

FAR WEST MASTERS

SKI RACING



THE FORERUNNER

MARCH 31, 2025

Mission Statement

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

- 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
- USSA Alpine Masters membership:
[Masters Getting Started: us skiandsnowboard.org](https://MastersGettingStarted.us skiandsnowboard.org)
- If you're a first time racer with Far West Masters, or if you have other questions, contact:
membership@farwestmasters.org

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President's Message: History repeating itself

I was recently reading a historical article in "Skiing History" magazine entitled, "The Pack is Back" by Edith Thys Morgan. It got me thinking about the notable characters in the Far West Masters in the 1980's when I joined the series. It's almost amazing to see the similarities even though the sport has dramatically evolved. Although the equipment has changed and hill preparation is much better, the challenge remains.

Back then, we had a much greater number of entries especially in the younger age groups. We averaged about 25 competitors in Class I here locally, and had to limit the "Nationals" to 50 in each Class I + II men. Often, we had 150 or more participants in the GS races held on "Red Dog" at Squaw Valley, same trail as the recent World Cup races.

In those years, Bob Bernard was inspirational with his efforts to modernize how things were done in Far West + National Masters. He participated in all events locally and often officiated. He raced Nationally and Internationally as well, He went on to become the us National Committee chairman and FIS liaison. I would say Don Smith and Bob Davis are his modern replacements with all the effort and participation they have put in over the years.

John Gianotti was an insatiable character no one can match, and frequent national champion! I think of Dan Simmons, perhaps, has replaced him these days.

The two fastest older ladies used to be Norma Lausmann and Gorgene Bielman. Obviously, Linda Crowell and Deb Lewis are still keeping that battle alive.

The old European contingent of Jorg Deutsche, Hans Muhlgrabber, Hans Pretcherer, Fritz Sigenthaler, and Martin Sulser, have now been replaced by Pierre Jeangirard, Wences Lada-Muñoz, Alain DeBost, Daniele Farnetti, Radek Vingralek, and others.

Fast Americans and national champions like Stan Beach and Dave Garner, are replaced with Ara Papazian and Ryan Ritchie.

Fast couples like Donna and Gary Collignon, and Dani and Rees Palermo, are now replaced by Julie Loisel and Daniel Minguez. More couples are needed!

I can't think of anyone in the past that can match the speed of fast young racers like David Law and the other great new young competitors skiing with us these days. Maybe Matt Savage could compete not too long ago?

President's message cont'd

And Lastly, Former Nevada skiers John Gianotti (1949) and Lynn Johnson 1956), will soon be replaced by Isaac Mozen and Ryan Herhusky, we can only hope!

A final acknowledgment and thanks to Eddie Mozen who started the Junior Scholarship program a back in 1993, and has kept it going! That s something great, Eddie!

I'm sure this far west Masters 40 year comparison is incomplete, but you get the idea.

RIP, our brave ski racing ancestors. – Rees

Palisades & Northstar parking update

Palisades Tahoe reservations are required on Saturday April 5.

Detailed parking information:

<https://www.parkpalisadestahoe.com/parkingbasics>

Palisades parking reservations:

<https://reservenski.parkpalisadestahoe.com/>

Our races on Thursday, April 3 (Northstar), and Friday, April 4 (Palisades) **do not require reservations at this time.**

Entry deadlines and cancellation info:

- The **entry deadline** for an event is generally set to be 1-2 days prior to the first race of the series.
- Online **registration is closed at 8pm on the entry deadline date** (this is usually on Wednesday or Thursday before the race series).
- The **cancellation deadline is set at the same time as the entry deadline.** You may cancel an entry at anytime until the cancellation deadline and no fees will be charged.
- The **start list for a race is generally closed the day before the race**, at the cutoff time determined by the ski area organizer's procedure.
- You **must be on the start list to compete in the race.** Day-of-race entries generally cannot be accepted.
- Open class participation must be elected before the start list is closed.
- Refunds may be granted at the discretion of the race organizer for injury or illness, but it is the competitor's responsibility to contact the race organizer prior to the race to notify them of your **withdrawal.** You can get the contact info by emailing membership@farwestmasters.org.
- No entry fees are charged if a race must be canceled.

Membership Meeting, BBQ & Banquet

Friday, April 4th: Membership meeting an BBQ on the Membership Locker Room deck following the race.

Saturday, April 5th: Awards banquet & auction to benefit the Scholarship program. Get tickets: <https://masters.adminskiracing.com/node/412276>

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	Fri: SGx2Sat: SGx2
Jan. 31 [Fri]	Alpine Meadows		SL x 2 #2 canceled
Feb. 1-2 [Sat-Sun]	Palisades Tahoe, CA	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	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	Fri: NSS SGx2 Sat: GS
Mar. 18-22 [Tue-Sat]	Gore Mountain, NY	Masters National Championships	SG / GS / SL + AC
Apr. 3 [Thu]	Northstar, CA	Northstar Speed Series	Thu: NSS SGx2
April 4-5 [Fri-Sat]	Palisades Tahoe, CA	Season Finals & Banquet	SL / GS

This schedule is subject to change. For the latest and additional info, go to farwestmasters.org/schedule.

Text messaging opt-in: farwestmasters.org/communication

See [New member info & how to sign up for racing](#) to get more info on registration for our races.

Link to the printable schedule: farwestmasters.org/announcements/2025/FWM_Schedule_2025.pdf

Race Report: Diamond Peak SL x 3 March 1-2, 2025

by Andy Wolf

After positive feedback from last year's Diamond Peak slalom series, Far West, Pacific Northwest, and visiting Alpine Masters athletes returned to Diamond Peak in Incline Village, Nevada, for another slalom racing series on March 1-2. This year, the series included a training session on Friday, then a demanding triple-header of races with three top-to-bottom race runs per day on DP's signature Showoff race hill.

Weather during the week leading up to the races started with a cold winter storm followed by unusually warm, dry, and breezy conditions. This challenged the athletes with an intimidating breakable surface on Saturday which required some supple legs, strong tactics, quick footwork, and sheer guts throughout the first day's races. Many racers, including myself, sought refuge in the shade throughout the day to stay cool as the afternoon temperatures climbed.

The racing seriously tested the athletes' fitness - many racers could be seen huffing and puffing at the bottom. I had the "luxury" of hooking a gate and losing a ski about 15 gates into my first run, which initially spared me from wheezing anaerobic moments at the finish on Run #1. For me, that came later. My inspections even included cues to breathe deeply at a few points on the hill! Some of the course sets were a bit tricky. In one course we saw two "into" hairpins and multiple delays, which made me double-check my eyes and the path during inspection. Thankfully, overnight temps plummeted Saturday night so we had a much-improved surface on Sunday from a solid melt-freeze cycle, and much cooler temps.

At the end of each race run, a large number of racers congregated at the finish area to watch the racers that followed. In addition to our usual stalwart athletes, a newer group of talented younger Bay Area athletes and some visitors from Mount Bachelor participated in the challenge. I enjoyed the camaraderie and excitement in the finish area.

The Diamond Peak Ski Team ran the races without a hitch and worked tirelessly to maintain the courses despite challenging weather and snow conditions. Hats off to DPST coaches Mats, Will, Sixtine, Stazi, Dingo, Mike, DPST athlete Doug Fulton, our Masters athlete/

race officials and course setters, and other volunteers for pulling off an excellent slalom series. Special thanks to Linda Crowell for organizing a fun apres-ski awards party on Saturday at Alibi Ale Works Incline Village Public House, and to Mike Braun for offering a sweet pair of Rossi SL skis in the Masters scholarship fund raffle. Kudos to the Masters scholarship athletes who participated as forerunners and spoke later during awards presentations. Finally, a big thank you to Diamond Peak Ski Resort for providing the competition venue and hospitality. As a DPST Masters athlete, I enjoyed hearing feedback from other resort athletes and coaches praising the technical challenges of DP's Showoff race hill.



Viva Italia Cup winners Wences Lada-Muñoz and Deb Lewis. Deb is holding the 2025 Masters Competition guide, which features a photo of her on the cover.

Melissa House



Racers Jamie Zhang, Cherie Williams, Melissa House, and Laura Greco in the start area at Diamond Peak.

J.C. Fat



Above: Doug Fulton (standing second from right) was presented with the banner renaming the Diamond Peak race shack after him to honor his years of service to the Diamond Peak racing community

Left: Racer on course at the bottom of the run on day one at Diamond Peak

Right: Men's Open Class medalists Ryan Ritchie (Race 2 second, Race 3 first) and Wences Lada-Muñoz (Race 3 third). Not pictured: Race 2 first David Law, third Sebastien Arnold, Race 3 second Sebastien Arnold.

All photos on this page by Melissa House



Left top: Race 1 Men's Open Class: Ryan Ritchie (2), David Law (1), Ara Papazian (3).

Left bottom: Race 2 Women's Open Class: Cherie Williams (2), Melissa House (3). Not pictured: Deb Lewis (1).

Bottom center: Racers in the finish on day 1, including Deb Lewis (center) and Pierre Jeangirard (left).

Right top: Race 1 Women's Open Class: Linda Crowell (3), Nancy Gieske (2). Not pictured: Katie Sears (1).

Right bottom: Race 3 Women's Open Class: Cherie Williams (3), Nancy Gieske (1). Not pictured: Deb Lewis (2).



2024 Lifetime Achievement award recipient: Don Smith

Dan Simmons and Melissa House talked with the 20204 Lifetime Achievement award recipient, Don Smith, after the Sugar Bowl race on January 11, 2025. Don races in Men's Class 12, the 80-84 age group.

Dan Simmons: So, tell us how Pennsylvania farm boy became a ski racer.

Don Smith: That is a good question.

Well, a Pennsylvania farm boy didn't have the time or the money to ski. So, after I finally got through school, when I was in my 20s, I can remember the 1960 Olympics and being very interested in ski racing. When I finally had a little bit of time and money available, and I wanted to learn now to ski. The night before I left to drive to my new job California, I went to this little ski area in Pennsylvania called Tussey Mountain, 17 miles from where I grew up.

It had night skiing, and I rented a pair of skis, and I was able to get down them mountain doing a snowplow which I knew about, but I never tried.

Melissa House: You just figured it out?

Don: Well, I'd seen skiing on television, and read about it. and I figured, well, well how hard can it be?

Dan: Talk a little bit about your career because it's fascinating and I think people would be very interested in what you do.

Don: Yeah, my first and only job was the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, which is one of the two nuclear weapons development labs. I've been there since 1964. 70% of our budget goes to weapons research and development. I worked in the test program doing underground nuclear tests. While we were doing testing - the last nuclear tests were in 1992. For 30 years, I worked in the nuclear test program, doing diagnostic experiments.

Dan: It should be noted he's one of the few people still working in the labs who've had hands on experience with actual testing, because that stopped in 1992.

Don: 1992 was 30 years ago, and there's not many people left who worked in that program. I'm one of the fortune few who are still there, and I enjoy doing it. We still make use of the information from the experiments that we're done back then, to maintain our nuclear stockpiles and so forth.



Top: Men's Class 9 race 1 podium: Michael Williams (3), Mark Mirviss (1), Dan Walker (2).

Left: Rossignol ski raffle prize donated by Mike Braun/Rossignol.

Melissa House

Race 3 men's class 11 podium: Dan Simmons, Brian Smith

Melissa House



A beautiful view of Lake Tahoe from the chairlift.

Jamie Zhang

L to R: Terri Forest, Rees Palermo, Melissa House, Jamie Zhang.

Don Smith interview, cont'd

Dan: When did you get started with Masters ski racing?

Don: Like I said, before I left to come to California is when I started skiing. When I got to California, there was a group of us that became friends and skied together. In 1969, two of us who had been pushing each other free skiing saw a group of adults who were ski racing, and it turned out that they were in the group that was the forerunner to Masters. It was called Veterans back then. And we got involved with it.

My first experience was the Veteran ski racing was at Diamond Peak, where we are still racing. In that race, there was this very friendly couple named Joe and Norma Lausmann. They were the Masters program for many, many, many years and they both went out their way to welcome us new racers to the to the program. When first I first started racing, I wasn't a very accomplished racer, but it was enjoyable. I can remember enjoying it from the very beginning.

Dan: You've known many of the greats of Master ski racing in USA say something about some of the more memorable people that you've been counting?

Don: Bob Bernard has been called the father of master ski racing, for good reason.

He had been a Vice President for Kaiser engineers, and when he was about 52 or 53 years old he took up ski racing. He was a natural athlete, took to it immediately, and he was also very skilled as an organizer, and he became head of the far west program. It was called Veterans when he started, but he reorganized it at the national level and it became Masters under his purview. He expanded the numbers of races probably at least four or fold.

There were years back then when we had a quota at nationals. I was the President of Far West Masters for six years, and I had the responsibility to determine who got to go to nationals at Sun Valley. Nationally, the cutoff was 300 people, and different divisions had quotas depending on how many people were in the division. Far West had more racers that wanted to go to nationals by 50%. My recollection is it was about 60 who wanted to go, and about 40 were allowed.

Dan: How many national championships have you won in your class?

Don: There are different you can win an individual race nationals, and the combined at nationals is based on race points for all of the events in the nationals week.

And then the most valued now is to be a member of the spider national team. Only one person in each age group gets that, and that is based on a slightly different calculation than the combined - it's based on what they call early old style World Cup points.

I got I got on the Spider National team and 2018 and 2022.

Melissa: Can you tell us more about what your conditioning program is?

Don: 30 years ago, I had knee operations as a result of ski racing. And, I had both ACLs replaced at different times, and I had physical therapy after that. And the physical therapist gave me all these great exercises to do, and I also try and do some aerobic exercise. I try to run about three miles if the weather is decent. If the weather isn't decent, I have an exercise bike. That has enabled me to keep going.



Don Smith in the start at the Sugar Bowl SL on January 11, 2025.

Melissa House

In addition to racing with Far West Masters this season, Don also competed in the national Masters races at Soldier Mountain, ID and Gore Mountain, NY. He was 2nd in his class in DH, SG, and GS.

Scholarship Program updates

The Far West Masters Scholarship Program is now entering our 35th year. In return for funding, recipients forerun one of our Masters races and speak at the following awards ceremony. The experience has proven to be quite fun as it allows a junior athlete to show off their stuff and to thank the Masters in person for their support.

To donate to the Far West Masters Scholarship program, go to: farwestmasters.org/scholarship_program

Scholarship recipient: Lila Attolica

Dear masters,
Thank you so much for awarding me this Scholarship. I look forward to this ski season and continue improving and reaching my goals. With your support I will be able to attend more regional races and projects. I am excited to forerun one of the masters races and get to know more of the people helping and giving back to this generation of aspiring ski racers with dreams. Thank you again and hope to see all of you out on the hill soon - Lila Attolica



Lila Attolica

Scholarship recipient: Max Cooper

Dear Eddie/FWM -

Thank you for all of the support you have provided me over the past two years. I really appreciate all of the financial support, race suits, volunteering opportunities and advice. It has been invaluable.

Thanks again,
Max



Max Cooper



Diamond Peak March 1 scholarship recipient forerunners, L to R: Lexy Denis, Lyla Denis and Dylan Schemenauer.



Diamond Peak March 2 scholarship recipient forerunners, L to R: Jacob Brown, Evi Barber, Avery Cronin and Aiden Morgan.

New member info & how to sign up for racing (and renewals if you haven't yet!)

What do I need to do?

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** 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
- **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.

Once you log in to 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 Far West Masters page on ASR has detailed instructions to help you with the system. If you need additional assistance, you can contact Mary Feddis at 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.



First time masters racer Jamie Zhang with Mary Feddis after day one of SL racing at Diamond Peak.  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

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.

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



Palisades Masters coaches with Daron Rahlves at the bottom of a Super G training course on Racers. Palisades Masters trained with Daron several times this season. From L to R: Mark Herhusky, Daron Rahlves, Mark Mirviss, Rees Palermo