrews was presented with the Teddy Cantanho "Spirit of Masters" award recognizing her contributions to the program and her evident cheerfulness and joy in participation in Masters ski racing.

Enjoy the summer and see you all at the first races next December. Dan.

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

The following is a (slightly edited) thank you note from current scholarship recipient Sierra Kim. She skis out of Sugar Bowl Academy, is 14 years old, and will be a second year U 16 next year.

Dear Far West Masters:

During the 2017/18 ski season I have made a ton of progress. I started the season as a Far West U16 in 41st place in GS, 37th place in SL, and 19th place in SG. The first race of the season was at Mammoth but was not a Wild West Series race. In this race, I was able to decrease my GS points, making me 8th place overall in U16 Far West for GS. By the end of the 2017/18 U16 Wild West Race Series, I had lowered my points for GS (10th place), SL (16th place) and SG (13th place). I was honored to represent Far West in the Western Regional Races at Alyeska, Alaska in mid-March. I raced well in SL and GS, but unfortunately, I crashed during the SG training run and suffered a severe concussion. I was not allowed to compete in the SG race nor any of the last races of the season, including Speed nor Tech Finals due to my concussion. Since I am still benched from skiing for at least another week from today, I have ended my ski season.

Although I did not end my season on a happy note as I was hoping, I think that I have made major progress in my skiing and my placing/racing. My final points for this season for FW U16 placed me in 13th place for GS, 20th place for SL, and 18th place for SG. This means I will be starting next season in 6th place for GS, 9th for SL, and 8th for SG.

Additionally, I have worked hard in school this year. I have earned all As except one B+ in Spanish during the school year. I have had a slow start to my last trimester due to my concussion recovery plan, but am committed to completing my school year with top grades. Thank you for supporting me in my endeavors this 2017/18 ski season.

*Sincerely,
Sierra*



Dan Simmons at the Season Finals.
Photo Randall Sussek.

**U.S. Ski & Snowboard Congress 2018 Park City, UT -
May 1-5, 2018**
Deb Lewis

Masters

Updated course setting specifications prepared by Masters working group was submitted by Masters representative to the Regional Subcommittee where masters report in the governing structure; positive comments from RSC, proposal was submitted and accepted by ASC. Rules updates and new course setting matrix will be in the 2019 Masters Competition Guide rules. See the article on page 4 for more details.

General Items

"Safe Sport" initiatives are a big deal. Federal laws and US Safe Sport procedures are impacting sports organizations nationwide; training is being pushed out widely; compliance cost and audits are a reality. Affects officials, coaches, and clubs, potentially event race volunteers, technicians, etc. Key notion is "position of authority or in frequent contact with minors". Background screening frequency by USS&S will increase from every 3 years to every 2 years; safe sport training will be required for many certifications.

No membership fee increases for 2018-2019; expect increases in 2020 season (partly driven by increased compliance costs of Safe Sport).

A proposal to revive Student membership for high school and college age athletes, age 18-22 was passed, cost \$75. This could help crossover, allowing college athletes to participate in Alpine Masters races (excluding championships).

Continuing concern about athlete retention at the U16 and older groups; significant drop-off when FIS level reached. Higher visibility of high school racing and discussions of improving collaboration with collegiate skiing organizations.

Officials education concerned about how to ensure that officials stay current. Proposal to require annual update attendance failed (too many practical difficulties); approved stronger wording for certification requirements that attendance at annual update clinic is **highly encouraged**, with bi-annual update required to maintain certification. Emphasize importance that officials with jury responsibility need to stay current with annual rule updates.

Considerable focus on duals and parallel racing. Alpine Combined (AC) is fading away and will likely disappear in the next few years. Working group formed to develop rules for parallel SL with panel gates (modified version of FIS parallel SL; GS panel gate, "pro" start, no cross-blocking).

Some confusion has occurred about use of start commands when audible/clock used for fixed- interval events; revise rules to clarify that verbal start commands must always be given.

Far West Masters Scholarship Program
- by Sandy Hogan

Where Are They Now? - A Tale of Two Sisters

Amie Lonza received her first award as a J-3 in 2007, and again in 2008. After graduating from Mammoth High School, she continued to race on the FIS and Nor-Am circuit before heading off to college. After that experience, and eager for college, she was accepted to St. Lawrence University, racing in NCAA division 1. Amie's exposure racing in east coast ski areas, Canada, and the Eastern Intercollegiate Ski Association rounded off her racing experience, and she graduated with a BA degree in Environmental Studies. During college, she came home to Mammoth during Christmas and summer/spring camps and coached the young ski teams. After she graduated, joining the staff at Mammoth was a natural fit for Amie, and during the 2016/17 season, she coached the U 14 team alongside Harry Blackburn and others. As she always had a passion for cooking, she seriously considered spending six months as a post-graduate at a culinary institute. However, in the summer of 2017 Amie was introduced to Ian, a former Culinary Institute Instructor and owner of the fine dining establishment in Mammoth Lakes known as Skadi, and the rest is history. Amie is enjoying her life in Mammoth working under and cooking alongside Ian, coaching three to four days a week with the Mammoth FIS group, raising a young puppy, and spending time with her boyfriend Kyle. She is happy to be back on the west coast of the US but thoroughly appreciated her experience living for four years in upstate New York while attending college.

Geordie Lonza was a J-2 when she got her first of five FWM Scholarship Program awards. Graduating from Mammoth High School in 2007, she postponed her entry to college to further lower her FIS points, and later entered Williams College, where she had four very successful ski racing seasons. As a three time All-American in her college ski racing career, Geordie is William's most decorated female ski racing athlete in their history of female racers, serving as captain of the team during her senior year. After graduation, Geordie entered the working world, working for Boston University as a research technician in regenerative medicine. In 2015, Geordie was accepted to the University of Vermont School of Medicine, and is now just finishing her third year in medical school. She is currently considering which residency program to enter, with orthopedics or general surgery foremost in her mind. Geordie is planning on returning to the west, after living and studying in the east for nearly ten years. Skiing is still a strong passion for her, and she can be found skiing the runs of Mammoth when time allows from her rigorous schedule.

Masters Course Setting Rules Changes

Ray Tulloch

We have probably all heard the “standard” greeting among Masters racers - “Who the heck set this course!?!?”. But just how many of us – apart from coaches and officials - actually understand what the rules are?

Until season 17-18 Masters course setting regulations were the same as for USS&S U19 and FIS. The rules were based principally around a hybrid combination of minimum distances and a min/max number of gates determined as a percentage of the vertical drop of the hill.

In season 17/18 USS&S changed the regulations for U19 (and below) so that course sets were based on minimum and maximum distances between gates (with different distances for different disciplines of course!). For Masters we resisted adopting the USS&S U19 regulations for 2018 as we believed that they would make course sets too tight with the shorter maximum distances and would adversely impact the quality and enjoyment of Masters racing.

However the changes in USS&S regulations led to some confusion among course setters in some Divisions (not in Far West I am pleased to say) and some instances of Masters courses being set by non-Masters coaches to U19 specs with predictable results.

To try to resolve these issues a Masters subcommittee was organized with representatives from all Divisions (with Pierre JeanGirard and myself from Far West) to review and come up with recommendations for Masters course sets. Within Far West Division we also received input from other coaches and TDs – Mark Mirviss, Rees Palermo, Dan Simmons and Deb Lewis. At the National sub committee there was initially some pressure to simply adopt the U19 regulations but we were able to argue successfully for a similar min/max distance approach but with increased distances more suitable for Masters racing. These proposals were approved and accepted at the USS&S Congress earlier this month.

So, that is the background, but what will it actually translate to for us in the 18/19 season? Well, the good news is that in Far West we should not see significant changes in our course sets. We are fortunate in that the great majority of our courses in Far West Masters are set by experienced Masters Coaches and Racers - something that is not always the case in other Divisions. This is important as there are materially different considerations for Masters course sets. We have a much wider range of ages and skills and as we get older we do not have the same levels of athleticism as a an 18 year old athlete!. We want courses to be challenging but still enjoyable and capable of being completed by 80% plus of the competitors.

As a result we will normally set gate distances more biased towards the maximum than the minimum distance and with typically less swing (offset) than a typical U19 course set. We try to reduce as much as possible the risk of injury and avoid erratic changes in rhythm, distances

between gates and swing so that the course remains challenging but fair.

So, hopefully the standard Masters greeting will not be so frequently heard going forward!! Once the new course setting matrix is published we will also post it here in Forerunner.

Big Sky FIS Masters World Criterium

A sizeable contingent of Far West racers joined competitors from around the US and 18 other countries at Big Sky MT the week of Mar. 19-24 for the 2018 FIS Masters World Criterium, the "world championships" of international masters racers. The field of over 300 competitors was split fairly evenly between US racers and athletes from other nations, including large teams from Italy, Austria, Japan, and Canada.

The international flavor was apparent as soon as we arrived in Big Sky, with national team uniforms and diverse languages flavoring the Huntley race headquarters area as competitors came through to check in for the week's racing. Following a "warm up" day on Monday allowing competitors to ski the race venues and explore Big Sky, racing opened on Tuesday with the Group B (men 55+) SG on Big Horn and the Group C ladies opening with SL on Tippy's Tumble. Groups A (men 30-55) and C women had their SG races on Wednesday, with the men again on Big Horn and the women on Hangmans. All groups reported a good track for their SG races and fun racing!

On Thursday the B men moved to SL on Tippys while C ladies ran GS on Hangmans. Several inches of new snow overnight required assistance from the competitors to help clear the race hills and prepare the track. The final Criterium races were held on Friday with A men running GS on Tippys and Group B on Hangmans for their GS. Once again all competitors started the morning by assisting the race crews to slip new snow and prepare the hill for racing.

Friday evening a large turnout of competitors, family, and friends celebrated the conclusion of the Criterium races with a relaxing banquet dinner at the Huntley Lodge. The final day of racing on Saturday was a 1-run FIS Masters Cup GS for all groups. However, snow began falling heavily just at dawn and continued steadily as the race crew went up on the hill at 8am to begin course preparation and setting. With no letup in the snowfall rate, the jury met at 8:45 and decided to cancel the race for safety considerations - it was not possible to prepare and maintain a safe track for racing with the new snow. While some competitors packed and began their travels home early, others went out and enjoyed a final day of powder skiing before their departure.

Congratulations to the following Far West racers for their strong results: Marietta Frinell, Sara Gold, Ingrid Braun, Gaetano Demattei, Jim Dugan, Don Smith, Dan Simmons Ara Papazian, Miha Filimon, Mike Shklovski, Mike Braun.

2019 Masters National Event Information

It's never too early to start planning for next season, so here are some preliminary details for the 2019 Regional and National Events. Full schedules for each event will be available soon. Note that all resorts are covered by the new IKON pass.

2019 Eastern Regional Championships

Stratton, VT

January 24-27, 2019

2019 FIS Masters Cup/Western Regional Championships

Aspen Highlands, CO

February 8-10, 2019

(followed by DH February 11-12, 2019)

2019 Masters Nationals

Mammoth, CA

DH, SG, GS, SL March 17-23, 2019

2017/2018 Season Registration

There are two steps you need to take in order to be ready to compete next season:

1. Renew your US Ski & Snowboard membership now
2. Renew your Far West masters membership in October

Please note that these are two separate steps that need to be completed individually.

Step one: US Ski & Snowboard Membership renewal for the 2017/2018 season is open now. Please go to <http://my.ussa.org> to log in and then in the "My Account" box click the link to "Renew Membership".

Step two: Far West Masters membership renewal will be in October. Once again this year we would like to encourage all members to renew their membership online at <https://www.skiracereg.com/fw>.



Emily Andrews and outgoing Secretary Diann Laing

2018 Season Finals

We had a few great days racing at Mammoth at the season finals in April, with beautiful weather and with the high standard of race operations we all expect from the Mammoth race department.

The final races were followed by our end of season board meeting and banquet where our Season winners were honored.

As already mentioned by Dan, our 2018 #1 bib winners were Andrea Levy and Mike Braun. Tom Bullard received the award for most improved racer and Rick Moberly received the award for most improved new racer. Emily Andrews received the Teddy Cantanho "Spirit of the Masters" award.

Many thanks to Lora Pimental Spicher for the photographs.



The top 5 2018 Ladies



Five of the 2018 top 10 Men

From: Far West Masters Racing Series

C/O Mary Feddis

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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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