



March 2023 Updates

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President's Update

To all our Far West Masters members and Racers

Well, this has been an “interesting” season in Far West! Great for powder skiing but unfortunately not so good for training, race organizers or racers! The weather patterns seem to keep bringing snowstorms in sync with our race calendar. I do not recall a season when FWM has had to cancel so many races. And as the coaches and athletes in our training programs know, we have spent a lot more days skiing powder than running gates.

This brings me to a question so many of you have brought up “Why can’t we just reschedule for a different date?” I wish that it were that simple! Our host mountains have only so many dates available in the season to run races. These dates are typically filled prior to the start of the season and Masters are competing with the Junior series races for dates. It is becoming more difficult to get available dates for Masters (as our scheduling director Mike Braun can confirm!). Especially when Masters races are normally 50-70 competitors and a U12, U14 or U16 race typically has 150-200 entries, and the costs to the mountain to run these races are similar.

So, when we get a season with weather disruption like this year, race cancellations/postponements unfortunately are not limited to Masters races. The U12/14/16/18 series races have also been subject to similar weather disruptions and cancellations/postponements. Thus, everyone is looking for possible alternative dates in an already crowded events calendar and there is simply not enough availability to just reschedule.

This issue is not just limited to Far West Masters or to weather. Other Masters Divisions have also been finding it increasingly difficult to schedule races in crowded calendars and have been trying several different approaches to address this. This includes holding races mid-week, going to smaller venues where the Division is responsible for providing all the race crew, infrastructure (timing, gates etc.) and running multiple races in a day. We have tried some of these approaches in the past and may need to do more in the future if schedule availability continues to be an issue.

However, as competitors there are some things that we all can do to help the situation. Most importantly, get your entries in early and ensure we have strong numbers of athletes. It is difficult for a mountain to cover costs if we only have 40-50 competitors and that makes it difficult to return in future seasons.

So, fingers (and toes!) crossed that the weather starts to cooperate, and we are able to run the remaining races on our schedule, culminating in hosting the United States Ski and Snowboard Masters Nationals at Mammoth at the end of this month. This is a great opportunity to meet with Masters from other Divisions and to participate in the full range of disciplines including DH. Also please do not think that you have to be a top-class competitor to compete. Masters Nationals is open to athletes of all levels and is a great experience.

On a different topic, I plan to step down as President at the end of this season to allow some fresh faces on the Board and to let me focus on my new role as Ski Team Head Coach at Mount Rose. Having been through Covid shut-downs and restrictions on race and multiple weather cancellations like this season, it seems the only thing I haven’t encountered during my tenure is a plague of locusts! I want to thank the Board for the great work they have done through all these issues to keep Far West Masters financially healthy and membership strong.

But, to end on a positive note, it does look like we will have lift served skiing through July 4 this year!

I look forward to seeing you all at Northstar and at Mammoth!

Best to All!
Ray Tulloch

Season Update

Unfortunately, this year due to the exceptional amount of snow that has fallen more races have been cancelled than held. The season opener at Mammoth in December, the Mammoth SG/DH, Mt Rose GS and Diamon Peak SL races were all cancelled due to very heavy snow or bad weather conditions.

We have however been able to put on two races so far this season:

Palisades Tahoe (Alpine Meadows)

The season kicked off on Saturday January 28th with a SL double header at Alpine Meadows on the Kangaroo race hill for the Viva Italia. After weeks of storms in December and early January the sun came out, and we had beautiful conditions for two SL races on.

In addition to being our season kickoff, these races were scored for the Viva Italia cup, a combined award based on age handicapped total times. John Gianotti would have been proud of the spirit of our racers carrying on his tradition. The 2023 Viva Italia winners were Nancy Gieske (W08) and Tim Stewart (M10).

Due to a number of delays during the day the second race finished later than hoped impacting the planned awards party and we were unfortunately unable to announce the Viva Italia results for the trophy presentation on Saturday, so congratulations to Nancy and Tim and all of the top 5 women and men.

Women	Competitor	Time (hdcp)	Actual time
1	Nancy Gieske (W08)	2:58.73	3:46.25
2	Andrea Levy (W02)	3:01.30	3:06.91
3	Danielle Palermo (W07)	3:04.31	3:44.77
4	Judy Colton (W10)	3:32.38	4:50.94
5	Melissa House (W06)	3:37.08	4:15.40

Men	Competitor	Time (hdcp)	Actual time
1	Tim Stewart (M10)	2:21.97	3:14.49
2	Kurt Belden (M09)	2:23.02	3:08.19
3	Doug Fulton (M09)	2:27.07	3:13.52
4	James Giacobazzi (M08)	2:28.10	3:07.47
5	Jonathan Garey-Sage (M09)	2:30.54	3:18.09

Palisades Tahoe (Olympic Valley)

Two weeks after the Viva Italia we were back in Tahoe at Mt Rose for the McKinney Cup. Unfortunately, persistent poor visibility made conditions too dangerous to race and the race was cancelled. The next day, on Sunday 12th February the athletes reconvened at Palisades Tahoe for the Bernard Cup GS race on Racers, under the Siberia Chair. The Bernard Cup, held in honor of masters founder Bob Bernard, uses age-handicapped scoring to determine the winners of the Bernard Cup trophy. This year after considering feedback from racers and discussions among the organizers, the schedule was changed from 2 GS races to 1 GS, allowing a more reasonable departure time for competitors.

The weather cooperated on Sunday and the Palisades race department put on a great race on Racers run starting under the Siberia chairlift. While shorter than some GS races on the calendar a course we set with the highest possible start and a slightly extended finish resulting in an enjoyable day of racing.

Regrettably it was not possible to announce the Bernard Cup trophy winners immediately following the race, as is normally done. Congratulations to the 2023 Bernard Cup winners - Carol Levine (W10) and Scott Malmsten (M09). We are working on plans for a trophy presentation at a future event for both the Viva Italia Cup trophies from the January Alpine SL races and the Bernard Cup, so that we can congratulate the winners and celebrate with our racing peers.

Photographer Peter Day has posted some great race photos on his site (link below) and has very reasonable pricing to purchase images.

Photos are organized by run in chronological order. If you have questions, contact Peter Day at peterdayphoto@gmail.com or by text at 864-551-5692.

-  https://peterdayphoto.pixieset.com/mastersbernardcup_palisadestahoe_2-12-2023

Northstar GS

Next up is our final scheduled FW race of the season, a SG doubleheader day at Northstar on Fri. Mar. 17. These races are also our Far West stop on the 2023 masters National Speed Series.

National Championships

The US masters national championships are planned for Mammoth Mountain CA from March 28-Apr 2. Mammoth will host a 4-event national championship event with DH, SG, GS, and SL.

If you're new to masters, don't be intimidated - nationals features top-notch racing, but is also an opportunity to meet masters from around the country. It's about challenging racing, creating and renewing friendships, and parties every day.



Diamond Peak

Regrettably the Diamond Peak SL races were also cancelled due to another monster storm, however, Far West Masters and Diamond Peak are actively exploring rescheduling options. If Diamond Peak remains open in April, as may be possible given all the snow this season, one option we are investigating is a possible reschedule in April as our season finals.

Scholarship Program

The Far West Master's Scholarship program is now in its 32nd year of raising funds to benefit Far West Junior ski racers. This has been a very successful program - our Far West athletes are tremendously appreciative; we hear back from many of them how helpful the extra support is to them. Current Far West athlete, and one of our forerunners at the recent Palisades Bernard Cup, Julie Cunningham recently sent this letter thanking you for your support:

16th January 2023

Dear Far West Masters,

Thank you so much for all of the support the master's program has given me. Through this help, I was able to qualify for the U16 NPS project at Burke Mountain. In this event, 30 girls and 30 boys were selected from all over the country to compete for 6 total spots (3 of each gender) to represent the USA at the Opa Cup in Europe.

After this event, I knew that I needed to send the master's program a thank you letter. Through the financial help, several camps, and an amazing community to lean on, it has truly helped me become better.



It was a true honor to be there, but I know that I left a lot on the table. I feel as though I had a mental block holding me back. It was frustrating, because I didn't feel scared, but I felt like I skied scared. I can tell you with certainty that at all times I was trying my best.

Although I am not thrilled with my results, I did learn a lot and was able to experience a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I can't wait to get to know the master's better and let the spectacular community lift me up. I would like to end with one of my favorite quotes, "Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, but today is a gift. That is why it is called the present."

Special thanks to Eddie Mozen, Ryan Ritchie, and Pierre Jeangirard.

Sincerely,

Julia Cunningham

We are grateful for everyone who has donated and supported the program. To learn more visit the [Scholarship Program](#) page.

To donate 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

We also accept donations online by credit card or through a [Paypal](#) account.

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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.
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