

# FAR WEST MASTERS

## SKI RACING



## THE FORERUNNER

OCTOBER 14, 2024

### Mission Statement

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We, the Far West Masters, embrace ski racing as a lifelong sport. Our mission is to provide skiers of all levels with an opportunity to compete in quality, challenging, and fun alpine ski racing events.

### Membership Info

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- Both a Far West Masters and a USSA membership are required to race with us.
- Far West Masters membership for 2024-2025 for new and renewing members:  
[masters.AdminSkiRacing.com/farwest](https://masters.AdminSkiRacing.com/farwest)
- USSA Alpine Masters membership: [Masters Getting Started: usskiandsnowboard.org](https://MastersGettingStarted.us Ski and Snowboard.org)
- If you're a first time racer with Far West Masters, or if you have other questions, contact:  
[membership@farwestmasters.org](mailto:membership@farwestmasters.org)

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### President's Message: Are you ready?

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Hi everyone, and welcome to a new season! Only one month away! Hope your fitness is coming along.

Our thanks to Mike Braun for putting together what should be a fun-filled and exciting local Far West schedule. Also, there are several out-of-division races you might want to consider!

The Masters National Championships will be at Gore Mt., in the Adirondack Mountains of NY, March 18-22. Closest airport is in Albany. Places to stay will be in Lake George Village. More info will be published soon regarding details.

Another big event will be the FIS Masters Cup/ Western Regional Championships, Feb 7-9, in Big Sky, Montana! Immediately following that will be the National Championship DH at Soldier Mt., Feb. 10-12. This venue, between Boise and Sun Valley, has hosted Masters friendly DH races many times over the years, and we are so glad that they are being revived!

If air travel with ski equipment is holding you back, consider using a shipping company like "Ship Skis". Check out their website! I hear its a great alternative to lugging all your equipment around through the airlines. "The best way to ship your skis, snowboards, and equipment."

And, please notice on the schedule there are some race camps prior to local and out-of-division races. Consider these for getting to know the hill, and a little extra training.

Over the summer, your Far West Masters board of directors, all volunteers, has had several meetings, and our biggest concern is participation. We are doing what we can to encourage more participation by holding good, challenging events, and streamlining entry to these races. We also created another Board position who's focus is on recruitment, and Damian Palfini is heading that. Please contact him with any ideas that can help. Our race venues are looking at cost, and having enough participants at our races is the bottom line. Please commit to entering as many races as possible to keep this series alive!

And, we have all new, beautiful race bibs for everyone this season! Thank you to our new sponsor, Fat Family Restaurants, in the Sacramento area. We plan to distribute the new bibs at the registration desk at all the races this year.

Alright, see all you aging athletes soon! Let's have a great season!

- Rees

## 2024-2025 Membership News

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### What do I need to do?

**Renew now!** There are two steps to signing up to race with Far West Masters each season. Please review these instructions and make sure you complete both steps.

- Racing with Far West Masters requires **BOTH** a Far West Masters Membership and a US Ski & Snowboard Alpine Master membership
- **Both memberships should be renewed now** if you plan to race with us in the 2024-2025 season
- Your FWM membership dues supports organizing our division race calendar and provides you with a permanent race bib for all our Far West masters races
- Race registration will open in November
- **Are you a new racer with Far West Masters?**  
Follow step one and step two, and Mary Feddis, our Membership Director, will contact you after you've signed up

### Step One: Far West Masters Race Sign-up

We are once again using Admin Ski Racing (ASR) for membership and race fees. Far West Masters membership for 2024-2025 is now open at at [masters.AdminSkiRacing.com/farwest](https://masters.AdminSkiRacing.com/farwest).

Once you log in to [masters.AdminSkiRacing.com/farwest](https://masters.AdminSkiRacing.com/farwest):

- You will be asked to review (or create) your account for the season.
  - You may need to update your contact and credit card information
  - You will be able to proceed after you have completed this step
- Click on Event Signup in the left sidebar (remember, races aren't listed yet - registration will open in November)
- Select the 2024-2025 Far West Masters membership purchase
- Check out and submit payment

**The renewal deadline for Far West Masters is November 20th, after that date renewal is \$25.**

Deb Lewis has been working closely with the ASR team and there have been improvements to last year's process. The Far West page at ASR has detailed instructions to help you with the system. If you need additional assistance, you can contact Mary Feddis at [membership@farwestmasters.org](mailto:membership@farwestmasters.org).

### Step Two: US Ski & Snowboard Sign-Up

Renew your US Ski & Snowboard membership

- Registration instructions are on the US Ski & Snowboard website:  
<https://usskiandsnowboard.org/membership/registration-instructions>
- Renew by October 15th to get the best price!

Reminders for US Ski & Snowboard Sign-Up

- Most masters should select the "Alpine Master" membership type. Only select the "Alpine Master w/ requirements" membership type if you are required to have SafeSport training and background checks due to your engagement with junior athletes through a US Ski & Snowboard club role.
- Most masters should select "No Club Affiliation" for the US Ski & Snowboard club affiliation. Do NOT select the club at the area where you ski and train unless you are actually a member - the clubs are generally associated only with junior alpine competitor programs.
- At the end of the renewal or new member process, you will be asked to e-sign a release of liability.
- Your Far West Masters membership is **in addition** to your US Ski & Snowboard Alpine Master membership. Your FWM membership dues supports organizing our division race calendar and provides you with a permanent race bib for all our Far West masters races.



Far West Masters 2023-24 Open Class Winners  
Linda Crowell and Ryan Ritchie

## 2024-2025 Season Schedule

Below is the current schedule for the 2024-2025 season.

Date	Location	Event Name	Discipline(s)
Dec. 3-6 [Tue-Fri]	Mammoth Mountain, CA	Masters race camp	GS and SL
December 7-8 [Sat-Sun]	Mammoth Mountain, CA		GS / GS
Jan. 11-12 [Sat-Sun]	Sugar Bowl, CA	Viva Italia Cup	SL / SL
January 24-25 [Fri-Sat]	Mammoth Mountain, CA	Mammoth Speed Series (1st SG race each day scored for 2025 NSS)	Fri: SGx2 (SG1 NSS) Sat: SGx2 (SG1 NSS)
Jan. 31 [Fri]	Alpine Meadows		SL x 2
Feb. 1-2 [Sat-Sun]	Palisades Tahoe, CA (Olympic Valley)	Bernard Cup	GS / GS
Feb. 4-6 [Tue-Thu]	Big Sky, MT	Masters race camp	
Feb. 7-9 [Fri-Sat-Sun]	Big Sky, MT	FIS Masters Cup / WesternRegion Championships (both SG races scored for NSS)	Fri: SGx2 Sat: 1-run GS x2 Sun: SL
Feb. 10-12 [Mon - Wed]	Soldier Mountain, ID	National DH Championship	DH(t) / DH(t) / DHx2
Mar. 1-2 [Sat-Sun]	Diamond Peak, NV		SLx2 / SL
Mar. 14-15 [Fri-Sat]	Northstar, CA	Northstar Speed Series (both SG races scored for NSS)	Fri: NSS SGx2 Sat: GS
Mar. 18-22 [Tue-Sat]	Gore Mountain, NY	Masters National Championships	SG / GS / SL + AC
April 4-5 [Fri-Sat]	Palisades Tahoe, CA	Season Finals & Banquet	SL / GS

This schedule is subject to change. For the latest schedule and any additional info on upcoming races, go to [farwestmasters.org/schedule](https://farwestmasters.org/schedule).

Link to the printable schedule: [https://farwestmasters.org/announcements/2025/FWM\\_Schedule\\_2025.pdf](https://farwestmasters.org/announcements/2025/FWM_Schedule_2025.pdf)

## Recruiting Updates

*Damian Palfini is the new Recruiting Director for FWM. He currently lives in Tahoe and trains with the Diamond Peak Masters Team.*

Mike Braun put together an amazing schedule for us this year and the best way to support his efforts and ensure it continues is to increase turnout for races. With that in mind, our goal for 2024/2025 is to grow our race registration numbers by focusing on new members with racing experience (in addition to new members from all experience levels and backgrounds).

### Former Racers

Many former racers may have burned out on the sport when they were younger, but Masters is a great outlet to continue that sense of camaraderie and competition without the pressures that may have pushed them away. Whether they want to beat old college teammates, fight for #1 in the Open Class this year, compete against a neighbor or family member, show off that mom/dad bod in spandex or just have fun - they can. Far West Masters offers all of the above plus an opportunity to reconnect with the sport they love in a way that fits their current lifestyle and stay active.

### Parents of Junior Ski Racers

Parents of racers are typically already aware of the realities of racing - from the improvements they see in their athlete's skiing and the excitement of competition to the time commitment and expenses involved. Masters is a great way to find a community of like-minded skiers, improve their skills, experience new parts of the mountain and connect with their kids more by experiencing racing for themselves (and arguing in the car over who is faster). Whether they join a Masters program or just jump into races when they can, it is a great way to get involved and gain new experiences.

### How Can You Help?

**Spread the Word:** If you know parents of junior racers or have former racers in your network, reach out and tell them about the Masters program. Share your experiences, and let them know how Masters Racing can enrich their time on the mountain using some of the points above.

**Local Events & Ski Shops:** We are hoping to have booths at ski swaps and events in and around Tahoe and Mammoth but also in greater population areas like the Bay Area, Reno, and greater Los Angeles. Know of local events? Let us know. Willing to volunteer for a few

hours? Even better. If you have a local ski shop that you know caters to local racers and their parents, inquire about letting us put a flyer up in the shop or link to us on their website.

**Invite Them to Join for a Race Weekend or Camp:** We have found that once we get someone up on the hill to experience Masters racing, they are hooked. Encourage your friends to come out and see if they can beat you at the next race, jump into one of the camps on this year's schedule or drop-in with a Masters team for training (if available - reach out to the respective program for options). It's a great way to experience the community without a long-term commitment.

**Join (or Start) Masters Programs:** It is no secret that a large number of our racers train regularly with one of our amazing training programs at Mammoth, Palisades Tahoe, Diamond Peak or Mt. Rose. Unfortunately, we have lost a few programs in the last several years as well. If you ski somewhere that previously had a program or has a junior program, reach out and see if there is a possibility of starting a Masters program. Encourage others to do the same, if a mountain knows there is demand for a program they might just be open to bringing it back.

**Use Our Resources:** We have put together email templates, talking points, flyers and visuals that you can easily share with anyone who might be interested. Have an idea for something that would be helpful? Let us know and we can work on building it out.

If you have friends or know of someone who may be interested in learning more, send their contact information to Damian at [dpalfini@farwestmasters.org](mailto:dpalfini@farwestmasters.org)

## You can submit articles and photos to The Forerunner!

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If you have an idea for a forerunner column, whether it's something you'd like to read or something you can write, contact Melissa: [forerunner@farwestmasters.org](mailto:forerunner@farwestmasters.org).

We love to hear stories about our racers, whether it's a race report, something you learned in training, an interview with another inspiring member, or anything else. For reference, a single column without photos is about 400 words. With photos, it's fewer words!

Have photos? We love those too! Photos, with or without an article, are appreciated. They can be emailed, or uploaded to a location of your choice.

## The Role of Officials in Our Races

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*Mark Mirviss, Palisades Tahoe Masters Head Coach and VP of Officials for Far West Masters.*

Hopefully, most of our racers have never had to spend much time or effort, figuring out the role Officials play in our races. Most race days, the role of the official is, and should be hard to discern, and in the background.

Officials in Masters Ski Racing are almost always entirely composed of our members and racers. And while their role stays pretty much in the background, it is vital.

Our races are sanctioned by United States Skiing and Snowboarding (USSS), formerly known as USSA. This means our races meet the standards for course setting and event organization set by USSS. The largest benefit we gain from from USSS sanctioning is USSS insurance coverage for our races, to the extent that Ski Areas are willing to host them. Without the insurance provided by USSS, we would, simply put, not have the money to hold a ski race, or would have to charge more to do so.

Of course, USSS and their insurers, do not wish to be sued, or pay out large sums in claims. So to that end, USSS does their best to sanction races that are relatively safe. Officials are the folks who help make that happen!

As you may have guessed after reading the above, the PRIMARY and overarching responsibility of the Officials is athlete safety. No race is even held, and no race course is even run without approval by a race jury. That Jury is composed of (in the case of technical events) three officials. A Technical Delegate (TD), a Referee (RF), and a Chief of Race (CR). Usually, the TD and RF are our members and racers. The CR is from the Race Department that is hosting us.

Of course, the secondary role of our officials is that the competition be fair, and while not often mentioned, FUN! At times, when the racers do interact with the officials, it is in regards to disqualification, (DQ's) missing a gate, stopping etc. So, hopefully, we don't have too much interaction there!

I could go into a deep dive and explain the role of each individual official, but for the purposes of this article, let's just leave with the fact that we need our Officials, and I, as the scheduler of officials, would like more of you to become Officials, selfishly, to make my job easier!

So, bottom line, why should you become an official? To me, the number one reason is to give back to the sport we all love. The number two reason is so you will become quite a bit more knowledgeable regarding the sport we all love. And finally, the third reason...free entry fees (reimbursed by FWM), and free lift tickets provided by the race venues!

Becoming an official is not difficult. It entails a weekend of learning and studying, a test, then "shadowing" (a mentoring program) with an already certified official.

This season, the Far West Officials Clinic will be held at Palisades Tahoe November 2nd and 3rd. Details to follow. So, if you are interested in becoming an Official, please save the date. There has always in the past been a clinic at Mammoth as well, but I do not yet know the dates. If you'd like any more detailed information, please email me at [mmirviss@palisadestahoe.com](mailto:mmirviss@palisadestahoe.com)

**All rules are in the 2024 Alpine Competition Guide:**  
[https://usskiandsnowboard.org/sites/default/files/files-resources/files/2023/2024\\_Alpine\\_Guide.pdf](https://usskiandsnowboard.org/sites/default/files/files-resources/files/2023/2024_Alpine_Guide.pdf)

**Also review the 2024 Masters Competition Guide:**  
[https://usskiandsnowboard.org/sites/default/files/files-resources/files/2023/Masters\\_Book.pdf](https://usskiandsnowboard.org/sites/default/files/files-resources/files/2023/Masters_Book.pdf)

Note: Guides will be updated by USSS for 2025 and posted soon.

## Scholarship Program: An interview with current recipients

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In July, The Forerunner editor Melissa House had the opportunity to talk with Far West Masters scholarship recipients Tatum Akers (18), Maren Paidakovich (15), and Max Cooper (15). This is a transcript of our conversation, edited for brevity.

**Melissa House:** So tell me a little bit about yourselves.

**Tatum Akers:** I ski at Palisades Tahoe and I am going into my third year FIS. I've been with the masters program for the last four or five years, and this year I have received the college scholarship for my Westminster University.

**MH:** And are you skiing there?

**TA:** I'm gonna try. I just blew out my knee, so, I'll be back in February.

**Maren Paidakovich:** This is my first year with the Masters scholarship, and I'm going into second year U 16.

**Max Cooper:** I'm 15 years old moving into my first year of FIS. I skied for Palisades Tahoe, and I just finished my first year with the Masters scholarship.

**MH:** So Tatum, you've been with the program for five years. Why don't you talk to a little bit about your your ski and school experience?

**TA:** It's been awesome. I went to Forest Charter School for the first three years of high school, and then my last year I went to Truckee High. I've been doing ski programs throughout high school and skiing five or six days a week. And then the Masters have helped me with my time management and being responsible for my own actions. In their Copper Mountain November camps, they have always made sure that I'm on top of it with my schoolwork and I'm always keeping the right amount of time between skiing and school so that I know what my priorities are.

**MH:** So, you two, as first years in the program, you're hearing Tatum talk about time management. What's been your experience with school and skiing?

**MP:** There was a point during March and April where I was at school once out of 35 days because of Regionals and some other events and races. So, I really learned how to talk to my teachers and talk to a lot of friends to just get ahead on schoolwork. There are a lot of nights where I'm studying really hard, but it ended up working out. I was able to keep my GPA up, and end Freshman year on a really good note.

**MC:** Yeah, so with my family, grades have always been more important than sports. My mom has always been on me about that, so I moved to online school when I was in seventh grade. Now I'm going into my junior year of high school. Because of online school, I was able to ski five days a week. To maintain on a good GPA and not get to behind in the work, I do school before and after skiing, and I have two days off off from skiing during the week. So, I tended to just bust through a lot of school during those days, to give me ten hours worth of school. Time management has been really important over these past couple years, but online school definitely makes it work.

**MH:** Could each of you tell me about the impact that the scholarship program has had on your skiing and your life?

**TA:** Oh, it's been huge. I've been able to get speed suits and gear [through the program], and go to their

training camp to get some preseason training. And, also they just support me in ski racing overall and come to some ski races up here in Palisades, which is awesome. I love being able to connect and see Masters on the go.

**MP:** This year it's pretty new, but it's really been awesome to forerun for the races. I was able to meet a lot of new people and make some new friends. And then, talking in front of the Masters about my goals for the season, everybody is really encouraging so it's nice to have that community back us up.

**MC:** Coming out of my first year with the Masters scholarship, first off Eddie and the Scholarship Foundation helped send me to events like regionals and nationals. And then I was it able to get some suits. A big thing that helped me this year is I got to work on my public speaking in front of a big group, so that definitely helped with my confidence having such a nice crowd having my back and um knowing all of them support me.

**MH:** Tatum, what is your major in school and, what are your aspirations there?

**TA:** I'm going to do environmental studies, and then I might double major in English, because I love to write. So hopefully I will start writing sustainable papers and get into sustainable marketing for bigger companies.

**Eddie Mozen:** In the scholarship program, typically we give out about the 40 scholarships. And now we have a college scholarship, so if you are in the program for four or five years, like [Tatum] has, then you go to college, you are eligible to apply for that. And the college scholarship very specifically is not for your skiing. It's for how well you did in school, your leadership, and your work in the community. It's also an NCAA rule, we can't pay her to ski, so we have to be very careful of that and whatever we offer. The scholarship is not based on ski racing in school.

Ultimately, the biggest asset the Masters offer is that you get to meet people that love ski racing, and that's that long term bonus to you. And also, you can communicate with them about things you'd like to do, like internships in college. It's a whole community and they get to meet people that can help them with all aspects of life.

To donate to the Far West Masters Scholarship program, go to: [farwestmasters.org/scholarship\\_program](https://farwestmasters.org/scholarship_program)



Maren Paidakovich and Max Cooper  
Melissa House



Tatum Akers  
Melissa House

## Be a race official

Any member can learn to be a race official. Contact Lead Official Mark Mirviss & find info here: [fwskiing.org/content/far-west-officials-page](https://fwskiing.org/content/far-west-officials-page)

## Helmet & wax info

- A FIS-certified race helmet is **required** for all GS / SG / DH events
- A helmet is also required for SL, a face guard is recommended
- Fluoro race waxes are NOT ALLOWED in any events, USSA Masters and FIS Masters (ban instituted in 2021)

## Anyone can write for The Forerunner!

If you have an idea for a forerunner article, whether it's something you'd like to read about or something you're offering to write, let Melissa know!

**The best way to get to know our racers is through race reports.** Thank you to all of our racers who have submit reports.

**We'd love to hear about your experiences at our races!** The best reports talk about the race in general but also include something personal about the race - a goal, or experience, or something funny or unusual that happened. For reference, a single column without photos is about 400 words. If you can submit photos, it's fewer words. One idea is to partner with another racer for photos at the race.

**Have photos? We love those too! Photos, with or without an article, are appreciated.** They can be emailed, or uploaded to a location of your choice.

If you have questions, or to submit an article or race report, email Melissa House, editor of The Forerunner at [forerunner@farwestmasters.org](mailto:forerunner@farwestmasters.org).

## 2024-2025 Far West Masters Board

Here is the list of our board members for this season, effective June 1, 2024. New positions are noted in the list. If you are interested in participating on the board next year, please contact Rees Palermo.

President	Rees Palermo	<a href="mailto:president@farwestmasters.org">president@farwestmasters.org</a>	
Past President	Ray Tulloch		
Officials	Mark Mirviss	<a href="mailto:mmirviss@farwestmasters.org">mmirviss@farwestmasters.org</a>	
Race Scheduling	Mike Braun		
Membership	Mary Feddis	<a href="mailto:membership@farwestmasters.org">membership@farwestmasters.org</a>	
Recruiting	Damian Palfini	<a href="mailto:recruiting@farwestmasters.org">recruiting@farwestmasters.org</a>	new for 2024-25
Communications	Melissa House	<a href="mailto:forerunner@farwestmasters.org">forerunner@farwestmasters.org</a>	
Secretary	Linda Crowell		
Treasurer	Hamish Butler		
Chief Technical Officer	Deb Lewis	<a href="mailto:dlewis@farwestmasters.org">dlewis@farwestmasters.org</a>	



Rees Palermo with Cherie Williams, 2023-24 Spirit of the Masters award recipient