



June 2021 Updates

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President's Update

So..... 2020/21 turned out to be the race season that was almost a bust but was saved just before the bell with our end (and start!) of season race series at Mammoth. All joking aside, I would like to express my sincere thanks on your behalf to Mammoth Mountain race crew for all the effort they put in to put on an excellent race series for us – 4SGs, 1 GS and 1 SL - at the start of April. It is equally important to thank all the FWM Board for their continued efforts through the season to pull off at least one race series despite all the roadblocks and restrictions on our sport. While as always this was a team effort, I must in particular highlight the efforts of Mary Feddis, our Membership Secretary who not only put in an enormous amount of work prior to the series to ensure we had compliant on-line registration and testing confirmation processes in place but went above and beyond on race days to ensure no-one was prevented from participating because they had failed to complete the daily testing uploads. Without these efforts we quite simply would not have been able to run the races. On behalf of all us thank you Mary!.

Of course, while I have highlighted the role of the organizers, I also want to thank all of our racers who turned up and participated at Mammoth. I fully realize how frustrating a season it has been for everyone when it seemed that we were cancelling race dates or pushing them further and further out on the calendar, plus the increasing possibility that we would not be able to host any races in 20/21. So it was very gratifying to see racers turning out in large numbers to get their race fix, ensuring the success of the event. Yes, it was different from the norm, and especially so in that we were unable to have our after race social events or to trade excuses at the results board but that did not dampen the enthusiasm and adrenalin highs (or lows!) displayed by all of you. Thank you for persevering through a tough season for Masters ski racing.

However, while there were a huge number of hurdles to overcome during the season there were also a number of positive learnings that will influence us in providing an even better experience for our members going forward including (in no particular order):

- On-line check in on race days received almost universal support from our racers
- The social aspect of Masters racing and after race parties are a hugely important element of our sport and the curtailment of these was a huge downside
- The foresight of previous Boards and Treasurers in ensuring we had built up adequate financial reserves enabled us to get through a difficult season and provide support - including free membership to Far West Masters for the year – without putting the organization in a difficult financial position
- Despite having on-line results from Live-timing.com, having a physical results board or screen is still an important element of our races
- More frequent communication from the Board, whether as group emails or additional editions of Forerunner, has been positive in keeping membership engaged and informed
- All of our Masters Coaches have been able to focus on blocks of training and improve athlete performance more effectively with a later start to our race program
- The increased frequency of Board meetings via Zoom has enabled us to be better coordinated and responsive in scheduling/postponing/cancelling races with better notice and information to our members.
- More of our members have taken advantage of the opportunity to go out of Division to race, not only for Regional/National events but also for other Division events such as the Pacific North West season finale at Bend in April.

As a Board we are currently working on ways to incorporate these learnings into our plans for 21/22 season.

With regard to the Board, some of you have probably noticed that because of the Covid restrictions on gatherings we were unable to hold our general meeting and election of Office bearers in 2020. So the Board adopted an emergency resolution to extend the term of expiring office holders by one year in the expectation that we could then have a general meeting in 2021. Of course, as it turned out the 2021 general meeting also had to be cancelled. When our bylaws were written, they had not anticipated a situation of this type and did not have a provision to cover it. After much consideration and discussion with all the Board members we proposed and passed an emergency resolution to extend all office-holder terms by another year in order to avoid a situation where we would need to elect all positions at the same time. It is our plan to have a special General Meeting at the first race of next season to ratify this. I hope all our members will appreciate the need for this approach to ensure continuity and also to ensure we actually have a Board in place. I also want to express my sincere thanks to all the Board members for agreeing to continue as, without them and all the voluntary effort they put in, we would not be able to run races. By 2022 we should be able to get back to normal order.

To close, I am both relieved and grateful that we have been able to get through a very difficult period of time, safe-guarding the health of our members as much as possible and still running some races. I know, like me, you are all looking forward to a more normal season in 21/22. Have a great summer, stay healthy and I look forward to seeing you all at the opening race next season.

Best regards

Ray Tulloch

FAR WEST MASTERS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

By Sandy Hogan

The following is a typed version of David Morken's hand-written season update and thank you letter for the Far West Masters Scholarship Program, dated 3/15/21. David is a U-16, skiing out of Squaw Valley.



Dear Far West Masters,

I have been having one of the best racing seasons of my life. Coming out and skiing in Copper Mountain was a very beneficial camp, one of the best I've been to in a while, the coaching and intensity was very helpful towards my skiing, and it's been reflecting in my performance.

I have been skiing with the Masters for 3 years now and I want to thank you guys for supporting me from the start. You guys have helped me become the person I am and I can't thank you enough for it!

Best, David Morken

Mammoth Season Finals

After a long season with no Far West races as a result of COVID we were finally able to put on the first, and last, race weekend of the Far West Masters season, the Season Finals at Mammoth from March 31st to April 3rd. Many thanks to the Mammoth race department for putting on a good race as always, and to Deb Lewis and Mary Feddis for all of the hard work they did in advance of the race ensuring that the weekend would fully comply with US Ski & Snowboard, and State of California requirements with regard to COVID, including pre-race questionnaires, daily emails and contactless check-in.

The good spring weather and many second vaccinations brought out a good crowd of over 60 athletes for the races. Two SG races were held on each of the first two days, with one race each day qualifying as part of the National Speed Series. After the speed events we transitioned to technical with a GS on Friday and SL on Saturday.

Congratulations to Leisl Panke who dominated the ladies SG, taking first place in all 4 races and winning the 2021 National Speed Series women's overall championship.

Julie Loisel, Vera Savage and Deb Lewis shared the podium spots after Leisl, with Linda Crowell, Ingrid Braun and Nancy Gieske following close behind.

In the men's speed events Mike Shklovski won two races and Ara Papazian and Ryan Ritchie each won one race. Mike, Ara and Ryan shared the other podium spots along with Scott Sady. Mike Braun, Erik Nelson and Wenceslao Lada Munoz consistently challenged for the top 3.

After the speed events we switched to GS where Leisl took first place again with Julie Loisel and Vera Savage in second and third. In the men's GS Mike Shklovski took first place with Ara and Ryan in second and third respectively and Mike Braun and Wenceslao hot on their heels

The last day of racing was SL and in the ladies race things changed up a little with Vera Savage taking first place, Deb Lewis in second and Megan Arabian taking her first podium finish of the weekend. In the men's SL Ryan took his second first place of the weekend with Wenceslao in second and Erik Nelson in third.

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

The Mammoth race results are posted on the usual farwestmasters.org Race Results page: <https://farwestmasters.org/raceinfo/2021/results>

The SG's are also posted on the NSS results page along with the complete series results and final standings: <https://usalpinemasters.org/2021/nss>

Masters Regional Champions



Congratulations to these Far West Athletes for being the Western Regional Champion for their age class:

- Leisl Panle
- Gaetano Demattei
- Don Smith
- Wolfgang Virostek

FAR WEST MASTERS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Gregory Shklovski



In November, 2020, 38 young athletes were awarded scholarships by the Far West Masters Scholarship Program. One of those racers, Squaw Valley second-year FIS Gregory Shklovski, recently updated us in a very nice thank you letter to Far West Masters. Greg is the son of one of our very fastest Masters racers, Mike Shklovski, and graduated in mid-April with a GPA of 4.48. This is an amazing feat, considering that Greg raced all over the west, including

Snow King, Wyoming, and even as far east as Lutsen, Minnesota, missing almost half a year of his senior year. A tech specialist, he trained early in November at Copper Mountain; two weeks with the Squaw race team and then another two weeks with the Masters. His upcoming plans include New York University (NYU), with a major in mechanical engineering. We know he will have a successful future, with his many fine past accomplishments.

The FWM Scholarship Program has been led by Eddie Mozen for more than 28 years. All money raised comes from Far West Masters racers, supporting sponsors and donors. Our young racers earn their scholarships based on a combination of financial need, ski racing potential and exemplary work ethic. 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.

Thanks to all of you for your support of this outstanding program. We are proud to say that it is without equal 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.

Pacific North West season finale at Mt Bachelor

Following the success of the Far West season finals at mammoth quite a few of our athletes made the journey to Mt Bachelor to participate in the PNW season finale.

Racers enjoyed 2 SG, a GS and an SL in perfect mid-April skiing conditions. Far West athletes who made the journey to Bend were:

- Malissa Austin
- Tom Bullard
- Linda Crowell
- Sam Crowell
- Nancy Gieske
- Robert-PhilippeHeller
- Liesl Panke
- Scott Sady
- Mike Shklovski
- Jeff Skeen
- Allan Slocum
- Kathy Slocum
- Kirk Swanson

Everyone had a great weekend in beautiful spring weather competing with fellow Masters skiers from the Pacific North West, Austria, San Diego and Montana.

The SG results from Bachelor counted towards the National Speed Series and are on the Speed Series results page here: <https://usalpinemasters.org/2021/nss#results>

Congratulations to Leisl Panke with two Mt Bachelor SG overall wins and to Mike Shklovski with a first and second overall. Congratulations also to the many FWM athletes who placed high in their age group classes.

FAR WEST MASTERS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Brenna Ritchie

Here's a typed version of Brenna Ritchie's two-page hand-written thank you letter, and an action photo of Brenna, a young U-16 who seems to have inherited the racing skills of her very fast Masters parents, Corey and Ryan Ritchie. The letter is dated 03/31,2021.



Dear Far West Masters -

This season has been the most off beat season ever imagined, but I am so grateful for it happening and bringing about so many opportunities for me. From winning the first race of the year to forerunning FIS races and training with Sierra Nevada University, I have learned a plethora of things in both my physical skiing and about myself.

My 16th birthday was in January of this year, and the privilege of driving has catapulted my independence capacity. I get

to be in charge of when and where I go to training, which has made me more comfortable advocating for myself and my desires. I have also started doing some of my own paperwork and registration recently and haven't even signed in the wrong spot yet ☹

As far as results this season, I am very proud to have gotten a 1st and 2nd at the Squaw GS races and 2nd and 1st at the Sugar Bowl Slaloms. Sadly, these were not qualifier races. At U16 qualifiers in Mammoth, I had the lamest DNF ever of simply leaning in at the third gate in the GS, and then winning the second run from dead last. In the SL, I played it safe to finish and got 7th. The following week, I won the second GS qualifier and got 3rd in the SL. Although I am happy with my results so far this year, I also know that they are not the end-all, be-all. With that, I am sitting in 4th for far west as we head into Regionals at Mammoth next week...and then a spring of speed races in Mammoth as well!

Additionally, I have become much more confident this year; I thought that I would be terrified in the start of the Boys FIS race I foreran, but I found myself knowing a surprising amount of people and not intimidated by the spread of 50-point skiers. In the end, I had a lot of fun forerunning at such a raised level.

None of this awesome season would be possible for me without your support, and especially the pre-season Copper camp that I love and always sets me up for a year of success.

Thank you so much, Brenna Ritchie

The Language of Ski Racing

Brenna's sister Fiona has been involved with the Far West Masters since she was a baby, Ryan and Cory used to bring Fiona to races and take turns watching her between their races. Fiona now sometimes helps Ryan coach the Diamond Peak Masters. Fiona recently wrote a short essay on the linguistics of ski racing for one of her college classes, and kindly offered to share with the Masters community! It talks about how recklessness is inherent in the language we use, how we use creative language to coach young athletes, and how race day language is universally similar.

This is a really interesting read and we would recommend everyone to take 5 to 10 minutes to take a look. Fiona's essay can be found here: [The Language of Ski Racing](#).

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The Forerunner

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

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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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