



February 2021 Updates

In this edition of The Forerunner:

- President's Update
- Far West Masters Scholarship Program
- Cody Masterson
- FIS Masters International/Western Region Championship Races, Big Sky Montana
- Luca Robillard
- The Silver Lining in the Season of Covid
- Bobbi Jo Griffin

Click [here](#) to view in a web browser.

President's Update

Unfortunately, as I write this we have still been unable to run any races this season. Just when we thought there was some hope on the horizon and we were going to open our season with races at Mount Rose and then at Squaw Valley, the COVID gods again conspired against us and, like Charlie Brown with Lucy, the metaphorical football was pulled away from under us. At Mount Rose the previous agreement with the State that we could run races was reversed. For Squaw we would have been restricted to racers from within a 120-mile radius which would have restricted the majority of our members from competing. So regrettably we had to cancel both events

I fully understand and share the disappointment among our membership about the lack of races but, as a Board, we need to both ensure the safety of our racers and also ensure that none of our host resorts are adversely impacted by holding a Masters race. However we have not given up all hope for the season. We have not cancelled our season finals weekend, scheduled for Mammoth on 1-3 April. We are continuing to monitor in conjunction with the mountain the potential for holding these races in compliance with State guidance and safety for our racers and we will provide as much notice as possible of a go/no go decision.

From a wider Regional/National perspective there have now been a number of Masters races run in other parts of the country under the new protocols. Several Far West Masters racers also travelled to Big Sky for the FIS Masters International/Western region races. So, this, along with the increasing spread of vaccinations, leaves us with hope that we may be able to race at Mammoth in April.

However, despite all the constraints caused by the pandemic, there have been some upsides. As Mark Mirviss describes in his article later in this Forerunner, from a coaching perspective it has enabled more focus on skills improvement in training which has translated to improvements in gate performance for our athletes. From my personal viewpoint, coaching at both Mount Rose and at Squaw, I fully concur with and support Mark's findings. As a Board, we will take this into consideration in the development of next season's race program.

So, I hope you all remain safe and healthy and I look forward to seeing more of you before the end of the season.

Best Regards

Ray Tulloch

FAR WEST MASTERS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

By Sandy Hogan

Far West Masters is very proud of this program, started in 1992 by Eddie Mozen, the late Joe Lausmann, and Doug Fulton. Eddie continues to lead this effort as he has for the past 28 years, with more than \$1.25 million going to more than 750 deserving Far West junior skiers. Each year up to 50 athletes have received scholarships, and some have gone on to join the US Ski Team, such as Stacy Cook, Marco Sullivan, Tim Jitloff, Lila Lapanja, Mark Engel, Jonna Mendes, and Travis Ganong. Others have received scholarships while racing in college. All money raised comes from Far West Masters racers, supporting sponsors and donors. All administrative activities involved in the fund-raising and review of athlete scholarship applications are done on a volunteer basis by members of the Far West Masters. This allows us to distribute the funds with no overhead to Far West Junior Athletes.

Our program initially raised money simply by direct contributions from Masters racers. However, over the years (until this Covid year) the program has expanded to include more fundraisers such as: raffles at most races with great prizes and silent auctions. In addition, the Jeff Wattenmaker scholarship endowment allowed us to award one \$10,000 college scholarship (\$2,500/year) to one of our outstanding young athletes, and once that endowment ran out, if Masters racers want to contribute to the Masters College fund, it continues to award a deserving athlete with a college scholarship.

Our young racers earn their scholarships based on a combination of financial need, ski racing potential and exemplary work ethic. In turn, they must forerun one of our races and speak at that day's awards ceremony. It's always fun to see these hot juniors tear up our courses, and equally impressive to listen to them talk about their goals and desires. Hopefully, next year we will return to these great traditions. There is no equal to this program in any region!

Financial support for the program is always welcome, you can write a check to "**Far West Masters Scholarship Program**" and send to:

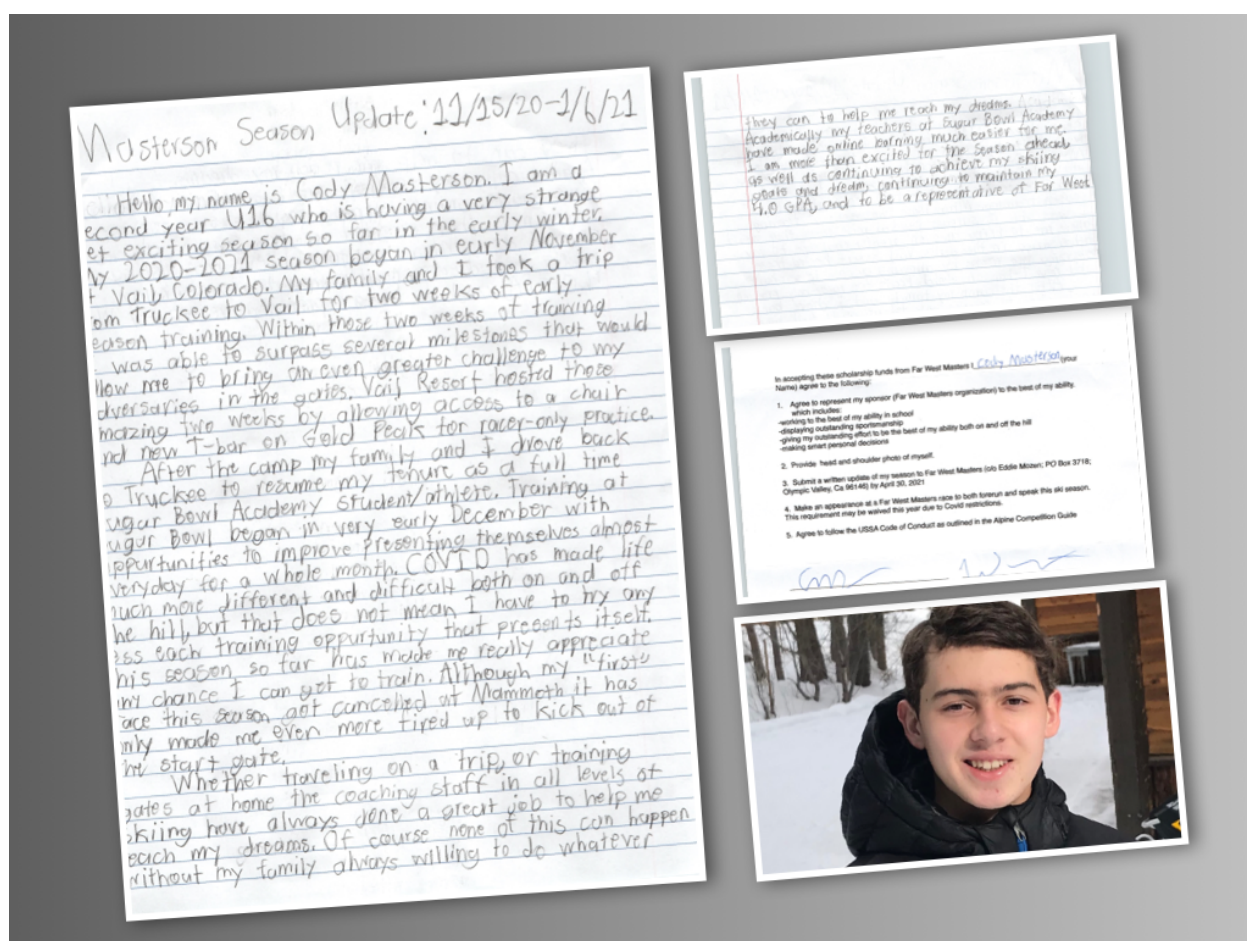
Masters Scholarship Program
c/o Eddie Mozen
PO Box 3718
Olympic Valley, CA 96146

You can also make donations online by credit card or through a [Paypal](#) account.

Cody Masterson

In November 2020, 38 young athletes were awarded scholarships by the Far West Masters Scholarship Program. Twenty young racers ski out of Squaw, ten are from Sugar Bowl, four from Mammoth, and the rest from Diamond Peak, Mt. Rose, Northstar, and Auburn Ski Club. Six are U-14's, the youngest, and five are oldest and U-19's, and the women slightly outnumber the men.

Cody Masterson is one of our recipients, and his contract, photo, and hand-written thank-you letter are excellent examples of dedication to our sport of ski racing.



Thanks to all of you who provide support to the Far West Masters Scholarship Program, as you can see that you are very much appreciated!

FIS Masters International/Western Region Championship Races, Big Sky Montana

Despite the dearth of racing at home a number of Far West Masters racers, including the President, made the trip to Big Sky Montana for the Phillips 66 FIS Masters International/Western Region Championships. In the week leading up to the races Big Sky Ski Education Foundation hosted a few days training in preparation for the planned schedule of 2 Super G races, 2 GS races and a slalom. Of course, as we all know, when you schedule speed races you are almost guaranteed to get new snow! And, come Friday morning, Super G day, there were more than 8 inches of new snow on the race hill. After efforts to clear the track failed, the only option was to go powder skiing instead!

The Saturday schedule was changed to accommodate one Super G and two one run GS races. Fortunately, the snow eased overnight, and, despite a soft surface, the race crew were able to run all 3 races as planned with some good results for the Far West contingent as noted below.

For Sunday's slalom there was more overnight snow projected so plans were made to do an extra early morning grooming of the race hill. By 6 AM there had been 8 inches of overnight snow which was cleared by the grooming crew. That of course did not stop the snow fall! By 08.30 there was another 6 inches of new snow on the hill which left the race organizers with no option but to cancel. So, a disappointing end to the series but at least we were able to get 3 races in.

The other obvious question of course is what does Masters racing look like in COVID times? As you will appreciate, racer and officials safety was a top priority. Masks were required to be worn at all times except when actually in the course and, given how cold it was, in many instances' racers kept their masks/buffs up even when skiing. All racers had to complete the daily COVID check form online and all team captain meetings and awards announcements were done virtually on Zoom. With these actions in place, it was possible to run the races safely. The downside of course was that the socialization which is such an important part of Masters ski racing was missing. None of the usual cluster round the score board to check times as there was no scoreboard and times were posted on live timing instead. (Which of course creates another issue for some of us older folks struggling to read results on our phones without glasses!). And of course, no after race parties to catch up with friends/rivals from other Regions. So definitely a bit different experience but still worthwhile to get some racing in.

Congratulations to all our Far West athletes who made the effort to attend and particularly to our podium placers.!

| Athlete | Class | Results |
|-------------------|-------|---|
| Liesl Panke | 5 | SG 1 st + fastest woman, GS1 1 st , GS2 1 st + fastest woman |
| Gaetano DeMateo | 13 | SG 1 st , GS1, 1 st GS2 1st |
| Don Smith | 11 | SG 1 st GS1 1 st GS2 1st |
| Ara Papazian | 5 | SG 1 st GS2 1st |
| Jeff Skeen | 7 | SG 2 nd GS1 3 rd GS2 2nd |
| Erik Nelson | 2 | SG 2 nd GS 1 - 2 nd GS 2 2nd |
| Wolfgang Virostek | 0 | SG 1 st GS 1 1 st GS 2 1st |

FAR WEST MASTERS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Luca Robbilard

Dear Masters Foundation,

The FW Masters Foundation recently helped me pay for a new pair of boots, which my coaches believed would be crucial to improve my skiing. I made a couple phone calls, talked to a few people, waited for the boots to arrive, and boom, I was set. Like predicted, they worked beautifully. In GS, I am able to arc the turn much easier, and the boots have turned out to be an enormous improvement. Additionally, in slalom I recently scored a career best result in Jackson Hole, Wyoming on the new boots. Without the help of the Masters Foundation none of this would have happened, and I am very grateful for that.

My goals for this season are to simply give my best effort daily and to trust in the process. By giving my best effort in every part of life, I know I can make big improvements in my skiing. Taking these small steps daily, I will be able to work my way towards my bigger goals. My big goal this year is to get on to a college team. I have always wanted to ski D1, so it would be amazing to achieve that goal. I know I need to work hard and ski fast



to achieve this goal, and I am ready to do just that.

I want to thank the Masters Foundation for supporting the past five years. From U14 Regionals to these new boots, you guys have been by my side, supporting me in my pursuit of my ski racing dreams. You guys make an enormous difference in my life, and without the opportunities you have helped me take advantage of, I would not be where I am today. I cannot be more grateful for your support, and I am very pleased to have the Masters' by my side for another year. Cheers!

-Luca Robillard

The Silver Lining in the Season of Covid by Mark Mirviss

I, and almost everyone I know in the ski world, are really missing the opportunity to compete this season. We also miss the fun and camaraderie that goes along with competition when we gather. I know, we all share the hope of returning to "normal" as soon as it is possible.

However, as I, and my fellow coaches across the vast Far West have noticed, there is actually a silver lining in this Covid cloud. And the silver lining is we coaches are seeing most of our athletes improving faster this season than in most "normal" seasons. Why?

Well, the answer is due to a number of factors we think. First and foremost, is that without having any races in December, it allowed all of us to concentrate more on the fundamentals of skiing, otherwise known as technique. We, for the most part, free skied with our athletes much more than in a "normal" year. We were able to observe issues needing correction(s) and prescribe drills that would aid and improve technique.

We were also able to do "block training." In other words, we skied one discipline for longer than we normally would. In our training program at Squaw Valley for instance, we free skied on slalom skis for about ten days before "graduating" to Giant Slalom skis (and turns).

And, when it WAS time to begin gate training, we also were able to spend time transitioning from stubbies, to leaners, to mixed courses, all of which, in the case of Slalom, were done without those "pesky" combinations. In other words, we keyed in on the fundamentals of Slalom.

Our athletes are now, skiing more relaxed, under less stress of a racing deadline, and not thinking, they need to "get it" by the following race weekend. Most are also, encouraged with their progress, as opposed by the discouragement that can follow a "bad" race result. Those "bad" race results have often actually been improvements. Just not as rapid an improvement as the athlete had unrealistically hoped for.

If the weather forecast would impact training, we needn't worry about getting some gate training in pre-race. If people were not skiing fundamentally strong, we did not need to "graduate" to a steeper hill in order to get "race ready."

Here is a quote from Pierre Jeangirard, the legendary Mammoth Head Coach, and my coaching idol; "I did not set a combo in a slalom until the end of January...I did not set anything on the steeps for a long time for GS or Slalom." February 16th we trained GS on Exhibition...for the first time this season! Guess what, it was, to say the least, a challenge, for most of us. But, we also saw a few of our newer racers, perform well above what we expected to see. In particular, one of the best performances we saw, was from an athlete that has yet to compete in his first ski race! Pierre has also (as has Squaw's program for the most part) deliberately refrained from timing runs. Again, in order to stress improvements in fundamental ski technique, as opposed to just wanting to go fast. Mammoth's team has also worked for the most part, on somewhat flat terrain. This again, enables the athletes to become fundamentally better. It also teaches the athletes how to retain, and even generate speed on the flat parts of a race hill.

I used to teach SWAT Team members how to prevail in a gun fight. Of course, the first step to being successful in such endeavors, is simply getting the handgun from the holster, and pointed on target. We broke that procedure down to a 5 step process, and worked very slowly on each individual step. Working slowly, and getting the process right, is what leads to speed. That was, and still is the route to success when instructing folks on physical skills.

To put it simply, the time spent without the pressure of competition allowed all of the programs collectively to focus on and provide the opportunity for each individual become fundamentally better skiers, racers, and maximize their potential. And hopefully, some of this success will be masked because EVERYONE is skiing better! Remember, as much as you are competing against others, you are really only competing against yourself. Why? You can not control how well your competitor skis, but you certainly can control how much you improve!

Next season, hopefully a season without Covid, I would like to see our races start AFTER the Christmas and New Year's holidays. I know some, including myself, have for decades now, stated we are in the business of putting on ski races. And in fact we are. But, I think it would be worth examining our scheduling with an eye on putting on races later in the season, and leave December as a training month.

Mark Mirviss

Squaw Valley Masters

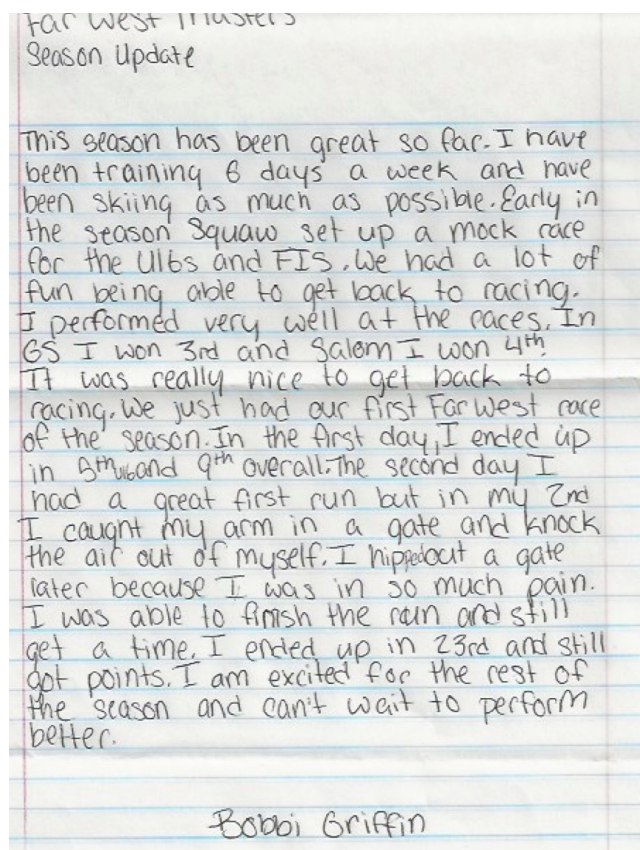
FAR WEST MASTERS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Bobbi Jo Griffin

Dear Far West Masters,

I am very thankful for getting the Far West Masters Scholarship. This is my second year receiving the scholarship and I plan on applying in the years ahead. Eddie Mozen was very nice and gave me an amazing U.S. ski team downhill suit to train and race in. I am very thankful for receiving this scholarship and suit. Being in the Masters scholarship program helps you get to your goals and helps push you to become a better skier. One of my favorite things about being in the program is being able to go to the camp in Colorado, where I learned many new things on how to help my skiing and the coaches were very helpful. Now that I am back home, I train 6 days a week in my suit from Eddie and I am becoming a better skier every day. Thank you once more!

- Bobbi Griffin



| | |
|--|---|
| President | Ray Tulloch Incline Village, NV 89451 president@farwestmasters.org |
| Past President | Dan Simmons Truckee, CA 96161 dsimmons@farwestmasters.org |
| Vice President, Officials | Mark Mirviss P. O. Box 3293 Olympic Valley, CA 96146 mmirviss@farwestmasters.org |
| Vice President, Race Scheduling | Mike Braun Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546 mbraun@farwestmasters.org |
| Vice President, Membership | Mary Feddis P.O. Box 7691 Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546 membership@farwestmasters.org |
| Vice President, Communications | Hamish Butler Sacramento, CA 95825 forerunner@farwestmasters.org |
| Secretary | Tricia Wall Costa Mesa, CA 92627 twall@farwestmasters.org |
| Treasurer | Tom Bullard Reno, Nevada, 89521 treasurer@farwestmasters.org |
| Chief Technical Officer | Deb Lewis San Clemente, CA 92672 dlewis@farwestmasters.org |

The Forerunner

Have you moved? Please let us know. Send your new address, phone number and email information to:

Mary Feddis
P.O. Box 7691
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546
Or email membership@farwestmasters.org

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

Copyright © 2021 Far West Masters Ski Racing Inc, All rights reserved.
You are receiving this email because of your Far West Masters membership.
If you don't want to receive any more newsletters from us, click [here](#) to unsubscribe.
or contact the farwestmasters.org **webmaster** for assistance.