

USSA MASTER'S NATIONAL WORKING GROUP MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MARCH 13, 2007
Huntley Lodge, Big Sky, Montana

The annual meeting of the USSA Master's National Working Group was called to order by Chairman Ned Dolan, at 3:00 PM on March 13, 2007

Attending Committee Members:

Eastern: Nadine Price, proxy for Bill McCollom
PNSA: Carolyn Phillips, proxy for Richard Zimmerman
Central: Steve Lindemer Far West: Don Smith
Rocky Mountain: Leslye Randall proxy for Bob Tatge
Intermountain: Steve Slivinski Past Chairman: Keith Thompson
FIS Liaison: Ann Nordhoy

Also Attending: USSA Coordinator: Bill Skinner, Bob Sarchett IM, Deb Lewis FW & Scoring, Esther DelliQuadri RM, Barb Brumbaugh EA, Rauli Karjalainen IM, Eddie Mozen FW, Pepi Neubauer NY, Elizabeth and Michael Kennedy FW, Rich Murphy NO, Fran Noel NO, Knut Olberg PN, Bob Tengdin CN, Jennifer Kaufman RM, JC Knaub TD, Willi Schmidt PN, Keith McCauley IM

Following sign in and a brief welcome the minutes of the March 2006 Committee Meeting were reviewed. Steve Lindemer moved that the minutes be accepted as written. Keith Thompson seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Chairman Dolan announced his retirement and thanked the Chairmen for making their division's races run smoothly. He also thanked Bill Skinner for being "Mr. Master" and making the organization responsive to the members needs and for promoting masters racing at every opportunity.

USSA Masters Coordinator's Report:

Bill Skinner, USSA Masters Coordinator, complemented all divisions on their websites and singled out Rocky Mountain for improvement and excellence in this area.

USSA Masters picked up new members from the NASTAR ranks this year. Once again this is due to the fact that each NASTAR gold/platinum winner over 21 years of age receives a letter from Bill inviting him or her to join masters along with a copy of our fall newsletter.

We also have had a number of temporary racers join USSA and Masters on a full membership basis. Again, Bill sends each person who raced on a temporary membership a recruiting letter.

Divisions should get a list of the temporary racers who raced this winter, along with their addresses, to Bill so this recruiting effort can continue.

The temporary membership paperwork slipped this year. We need to make sure **all** the proper data is entered on the forms. Temporary membership fees will not be raised next year. The necessary forms for temporary memberships are available on the web site.

Fees for masters memberships will be raised by \$10 next year. This is the first increase in many years.

The younger racers in Group A are our future and we may need to do more to support them in order to keep their interest. IM has started to do this and encourages other divisions to look into ways to keep them in masters racing.

Please make sure all your events are sanctioned by USSA as our insurance is only valid at a sanctioned race.

Bill discussed the problems presented to race organizers at our National Championships by late entries. There is a definite need to have a correct count of racers to make sure the event can be held in a way that is equitable to all concerned. We may have to institute a fee for late entries.

Neither the Eastern Regionals nor the Western Regionals have confirmed dates as yet. Please get your information to Bill in time for the publication of the Competition Guide.

Divisional Chair Reports:

Eastern: Nadine Price reported that their winter was so poor that they were playing golf until February, and then got too much snow.

Central: Steve Lindemer reported that Central is a little different from other divisions because of the totality of their involvement in running the races. They have a race trailer with gates and all their equipment and, essentially, do the whole thing themselves, paying the areas only a hill fee. He is working on getting an IRS ruling that will give them "non-profit charitable organization" status. (501 3C) They do not do online race registration.

Far West: Sam Crowell reported that past Chairman Don Smith suffered a knee injury. They lost races at the beginning of the season due to a lack of snow. Eddie Mozen runs their junior scholarship program which raised \$37,000 last year. They are

working with Mammoth to schedule a whole weekend of SG races next season.

Intermountain: Steve Slivinski noted that IM is now using on-line race registration and that it has worked out beautifully in many ways, among them is that their head tax is collected by IM, not the areas which are sometimes slow to pay the head tax. IM may have scheduled too many races this season. A donation from one of their members enabled IM to sponsor 3 Class A racers to attend these championship races.

PNSA: Carolyn Phillips said that PNSA had a good snow year and that they use Active.com for on-line registration. They are charged \$3 for each on-line registration. They give sponsors some space on their web site.

Rocky Mountain: Richard Bradsby reported that Rocky Mountain had very good participation this year. It is tough to get them to travel, however. The Western regionals at Vail went well. RM has attained IRS 501 3C status which makes donations to RM tax deductible for the donor. RM charges a late fee for late race registrations.

Northern: Dave Shapee reported a 20% increase in membership this season. NO uses Active.com for on-line registration and they charge a late fee. A sponsor, Lone Mountain Sports, gave skis to rookie racers this year.

Alaska: Leslye Randall pointed out that there are only 2 racers from Alaska at the nationals this year. She feels that holding another championship in Alaska may rejuvenate the group and result in more participation. The Alaska division would certainly like to host the nationals again.

Old Business:

Handbook and Newsletters: Bill Skinner reviewed the printed USSA Alpine Masters Time Line, 2007-2008, emphasizing the importance of the Spring and Fall Newsletters, especially as recruiting tools

New Business:

Election of Chairman

The chair called for nominations for chairman. Steve Slivinski nominated Keith McCauley (IM) seconded by Leslye Randall. No others were nominated and Keith was elected by acclamation.

Late Fees for Nationals

A discussion of late entries and failures to cancel in a timely manner included the following: Current policy requires two weeks notice of cancellations for a full refund and that there may be a \$20 service fee if cancellation is within the two week period due to injury or emergency. The group felt that a \$10/race late fee for entries after February 15th would be appropriate and directed Bill Skinner to impose the fee starting next year.

FIS Ski Requirements

Bill Skinner presented a copy of the new FIS proposed requirements for equipment. Current USSA policy, that exempts masters from FIS ski length requirements, was reviewed. During a lengthy discussion on equipment requirements the following points were presented by various members of the working group.

The new requirements are for the world cup and our members are not all 25 year old athletes. It makes little sense to require a 65 year old man or a 55 year old woman or any master's skier to use the same equipment as a world cup skier. If we force them to use a ski that is certainly not optimal for their strength and ability level we may be inviting an injury.

The world cup athletes are provided with equipment free of charge. Our members have to pay for their equipment. Requiring them to buy new equipment every time the FIS changes the world cup rules would be a financial hardship that would cause many to drop out of masters.

It would be very frustrating and even dangerous to try to compete on equipment that you couldn't handle as well as the equipment that would be your first choice. If you have no confidence in your equipment you are starting out with two strikes against you.

While there are some masters that could afford new equipment every year they would rather spend the money on dinners and parties. Masters just want to have fun.

We have masters that weigh less than 100 pounds and some over 240 pounds. We have people under 5 feet tall and others over 6 and a half feet. Trying to dictate the same equipment rules for all makes absolutely no sense.

After this discussion the following resolution was introduced by Steve Lindemer and seconded by Keith Thompson.

Whereas, masters racing is designed for every level of skier ability from entry level racers through ex-national team members and our membership includes ages 21 through the 90s. Our athletic conditioning varies from poor through elite athletes and our weights vary from under 100 pounds to over 240 pounds and

Whereas, the safety of competitors is of prime importance as we plan and conduct races and

Whereas the FIS is starting yet another round of changes to equipment technical specifications that are designed primarily for world cup athletes and

Whereas there is some possibility that our great variety of masters competitors may be forced to comply with these new specifications and we feel this would have a negative impact on the safety of our membership and

Whereas, the primary reason the majority of our members are supporters of USSA is for the camaraderie and the social side of our organization and

Whereas many members may decide not to participate if required to purchase new equipment every year.

Therefore be it resolved that in the interests of safety and maintaining our membership numbers this committee directs our masters chairman and masters coordinator to make every effort to get masters racers exempt from the FIS equipment requirements.

Passed unanimously.

Division Cup Scoring

A discussion on the composition of the division teams and scoring at the nationals followed. Some felt that our present method may present a disincentive to some to participate due to their possibility of detracting from the division team. It was noted that the present system was designed to even out any host division disadvantage and encourage participation. The group felt that further refinements could be made and the following motion by Steve Lindemer, seconded by Steve Slivinski was passed.

Move that our scorer, Deb Lewis, present various proposals to adjust our present method of division cup scoring by October 15th for evaluation. These proposals are to include 20% off the bottom of the numbers of participators.

USSA Master's Website

Ned noted that our USSA web site was still listing races from the previous year instead of current information. This web site is not meeting the needs of masters, as we have no ability to update the web site in a timely manner. When answering a question Bill noted that he has limited access to the Masters email list for notifying members of current information. The discussion resulted in the following motion by Carolyn Phillips, seconded by Steve Slivinski and passed unanimously.

Move that the masters want more control over and access to the master's portion of the USSA web site and that our chairman and coordinator should have access to the masters email list.

Spirit of Masters Award

A discussion on how to reward those people that may not stand on the podium, but nevertheless contribute a great deal to the masters programs resulted in the following motion by Steve Lindemer, seconded by Richard Bradsby and passed unanimously.

Move that each division may incorporate a Spirit of Masters award into their program. This award will be given each year to an individual who by his/her involvement in masters racing and with other skier's best exemplifies the spirit of friendship and camaraderie found in masters ski racing.

Downhill as part of Combined

Eastern presented a motion to change the way we compute the combined awards at nationals which would provide more flexibility by enabling a racer that fell in one event to still be eligible for a combined award.

Move that the combined award at nationals be comprised of the best three of the following races. Slalom, Giant Slalom, Super Giant Slalom and Downhill.

Discussion followed that pointed out the vast disparity between the way race points are computed for downhill and slalom and that we dropped the downhill from the combined many years ago to remove any pressure to run downhill from those that are not comfortable doing it in the interest of safety.

The motion failed on a vote of 6-2.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20pm.