



March 2019



Viva Italia Cup Winners Deb Lewis and Doug Fulton

From the President's Corner...

By Ray Tulloch

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Well, after a rocky start to the season when we had to postpone races due to lack of snow, we are now suffering from an embarrassment of (snow) riches and having to delay/cancel races because of too much snow! It has given us some awesome powder skiing but has also created all sorts of headaches for our racers, race organizers and host areas. While we hate having to cancel races when conditions are not going to be safe we have no option. We also recognize as a Board that many of you have a lot of other things going on in your lives and cancelling races at the very last minute when travel arrangements have been made, time off has been booked etc. can be costly. So, when it is obvious in advance that a venue will not be able to safely run a race, we prefer to give you as much notice as possible. I appreciate the disappointment when races are cancelled but unfortunately there are situations when it is simply not possible to run an event safely.

However, despite this, we have still been able to run many of our scheduled races so far including an awesome speed weekend at Mammoth with perfect ski racing weather. I can honestly say that was one of the very best weekends of racing I have experienced in 15 years of Masters' racing and, judging by all the enthusiasm and smiles at the bottom of the course, most of you were thinking the same!

We also had a strong contingent from Far West travel to Aspen – despite the travel difficulties created by the storms! – for the Western Regionals/FIS Masters event. We had 3 excellent days of racing with great performances and multiple podiums from our FW Masters. Special mentions to Mike Braun and Liesl Panke for taking overall fastest awards in their classes against multiple age groups..

Masters Nationals

We now have the opportunity to return to Mammoth for more speed races - both DH and SG - as well as GS and slalom at the **US Masters Nationals from 18-23 March**. Now, I understand from talking with many of you that some think Masters Nationals is only open to the very best racers. Well, I would like to dispel that myth! While it does attract some of the top Masters' racers from around the country it also has racers of all levels of abilities competing. It lets

you meet your fellow Master racers from other Divisions as well as experience the atmosphere of a national level event. Having it local to Far West Masters at Mammoth provides a great opportunity to compete without having long distance travel to other parts of the country. For those who do not want to race Downhill I should also point out that the overall rankings and awards at Nationals are based on SG, GS and SL only. There are separate courses for women/older men (>65) and the younger men (<65) in GS and slalom to ensure as far as possible clean course conditions.

Given that Far West are hosting the Nationals I would really like to see as many as possible of our racers competing. Registration is open at <https://skiracereg.com/index.asp> until March 15 but there is an additional per race fee of \$10 for entries received after March 3 with a cancellation deadline of March 10. I would encourage you all to sign up and look forward to seeing you there!

December Season Opener

We had a very good opening event at Mammoth just before the Christmas break - the weather was varied but race conditions were excellent and Mammoth Race Department put on an outstanding opening event for us, with two GS races and two SL races on the Andy's Double Gold race hill.

Far West Masters Scholarship Program By Sandy Hogan

Due to Eddie Mozen's leadership for the past 30 years, our incomparable program has awarded more than one million dollars to our young scholarship athletes, and thanks to **your** participation in raffles, silent auctions, annual contributions, and other financial support. Our program sponsors many of our athletes for a number of years, including those who go on to race in college or with US Skiing. The minimum scholarship is \$250, based on race performance, work ethic, financial need, citizenship, and academic scholarship and can only be used for race-related expenses. Some athletes receive many thousands of dollars, depending on need, years in the program, and expenses at the level they are skiing.

This season's 38 Far West Masters Scholarship recipients come from Diamond Peak (2), Mammoth Mountain (11), Northstar (3), Squaw Valley (9), and Sugar Bowl (12). They range from first-year U-16 athletes to AJ Hurt, who has been named to the US Ski Team.

Squaw Valley is AJ's home area, and after several World Cup starts last year, she was named to the US Ski Team. She will be racing in the US Nationals along with this year's scholarship winners:

Jillian Ferre
Zazie Huml
Sophia Staudenmayer
Preston O'Brien
Matt Smallhouse

AND honorary members of the Scholarship Program, Gwen Wattenmaker and Isaac Mozen

Some of our athletes who had World Cup slalom starts last year are racing elsewhere, as the USST made cuts to its slalom team: Mark Engel is back at the University of Utah, Foreste Peterson is racing for the private X team, and Lila Lapanja for the private Clif Team.

Our scholarship program has no equal in any region, thanks to Chair Eddie Mozen's and Board members Doug Fulton's and Miles Anderson's outstanding leadership, and to **your** continued (tax-deductible) support!

Heavenly Viva Italia

Our January racing program in Far West started off with the classic Viva Italia Cup SL races at Heavenly Valley on Friday Jan. 11. The World Cup race run at the Heavenly California base has been a reliable and popular venue for many seasons. Although the hill is relatively short, snow conditions are often firm and the challenges of SL are supplemented by a warmup hike from the top of the lift up a short but steep pitch to the starting gate.

Heavenly welcomed us with clear weather and an enthusiastic course crew that kept the race day moving expeditiously through 4 runs of SL. The field of over 50 competitors featured an exceptionally young and strong women's field, with multiple women breaking into the overall top 10 in both races led by Casey Edgeton's smoking Buck

Hill-honed charge keeping men's overall winner Ryan Ritchie working to hold his lead.

The day ended with a pizza party at the base of the race hill while the age handicap scoring was computed to determine the overall Viva Italia Cup winners. The trophy award went to two class 8 competitors who combined consistent fast skiing with sufficient age to edge ahead of the younger athletes in the final rankings. Former winner Deb Lewis took the ladies title, while hard-working TD Doug Fulton abandoned his "slalom boy" moniker to convincingly ascend to the Slalom King seat.

Far West Masters Scholarship Program **Fundraising** **By Eddie Mozen**

The Far West Masters annual banquet and silent auction is April 6th 2019 at the Lodge at Tahoe Donner. This is our only fund raising event each year for the Far West Masters Scholarship Program and is the major contributor of funds to our program. Each year we have a wide assortment of auction items available for bid to help raise money for our scholarship program. In addition to having a silent and live auction at the event, we will be opening it up to bidders that are not in attendance in an effort to raise even more funds.

At this time I am soliciting items for donation for the auction. Almost anything would be beneficial. I am looking for hard goods, services, restaurant and store credit or any other creative item for auction you might think of. If you would like to contribute, please contact Eddie Mozen at ebmozen@gmail.com. I would like to have contributions made by March 30th so we can get those items to our on line auction site prior to the auction on April 6th.

The Far West Masters Scholarship Program is now in our 30^h year of raising funds to benefit Far West Junior ski racers and over that time period we have awarded over one million dollars in scholarship funds. We are an incorporated 501 (c)(3) public charity tax exempt organization.

This is our scholarship program. It has been incredibly successful because of the contributions from our members. Thank you for your continued support!

Mammoth Speed Series

What an amazing, spectacular, incredible event we had with four days of DH and SG speed racing at Mammoth Mountain on Jan. 24.27. It really doesn't get any better than this - comfortable, sunny weather, fantastic conditions on the speed track, top-notch support from the Mammoth Mountain Race Department throughout.

Despite some worries about whether the 5-6 ft of new snow from the preceding weekend would pack in enough, Thursday's DH training day opened with a sunny day on the World Cup/Fascination course. With many competitors coming in without any speed practice this season, most took the first training run to get used to the hill and the speed. Giggles and smiles spread at the finish as competitors realized how great the track ran, and enthusiastically cycled around to open it up on the second training run.

The good times kept rolling with two DH races on Friday, with the first race counting in the 2019 masters National Speed Series as well as our Far West season scoring. It was great to be joined by competitors from Rocky and Intermountain travelling the speed series tour.

Despite pleas for another day of DH racing, on Saturday we switched to two SG races on the World Cup/Terries course. Again, the first race of the morning counted for the Speed Series. Ho hum, another perfect day in masters racing paradise - spectacular conditions, beautiful weather, great snow conditions on the course.

Sunday wrapped up the event with another fantastic race day and a final SG race.



Liesl Panke, Linda Crowel and Deb Lewis on the podium



Mike Braun, Jeff Anderson and Kris Buttenberg on the podium

Northstar

February turned into a record-breaker as multiple storm trains rolled through and dropped massive amounts of snow throughout the Sierra. We finally got a weather break the week before our scheduled races at Northstar and Squaw on Feb. 22-24. Faced with fresh snow depths in the double-digit feet and cold dry conditions all week, the race crews at both venues faced a daunting challenge to pack and prepare the race venues, reset safety fences, and generally dig out the race arenas.

The decision was made early in the week by the Northstar race organizers and Far West Masters that it would not be possible to safely prepare the race hill by Friday, so the scheduled Friday SG races were cancelled. Even with the extra day, the Northstar crew had an enormous amount of work to do, but by Saturday morning racers were greeted with warming temperatures, partly-sunny skies, and two fun runs of GS.

Squaw Valley Buck Thys Memorial GS

On Sunday competitors moved to nearby Squaw Valley for the Buck Thys Memorial GS on Exhibition, a long and challenging race hill which is one of our best GS venues. The race surface was still relatively soft, compared to the usual "firm" conditions that are often encountered on Exhibition, but good course work by the Squaw crew and good course setting on both runs added up to two good runs of GS for a satisfying race day.

The competition was enlivened throughout the day as MC John Haines shared stories of Buck Thys and the skiing Thys family. It was a pleasure to be joined by several of Buck and Nina's children, Beatrice and US Ski Team alums Edith and Barry. Edith also foreran both runs on her home hill. Edith pays tribute to the wisdom of her father Buck in this recent blog post <https://racerec.com/buck-up-if-youre-on-snow-its-all-good/?fbclid=IwAR0RhOm69A6CAwzWZ7fXgFxCII-8qakWI7x7xKfXhajE0YdObPsgLV53yFA>



The Bernard Cup

Adding to the Squaw heritage, Sunday's race was also scored for the Bernard Cup trophy. The Bernard Cup is a perpetual trophy awarded annually at our Squaw event to the top man and woman racer using an age-handicap formula. Over the years competitors of all ages have won - Buck Thys was the 2002 winner when he was competing in the 70's class.

The men's trophy was won handily by Kurt Belden (M08), who was third overall in the men's results. The women's trophy race was wide open, with competitors of nearly all ages in the running. Overcoming some spectacular skiing from defending champ Andrea Levy (W01), 3rd overall on the day, the women's title went to Carol Levine (W10).



Bernard Cup Winners Carol Levine and Kurt Belden

From: Far West Masters Racing Series

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