

# ALPINE MASTERS SERIES



News and Information  
of the Alpine Masters

autumn 2016  
ussa.org/masters

## USSA COACHES

### Do you know:

- You can get up to ½ point towards the 1 point needed to keep your certification current by racing in Masters races!
- Coaches can add a Masters membership at no cost just by contacting USSA membership. For recertification credit just submit copy of results to [education@ussa.org](mailto:education@ussa.org).

## Coaching Masters/Adults

### Valle Nevado, Chile

The terrain, firm snow conditions and weather make springtime in Valle Nevado one of the world's best pre-season training venues, attracting World Cup teams and top junior race programs from around the globe. Making the long trek to Chile once again this past September, were 38 Masters racers from North America and Europe, accompanied by eight coaches—among them, three recent World Cup, National Team and Olympic contenders. Their mission: jump-start the technical and

tactical skills of these Masters for both the upcoming 2017 season and get them race-ready, by the end of camp, for the 2016 South American FIS Championships held in Valle Nevado and La Parva Sept. 15–17.

It is within this spectacular setting in the Andes and near-perfect training environment that these six coaches—three of whom had never coached Masters before—performed their magic: transforming mediocrity into mastering fundamentals, changing reluctance to confidence, and

helping them to find the speed needed on race day to climb the podium.

We sat down with these elite-level coaches after the camp and races to ask them to evaluate their experience with Masters racers. They offered some interesting observations along with very specific recommendations. —D. Brennan

*Interview begins on page 4...*

### We tapped the wisdom of these six coaching giants who joined us at Valle Nevado in September.

Anna Goodman,  
Olympian



Mike Janyk,  
Olympian



Marco Sullivan,  
Olympian



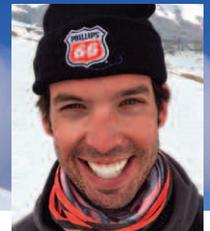
Don Sears,  
Masters Head Coach



Nate Schwing,  
National Champion



James Tautkus,  
Sun Valley Coach



## Turning your GS Skills into Super-G Results

The Western and Eastern Masters Championships feature two SG races and one each SL and GS. With such Masters interest in SG, Ron has put together another of his always great tech articles to help us. —B.S.

No matter who you are, Super G training is difficult to come by. Don't let this derail your aspiration of entering an SG race or just improving the skills you already have. By availing yourself to existing situations, you may be able fill in some important gaps in your training.

### Free-ski for feel

Time spent getting used to the long boards is essential.

Speed can look like GS. Marco Sullivan racing in the World Cup DH in Kvitfjell Norway, 2016.



SG skis are longer, with more horsepower. If you ever want to ski these skis at speed, you have to first get used to their length. Start with free-skiing the long boards in familiar terrain. Your goal should be to become acquainted and eventually intimate with

them. Don't get the mentality that they are only to be skied with long, fast, carved turns. Skiing shorter—and even skidded—turns is a sensible way to start. Foreplay before... well, you know. It's okay if your friends laugh now, because they will be buying you beer after an awards ceremony someday. As you become more familiar, increase your speed and radius. You want to inch it up gradually, never getting too far past

*Continued on page 10*

# National Chairperson's Report

by Lisa Densmore Ballard, Chair,  
USSA National Masters Committee



It's been a busy 1 1/2 years since I took over as Chair of USSA's Masters committee, not only for me, but also the division chairs who are most active in Masters ski racing. Next time you ride up a chairlift with Bill McCollom (Eastern), Nadine Price (New England), Ryan Fuller (Central), Fran Noel (Northern), Gary Randall (Alaska), Rob Cravens (PNSA), Dan Simmons (Far West), Lauren Beckos (Rocky), Stu Marsh (Intermountain), as well as Meri Stratton, Esther DellaQuadri and Deb Lewis, please say *thank you*. These volunteers not only play a critical role in coordinating the ski races you attend, but also lend their brainpower and time to help me move masters ski racing ahead nationally. And we have made strides!

With the help of Deb Lewis, the 2016-17 Masters Handbook is again updated to keep pace with our ever-changing sport. Wait 'til you see what Lauren Beckos has done to improve the Masters poster, too! It's not only an attractive way to publicize Masters events in all USSA divisions in one place, but now it will hopefully get more people to them. Recruitment continues to be one of the big goals for your national Masters committee. We're hoping to welcome those from NASTAR, who want more variety and challenge, to Masters racing and have a number of cross-promotions with them underway for this winter. We're also looking at ways to raise awareness about the Masters circuit among all levels of college racers. And new this winter, spearheaded by Rob Cravens, I'll be hosting a women's-only ski racing clinic with PNSA to hopefully recruit a few moms of junior racers into the Masters ranks. Girls' day out!

Of course, our top priority is to bring you a full calendar of topnotch events each winter. This year's schedule will get you excited about going fast. Once again, you'll find dozens of opportunities across the U.S. to test yourself in SL, GS, SG and DH. The Eastern Regionals, at Okemo and Suicide Six, will include all four

events. The Western Regionals, at Park City, will have two SG's and run concurrently with the FIS Masters Cup races, the only four international starts in North American this winter. Then there's the 2017 U.S. Alpine Masters Nationals. Mammoth is hosting this can't-miss event, one of my favorite places to race. By the time you read this, I'll have made my reservation at the Mammoth Mountain Inn, and urge you to, as well. The Inn always fills up early. See you there!



## What to Do With Your 2017 Schedule Poster

Track all the upcoming events and show your support for Masters ski racing. Contact your division chairman or pick up some posters at your first race and spread them around! Put it up in your place of work. Project it on your garage door for the neighbors to see. Frame it and hang it next to your Monet. Display it in your Victory Meditation Nook. Tape it over your bathroom mirror and pretend that guy is *you*. Use it to remind yourself when the races are, register early, show up and, win or lose, have a hell of a winter.

## Masters Membership News

by Bill Skinner, USSA Masters Manager



The 2017 Masters race season is about to begin. So, here's your top-10 list of what's new:

1. Our Masters Membership numbers remain stable.
2. Our association with NASTAR is strong, with our newsletter now going electronically to all platinum and gold medalists over the age of 18.
3. Phillips 66 is returning to sponsor our major events.
4. USSA Coaches can now add a Masters membership at no extra cost. Division dues may apply.
5. Our membership fees have stayed the same, which were reduced

last year, thanks to our President and CEO, Tiger Shaw.

6. Lisa Densmore Ballard has taken the reins as our national chairperson and has led us with a number of strong initiatives to increase membership and communication.
7. Our 2017 Masters Schedule poster has been printed and will be distributed to our division leaders, so get some at your first race and spread them around.
8. Our 2017 Masters Completion Guide is available online and in print. If you would like hard copy, send me an email and we'll send one to you. Or pick one up at an early season race.
9. In 2018, the U.S. will be hosting the FIS Masters World Championships (criterium,) location and dates to be announced soon.
10. FIS stickered helmets are now required for Masters GS/SG/DH.

The 2016-2017 Masters racing season will be a great one, thanks to our division volunteers.

See all of you at the start!

# 2017 Alpine Masters Schedules (Subject to change)

## Alaska Alpine Masters

Jan. 7 . . . . . Alyeska . . . . . GS  
 Jan. 21 . . . . . Alyeska . . . . . GS  
 Feb. 4 . . . . . Alyeska . . . . . SL  
 Feb. 19 . . . . . Alyeska . . . . . SL  
 Feb. 25 . . . . . Alyeska . . . . . SL  
 Mar. 5 . . . . . Alyeska . . . . . SL  
 Mar. 25 . . . . . Alyeska . . . . . GS  
 Info: Gary Randall 907.242.2927

## Central Alpine Masters

Nov. 13-16 . . . . . Koznick Fall Camp  
 . . . . . Copper Mtn, CO  
 Dec. 17-18 . . . . . Afton Alps . . . . . 2SL/2GS  
 Jan. 7-8 . . . . . Welch Village . . . . . 4SL  
 Jan. 12-16 . . . . . Ski Cooper 2DH/SG/GS/SL

## Central/Region 2 Championships

Feb. 10-12 . . . . . Granite Peak . . . . . 2SL/2GS  
 Feb. 24-26 . . . . . Chestnut . . . . . 2SL/2GS

## Central/Region 1 Championships

Mar. 11-12 . . . . . Spirit Mtn. . . . . 2GS/2SL  
 Info: program.director@midwestmasters.org  
 midwestmasters.org

## New England Masters/Sise Cup

Dec. 17-18 . . . . . Killington . . . . . GS/SL  
 Jan. 7-8 . . . . . Sunapee . . . . . GS/SL  
 Jan. 14-15 . . . . . Middlebury . . . . . duelGS/GS  
 Jan. 19-21 . . . . . Stratton . . . . . SG/SG/GS  
 Jan. 28-29 . . . . . Shawnee Peak . . . . . SL/GS  
 Feb. 5 . . . . . Ragged Mtn. . . . . GS  
 Feb. 18 . . . . . Cannon . . . . . SL  
 Feb. 20 . . . . . Cannon . . . . . SL

## Eastern Championships

Feb. 25 . . . . . Suicide Six . . . . . SL  
 Feb. 26 . . . . . Okemo . . . . . GS  
 Feb. 27 . . . . . Okemo . . . . . SG/SG

## Sise Cup Finals

Mar. 3-4 . . . . . Waterville .GS/SL Banquet  
 Info: nemasters.org

## New York Masters

Jan. 8 . . . . . Swain . . . . . GS/SL  
 Jan. 19-21 . . . . . Stratton . . . . . 2SG/GS  
 Jan. 28 . . . . . Kissing Bridge . . . . . SL/SL  
 Jan. 29 . . . . . Holimont . . . . . GS/GS  
 Feb. 4 . . . . . Song Mtn. . . . . SG/SL  
 Feb. 5 . . . . . Greek Peak . . . . . GS/SL  
 Feb. 11 . . . . . Hunt Hollow . . . . . GS/GS  
 Feb. 25-27 . . . . . Suicide/Okemo .SL/GS/SG/SG  
 Mar. 5 . . . . . Swain . . . . . GS/SL  
 Info: Jack Eisenschmid 585.288.4554  
 nymasters.org

## Southern Masters (SARA)

Dec. 18 . . . . . Bryce Resort . . . . . GS  
 Dec. 28-29 . . . . . Sugar Mtn. . . . . SL/GS  
 Jan. 7 . . . . . Bryce Resort . . . . . SL  
 Jan. 8 . . . . . Massanutten . . . . . GS  
 Jan. 21-22 . . . . . Timberline . . . . . SL/GS  
 Jan. 28-29 . . . . . Sugar Mtn. . . . . SL/GS  
 Feb. 4-5 . . . . . Snowshoe, WV . . . . . SL/GS  
 Feb. 11-12 . . . . . Wintergreen . . . . . GS/SL

Feb. 25-26 . . . . . Massanutten . . . . . GS/SL  
 Info Contact: Horst Locher 540.856.2121  
 skisara.org

## Far West Masters

Nov. 28-Dec. 2 . . . . . Mammoth . . . . . Camp  
 Dec. 3-4 . . . . . Mammoth . . . . . 2SL/GS  
 Dec. 18-19 . . . . . Alpine Meadows . . . . . SL/SL  
 Jan. 6-8 . . . . . Heavenly . . . . . 2GS/2SL/SL  
 Jan. 19-22 . . . . . Mammoth .2DH/2SG/SG  
 Feb. 9-12 . . . . . Northstar . . . . . 2SG/GS/GS  
 Mar. 4-5 . . . . . Mt Rose . . . . . GS/GS

## Masters Nationals

Mar. 13-18 . . . . . Mammoth .DH/SG/GS/SL

## Far West Finals

Mar. 30-Apr. 1 . . . . . Squaw Valley .2SG/2SL/GS  
 Info: Dan Simmons 530.587.4864  
 farwestmasters.org

## Intermountain Masters/ JANS Cup

Jan. 7-8 . . . . . Snowbasin . . . . . GS/SL  
 Jan. 14-15 . . . . . Nordic Valley . . . . . SL/SL  
 Jan. 20-22 . . . . . Sun Valley . . . . . 2SG/GS/SL  
 Jan. 23-25 . . . . . Soldier Mtn. . . . . trDH/3DH

## FIS Cup / Western Championships

Feb. 3-5 . . . . . Park City . . . . . 2SG/SL/GS  
 Feb. 11-12 . . . . . Snow King . . . . . GS/GS  
 Feb. 18-19 . . . . . Soldier Mtn. . . . . GS/SL  
 Feb. 25-26 . . . . . Nordic Valley . . . . . SL/GS  
 Mar. 2-4 . . . . . Snowbasin . . . . . 2SG/GS/GS  
 Info: Stew Marsh 385.315.4817  
 intermountainmasters.org

## Northern Masters

Dec. 7-11 . . . . . Red Lodge . .Pre race camp  
 Jan. 7-8 . . . . . Grand Targhee . . . . . GS/GS  
 Jan. 20-22 . . . . . Sun Valley, ID .2SG/GS/SL  
 Feb. 11-12 . . . . . Jackson, WY . . . . . GS/GS  
 Feb. 17-19 . . . . . 49 Degrees N . . . . . SG/SG  
 Feb. 23-26 . . . . . Schweitzer, ID .3SG/GS/SL  
 Info: Fran Noel 406.586.5759

## Pacific Northwest Masters

Dec. 17-19 . . . . . Mt. Bachelor . . . . . 2GS/SG  
 Dec. 17-18 . . . . . Summit at Snoq .trGS/GS  
 Jan. 7-8 . . . . . Crystal . . . . . SL/GS  
 Jan. 21-22 . . . . . Stevens Pass . . . . . SL/GS  
 Feb. 11-12 . . . . . Alpine/Snoq . . . . . 4SL  
 Feb. 17-19 . . . . . 49 Degrees N . .SGt/2SG/2SG  
 Feb. 23-26 . . . . . Schweitzer . .SGt/3SG/GS/SL  
 Mar. 4-5 . . . . . Ski Bowl . . . . . 2SL/GS  
 Apr. 6-9 . . . . . Mt Bachelor .SGt/2SG/GS/SL  
 Info: Robert Cravens 541.419.3893  
 pnsamasters.org

## Rocky Mountain Masters

Dec. 17-18 . . . . . Winter Park . . . . . 2SL/GS  
 Jan. 7-8 . . . . . Copper . . . . . 2GS/SL  
 Jan. 13-16 . . . . . Ski Cooper trDH/2DH/2SG/SL  
 Jan. 22 . . . . . Loveland . . . . . TBA  
 Feb. 11-12 . . . . . Ski Cooper . . . . . GS/DH  
 Feb. 26 . . . . . Loveland . . . . . TBA  
 Apr. 1-2 . . . . . Breckenridge . . . . . 2SG/GS  
 Info: Lauren Beckos 267.496.1320  
 rmmiskiracing.org

## NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENTS

### Phillips 66 Masters National Championship

Mar. 13-18 . Mammoth, CA DH/SG/GS/SL  
 Bill Skinner 435.647.2633

### Phillips 66 FIS Masters Cup/ Western Championships

Feb. 3-5 . . Park City, UT . . . . . SG/SG/SL/GS  
 Bill Skinner 435.647.2633

### Eastern Championships

Feb. 25-27 . Suicide/Okemo .SL/GS/SG/SG  
 Bill McCollom 802.234.9561

### Summer Fun Nationals

July 15-16 . . . . . Mt Hood, OR . . . . . GS/SL  
 Meri Stratton 541.490.5888

### Phillips 66 National Speed Series

Jan. 13-15 . . . . . Ski Cooper, CO . . . . . DH/SG  
 Jan. 19--20 . . . . . Stratton, VT . . . . . SG/SG  
 Jan. 19-22 . . . . . Mammoth, CA . . . . . DH/SG  
 Jan. 23-25 . . . . . Soldier Mt. ID . . . . . DH/DH  
 Feb. 3 . . . . . Park City, UT . . . . . SG/SG  
 Feb. 17-19 . . . . . 49 Degrees N, WA .SG/SG  
 Feb. 23-26 . . . . . Schweitzer, ID . . . . . SG/SG  
 Feb. 27 . . . . . Okemo, VT . . . . . SG/SG  
 Mar. 13-16 . . . . . Mammoth, CA (Nationals)  
 DH/SG

### NASTAR Finals

Mar. 23-26 . . . . . Steamboat, CO

Masters adult racing: Age class competition for skiers 18 years and older. For more information contact Bill Skinner at 435.647.2633 / bskinner@ussa.org.

Schedules subject to change. For complete info on Masters Racing visit [ussa.org/masters](http://ussa.org/masters).



Martin Sulser, doing age 80 like he's doing 80.

# Coaching Masters / Adults

Continued from Page 1

*What was your general impression of Masters racers?*

**Anna:** Masters racing is a great way for adults of all ages to engage with their peers and work towards common athletic goals. To think that we'll have access to the outdoors, travelling the globe in the pursuit of excellence, until our late 80s and beyond, is one of the many reasons why ski racing is such a special part of our lives—don't forget it!

**Mike:** Masters racers love the sport, and it shows. They bring an enthusiasm to their days on snow that's admirable.

**Don:** Greatest group of people in the world!!

**James:** Masters racing is cool. It just goes to show that ski racing can be forever...and Masters certainly know how to have a good time!

**Marco:** I loved seeing adult racers embracing the struggle and getting better every day!

**Nate:** Most Masters racers I've worked with have solid fundamentals.

*As coaches, what specific areas do you stress the most with Masters?*

**Don:** Balance on the outside foot. I've never heard a National coach say you have too much weight on the outside foot. Most Masters move inside too much (during the turn), especially when the terrain gets challenging.

**Mike:** Feeling the ski and the terrain under your foot. Bringing focus to the 'feeling' allows the individual to grow their own skills—no matter what level they are!

**James:** Fundamentals! You're never too old to focus on the basics. This also keeps the perspective simple. The truth is that World Cup racers also focus on fundamentals, to keep it simple.

**Nate:** Mindset. There's a broad range of abilities in Masters: some are competing for Globes, others to improve their skiing. No matter where you fall in the spectrum, embrace the challenge of "arcing" around the gates and have fun with ski racing.

**Marco:** Focus on (free) skiing more. Many Masters have a strong understanding of the fundamentals, but lack the body awareness to implement them in their skiing. Getting more miles on the snow will make you more confident and comfortable with body movements.

**Anna:** Keep it about fun and community. As with younger racers, it's easy to get caught up with the pressure to perform, or to rely too much on results as a means to measure individual value.

*For Masters, which fundamentals showed the biggest improvement gains in the gates?*

**Marco:** As we get older, we tend to ski more passively. Driving the shins into the front of the boot to (pressure) bend the ski tip got the ski to initiate quicker and gave

these Masters more control of their runs in the gates.

**James:** Stance and balance. A strong, balanced stance with flexed ankles was huge. Transferring this from their free-skiing to the gates gave them room at the gate vs. cutting off the line, which throws all good technique out the window.

**Nate:** Ankle flexion and mobility in the lower body are the areas that created improvement. Developing the feel for a clean, arcing ski improved with consistent ankle flex through the turn, combined with the mobility to use the ankles and knees to roll the ski up on edge.

**Anna:** A focus that bridges the age and gender ranges for Masters is combining balance and movement. By balance, I mean basic body awareness: strong outside ski, hands up and forward, shoulders and head facing down the corridor and a pole plant. By movement, I'm referring to being "dynamic": hips moving forward through each transition and the feet and knees rolling the skis up on edge.

**Mike:** Among the key fundamentals, I suggest focusing on stance and balance first. Modern racing technique requires a wider stance to maximize ski designs. A wider, more relaxed stance will help you "feel" the ski more.

**Don:** Five fundamentals that work for Masters racers: 1) balance on the outside foot, 2) maintain ankle flex all the time, 3)

hands in front of the body, shoulders level, 4) upper and lower body separation—legs tip in and rotate separately from the upper body, 5) center of mass forward and over the new outside ski at the transition.

*What differences or similarities do you see between Masters and junior racers?*

**Nate:** Many Masters have skills that juniors could learn from! You rarely have to talk about or teach a pole plant with Master, and they generally have better edging control when it comes to pressuring the ski while steering it. Juniors tend to be committed to the arc, to a fault at times, and lack the ability to make tactical adjustments by pressuring the ski while steering it in order

*Continued next page*

The Brain Trust in Valle Nevado:  
Six kick-ass coaches flanked by a pair of Skinners.



to manage situations when they might not be on the ideal line tactically. That said, Masters could learn from juniors how to prepare for the season with conditioning. Masters need to be efficient in their skiing, and being well-conditioned will give them an edge up on the competition.

**Don:** Masters usually go too straight at the gate, and pressure late. Juniors are good at a high line, pressuring early, so they carve in the fall-line and then get off the ski early.

**James:** For Masters, their reward is much more intrinsic. They've raced against a clock for years and know the taste of success and the agony of defeat very well. They understand the importance of picking your head up and appreciating the moments when it all comes together. For them, success isn't measured in hardware, but rather in the feeling of having a good run and that they left it all out there. Compared to juniors, they're not as outcome driven. It's much more personal than that.

**Anna:** Compared with junior racers, Masters understand their own boundary between risk vs. reward, so there is less pressure to play with fire. This is somewhat of a broad generalization, but it seems to me like juniors are less analytical and more willing to let their skis run and risk a little more. Being fast and being ahead of the course requires precision, but in order to find the balance between being blown out of the course or winning, racers must 1) really push themselves (their line, their speed, their technique) in training, 2) feel out the boundaries of their equipment and their abilities, and 3) keep an open mind.

**Mike:** Masters are kids at heart. The fundamental techniques are the same for juniors and skiers at all levels, though the tactics seem to be the biggest difference. A junior may be willing to take more risks to achieve their desired goal—pushing the line, tighter on the gate—where a Masters racer may take a more sensible approach (though I definitely saw acceptations to the rule). I choose to focus on the similarities between the two groups, the love and passion for the sport, because only from this can you achieve fun and fast skiing.

**Marco:** The biggest difference I observed is that the junior racers get their feet out from under their center of mass and create sharp angles that result in quick and powerful direction changes. Many Masters keep their feet directly underneath their center of mass to minimize risk. This completely changes the tactical approach, because it takes much longer for the turn to develop.

*In your opinion, what drills help Masters racing technique the most?*

**James:** The best drill is the garland. Then add picking up your inside foot. If you can make a clean, arcing turn balanced only on your outside ski, and be able to link them together, then you are probably on your way to top 15 in the world. This drill is the whole enchilada. Balanced, strong upper and lower half with separation, strong ankle flexion, and a strong pole plant is what this simple drill can give you. Find moderate to easy terrain, use the whole width and you can go from zero to hero.

**Mike:** During my time coaching Masters, I saw a great result with lifting the inside/uphill ski as you go around the turn. It's simple and actually is a common drill for World Cup athletes. This it promotes balance and a commitment to the outside ski. In a slow and safe environment, it can grow your confidence to feel the whole ski.

**Anna:** For body awareness, I like to start with the basics: undo your boots, find a flat hill, put your hands on your knees while carving a radius that's between a GS and SL turn and really feel what is going on. Are you using your ankles and knees? Are you arcing? Are you moving or are you static? Then on steeper terrain I like drills that force you to feel that you're using your boots and skis, like a basic lift the inside foot through the turn drill while skiing VERY slowly. When this is working for you, add in the knee for more edging, while traversing along the hill slowly. These types of drills really help get a feel for how the skis and boots work.

Then I like to work on body position/outside ski by using a sort-of shoulder/airplane drill where you don't physically touch your boot, but you imagine that your shoulders are on a plane, and if you're doing it right, your inside shoulder would be up and outside shoulder down. If the airplane is too static, I like to add a forward clap in the transition of the turn.

**Marco:** Start by working on slow-speed turns focusing on correct balance and body position. Then slowly progress into faster turns while still focusing on being able to control speed and maintain correct body position.

**Nate:** One of my go-to drills with Masters is the hands-on-knees drill. This drill is great for working on ankle flexion and to feel the ski rolling up onto a clean, arcing edge. Execute this drill without your poles on flat-to-moderate terrain with both hands on your knees while rolling both skis up

on edge while maintaining ankle flexion. Having your hands on your knees will help you with this awareness. Make sure you're keeping the inside (uphill) foot pulled back and the majority of your weight on your outside ski while arcing. The next step in the progression of this drill is to take your hands off of your knees and continue to make parallel arcs while maintaining ankle flexion.

**Don:** Here are three of my favorite drills for Masters: 1) Javelin turns: this forces weight to outside, with slight counter, 2) Schlopy drill: outside hand pushes hip inward, while inside hand is raised up and forward over the inside ski during the turn to exaggerate weight on the outside foot and hip angulation, 3) Simply pick up the inside ski tail from beginning to end of turn to force weight to outside ski early and completely.

## OUR COACHES

### Anna Goodman

Former Canadian Olympic Team member, 2013 US National SL Champion and three-time NorAm SL Champion.

### Mike Janyk

Recently retired after 14 years with the Canadian National Team, with nine of those years on the World Cup tour, three times on the Canadian Olympic Team, and a Bronze Medal winner in SL at the 2009 World Championships.

### Marco Sullivan

Four-time Olympian, recently retired from the U.S. Ski Team after 17 years, 15 of those years on the World Cup tour, with 165 starts and DH podiums in Wengen and Chamonix.

### Nate Schwing

Head FIS Coach at Sun Valley Ski Education Foundation, USSA Level 300 coach, 2002 Class 1 National Masters Champion, 1st Place Western Region Spring Series 2003, top 10 US Nationals 2004.

### Don Sears

USSA Level 200 coach and Masters head coach at Park City Mountain Resort with 15+ years of experience coaching and racing and 25+ years teaching with PSIA.

### James Tautkus

UNH alum and currently the youth-14 coach at Sun Valley Ski Education Foundation with stops along the way at GMVS, Rowmark and Park City Ski Team.

*This interview was conducted by Bill Skinner at Valle Nevado, Chile, and edited by Dave Brennan.*

# When Soft is Better than Stiff

by Matt Schiller



Sometimes, I'm a coach who can work on equipment, other times, I'm an equipment tech with a coaching background. This past season, I wore both hats while running my new shop, Park City Boot Room, while also coaching part-time with the Park City Masters crew. I truly feel that being able to speak the language and demonstrate technique on the hill, then transfer those feelings, movements, and skills to equipment set up is a unique and rare angle to the ski sports business. Skiing and then working on a large group of the Park City Masters boots, often in the same week, has made a huge impact due to the connection of snow time and adjustments in real time at the shop.

This article will address how one of the major skills we drill constantly and strive to master to be *fast* is directly equipment related, yet the connection is often overlooked and more often than not, unattainable, due to our equipment choice.

## Here's the crux of the biscuit

Skill: At turn transition, the inside ski becomes the new uphill ski. Early pressure is paramount, and started by standing on that new ski, while it's underneath you. The shin and ankle are flexed and in contact with the tongue of the boot. We then start extending that leg, moving our center of mass forward and in the direction of the new turn, as early and high up the hill as possible, rolling that ski on edge far above the fall line, and moving the body downhill against the new early-edge platform. By ever increasing the new outside ski edge angle and balancing our body over the sweet spot of the ski throughout the turn, we generate energy and speed. Got the picture, know the feeling?

Now, think of the dynamics and body movements it takes to pull that move off. As for the equipment consideration to pull it off, I would argue that unless you can flex your joints underneath your hips to keep that pressure on the tongue, and have a soft enough boot that allows you to stay balanced over the sweet spot of the ski

platform so there is no loss of time and distance to start the next turn, life will be effortlessly fast.

If the boot is too stiff—and when it's time to transition to the new uphill ski—the inside ankle/leg shaft angle in the boot will be whatever the rearmost angle of the boot design is. The pressure will be on the calf and heel of the foot, and tail of the ski, and the ski will be out ahead of you and running away. Your job becomes getting out of that late and back position, repeatedly, to start a new turn. Even the strongest athletes on the WC can only manage to pull themselves up out of the back seat so many times per run. Your hamstrings and quads will be in overdrive, your core will be wincing, and the energy and time it will take to re-center, find the boot, then find the ski tip, then flex and roll onto edge is just too slow and inefficient.

Most juniors, up through Masters, fall into the trap of thinking a stiffer boot will enable more power to bend the ski and generate speed. Again, I would recommend that laterally, most race design shells have plenty of torsional stiffness to hold on hard race conditions, so there really



The inside leg is folded in and flexed in this GS turn.

shouldn't be a problem once on edge and ahead of the turn. But getting there is the battle. Another reminder is boots can be softened or lowered to allow the fine tuning balance that it takes to stay on top of the

ski and get the turn built early. The perceived power a 10–15% extra-stiff boot might give in the fall line will hurt you if you can't get the turn started in the right place. You'll be more than rewarded if you're early, in balance, and can add pressure to the tip at will!

I hope this will help steer you in the proper direction when it comes to struggling with developing new technique and the equipment barriers that will either inhibit or promote your progress.

By Matt Schiller, owner of Park City Boot Room, PSIA full cert, USSA national level coach.

# Speed Dialing Your Set-Up

Mastering Equipment Optimization Can Take Time Off the Clock



by Dave Brennan

During a recent interview with Ted Ligety, he made it a point to emphasize the advantage of optimizing his equipment set up:

"It gets understated how important equipment is. If you find something better than your previous set up, it's free time! This is a motivating factor for me. It's nice to gain a tenth and not do anything other than get on a different (set up) ramp angle."

To Ligety's point, it's said that preparation is ninety percent of winning. In addition to conditioning, drills and running gates, equipment set up should be a significant part of every Masters preparation. Taking time to coordinate the set-up adjustments of your boots, bindings, skis and tuning to best match your individual physical characteristics, technical strengths, race events and venues will improve performance, which could contribute to a breakout season.

On the World Cup, professional service reps are responsible for fitting, adjusting and maintaining their athletes' equipment. They also keep highly detailed records for each racer, including specifications that impact the fit and function of every piece of gear used in each discipline. Any change, whether it's in the athlete's physical condition, adding new gear, replacing an old piece, or even when changing race venues, requires that this vital data be reevaluated and updated.

Whether it's a World Cup standout or a first-year Masters racer, the correct selection, fit and set up of boots, bindings and skis is critical. Understanding the importance of this performance-dependent interrelationship between the athlete and equipment is the first step towards results-oriented optimization. The prerequisites are acquiring product knowledge, paying attention to detail and developing effective communication. In this regard—given that you don't have one—you better become your own service rep.

Some ski shops have trained techni-

icians knowledgeable in race-specific equipment. Others specialize in fitting and servicing the racer. The majority of Masters depend on these shops to dial-in their boots, mount the bindings and grind the bases. Typically, more than one technician and shop can be involved in this process—boot fitter, binding mechanic, and ski tuner—so the responsibility falls on the athlete to understand their own needs and to communicate and coordinate with each technician for two important reasons: First, to assist in developing the initial set-up specifications, which establishes a baseline for each piece of equipment. Second, and with on-the-hill feedback from the coach and the clock, is to direct the technicians in fine-tuning the baseline set up for optimized performance as well as to make any necessary specification adjustments for each race discipline.

Serious racers should, at a minimum, have a working knowledge of equipment set-up adjustment variables and how each can influence performance. Having this understanding will help facilitate effective communication between racer, coach and technician so that the set up can deliver positive gains in performance. Remember, equipment selection is only step one in a three-step process. Step two is making static (in shop) initial set up adjustments to establish baseline specifications. Step three comes from dynamic (on-hill) feedback to fine-tune baseline specifications.



tions. Having a disciplined approach to this process can optimize performance and deliver meaningful results on the clock—as famously coined by Daron Rahlves, “Hundies matter!”

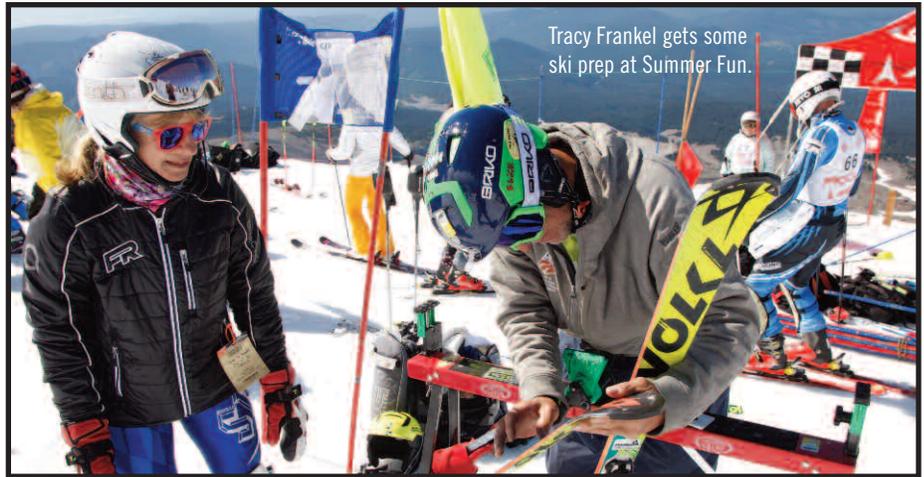
*Dave Brennan is a ski industry veteran who has worked for several major European manufacturers. Currently, he writes technical articles for a number of ski publications, is an equipment consultant to USSA, and an active Masters racer living and training in Park City, Utah.*

Step three comes from dynamic (on-hill) feedback to fine-tune baseline specifications.

# Ski Set-up Basics

## 1) Binding Placement/Mounting

Don't automatically assume that the manufacturer's recommended boot/binding placement marks will work best for you—it's a good starting point, but only a recommendation. Consideration needs to be given to your boot specs and race event



Tracy Frankel gets some ski prep at Summer Fun.

(tech or speed). Generally, we're looking to place the center of the boot at the middle of the sidecut radius and then adjust for boot size and race discipline (again, tech or speed). Test placement options.

## 2) Ramp Angles and Stand Height

Ramp angles (adjusting toe and/or heel heights), in coordination with boot specs, help control turn initiation quickness by changing the pressure transmitted to the ski through added leverage. This can be counterintuitive in application. For example, “lifting,” or increasing the ramp angle under the toe, will engage the ski sooner by placing the ankle in a “loaded” position, which requires less forward motion to pressure the ski. Adjusting toe and heel ramp angles can vary greatly for individual skiers and disciplines and should be tested (FIS rules may apply).

## 3) Base Bevel

The single most important set-up in ski tuning is the base bevel, which controls the quickness of edge angle engagement. Lower base bevel angles, .25°, .5°, will engage the ski more quickly than .75° or 1°. When testing, start with a lower base bevel; it's easier to add bevel then to reduce it. Racers who develop bigger angles at the top of the turn with little or no skidding should use lower base bevel angles. Those who are still working on getting more angle at the top of the turn and skid out of

the transition will benefit from higher base bevel angles. Again, base bevel needs to work with your boot set-up, so know your boot spec information. Once set, the bases shouldn't be touched again during the season—even with a file or stone—unless there is substantial edge damage or if it's determined that a different base bevel is needed, as this will increase the base bevel angle over time. Check your base bevels at

the start of the season.

## 4) Edge Angle

This is a more subtle adjustment than base bevels. The ‘grip’ or holding power of the ski is impacted to the greatest extent by the edge angle. The more acute the edge angle, the more aggressive and powerful the pressure applied to the snow. A 4° edge angle is more aggressive than a 3°, and 3° is more powerful than a 2° edge angle. While a 3° edge angle will work for most disciplines and maintain its sharpness longer, higher edge angles for SL and GS—4° or even 5°—and a lower edge angle for SG and DH (2°), should be considered and tested. Racers who are technically strong can benefit from more aggressive, higher edge angles. Maintain the sharpness of your edge angles regularly.

## 5) Track Changes

Make sure your training and race equipment is set up the same for their respective disciplines. If you have multiple skis for each discipline, try setting them up with different specs and test the set ups against the clock. Remember, all of the components of your set up—boots, bindings, skis and tuning—have to work in coordination with one another. If one or more of these components is not optimized for your specific needs, it can add time on the clock.

*Tips provided by Graham Lonetto, USST Service Rep*

# In Pursuit of the Crystal Globes

## Pepi Neubauer Conquers the World

It was at the 2015 U.S. Masters Nationals in Sun Valley when Bill Skinner said, "Pepi, you need to come to Chile with us." This is how the passionate pursuit of the FIS Masters Cup globes began.

The Chileans were great hosts. The coaching was unbelievable: a week of race training and video analysis with former Russian National Ski Team coach Cameron Chin. There, Pepi Neubauer acquired his first 100 points (GS) in the 2016 FIS Masters Cup race season at Valle Nevado, Chile. Three more gold medals (SG, GS, SL) followed and Pepi had not only secured a total of 400 FIS Cup points, but also the South American Cup for his FIS class 9. It was September.

The next stop would be Maria Alm, Austria. Scheduled for December 19 and 20, it would be Pepi's first 2016 FIS races in the northern hemisphere. Pepi eagerly stepped off the plane in Munich, and soon received the unfortunate news that those races had been cancelled! Such is racing. Pepi returned to Europe on January 5, this time for three weeks. First, races in Hasliberg Switzerland, then Karpun, Austria, then *more* races in Morgins, Switzerland. These were competitive races, with all the top Austrians, Italians and Germans. Pepi had competed against some of these athletes 50 years prior, while on the Austrian National Ski Team. In spite of their ages, these men, in class 9 (age 70-74), are still strong, fit, and fierce competitors. Everything was in sync, and Pepi secured seven more gold medals in his class, reaching the limit of 900 FIS points towards the FIS Masters Cup.

More significant, however, was Pepi's ranking among all of the men over 55 (Category B). Pepi has often ranked in the top ten of the approximately 60 men from around the globe in this category. Then, finally, came the opportunity to race in the U.S. Four FIS Masters Cup races were scheduled at Aspen, Colorado in early February, and there was snow—lots

of it! The first race (SL) was held two days after a 25-inch snow fall. After the first SL run, Pepi was leading his class and was third overall (Category B). In the second run, the powder caught him, he hooked



the gate, spun around backwards, slammed the ground with his back, bounced up, still on course, and finished third in his class. But a back injury had put an end to Pepi's Aspen races.

But a great racer never gives up. With races in Hochfugen, Austria, Piancavallo, Italy and Cerklno, Slovenia, the European competitors were edging in, gaining cup points, edging closer to 900.

Finally recovering, race training continued, and the decision was made to race at USSA Masters Nationals in Big Sky, Montana, March 15 through March 20. There are no FIS Cup points to be gained at Nationals, but it was worth it. A gold in DH, SG and GS provided him with the confidence to keep going.

Passing on the Nationals SL, it was off to Spindleruv Mlyn, Czech Republic, to compete in the World Criterium (championships) to protect his lead. He pulled it off and won first in class 9 and 13th overall,

against the world's best 170 Masters racers age 55 and over. This is when Pepi learned that he was in the running for more than the FIS class 9 champion; he was now in the running for the overall FIS

champion in category B for each event (SG, GS and SL). It was time to fly home to New York and regroup for the FIS Cup Finals.

Now early April, Pepi was back to Europe for the FIS Masters Finals in Les Menuires, France. There were two races scheduled (SG, GS), but because of the questionable snow conditions, the intended SG race was swapped out for an SL.

Pepi's perseverance paid off. It was awards banquet time for the globes. He was called to the stage and awarded the crystal globe for first place in class 9. Tears were shed. He had done it. He had won the FIS Masters World Cup! And then he heard his name again and was awarded an even larger crystal globe, this one for FIS SG champion in category B and then another for FIS GS champion in category B and then, yet another, the finale for the 2016 FIS overall champion in category B.

Pepi had secured not one but *four* crystal globes! A first for an American.

It was surreal; the 2016 race season was complete. What had started out to be a dream, an imagining, spurred by Bill Skinner's encouragement to go to Chile,

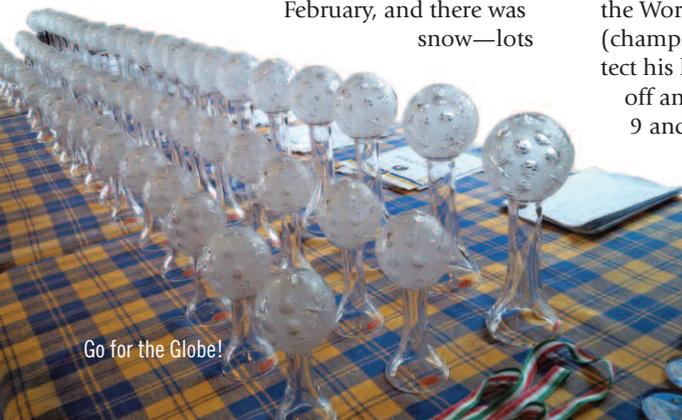
### FIS Calendar Masters 2016-17

When	Where	What
Sept. 15-16	Valle Nevado, CHI	GS/SG/SG
Sept. 17	La Parva, CHI	SL
Dec. 9-11	Pila-Gressan, ITA	SG/SL/GS
Dec. 17-18	Fuegen, AUT	SL/GS
Jan. 6-8	Val Thorens, FRA	SG/SL/GS
Jan. 13-15	Gerlitzten, AUT	SG/SL/GS
Jan. 21-22	Zagreb, CRO	GS/SL
Jan. 27-19	Chatel, FRA	SG/SL/GS
Feb. 3-5	Park City, USA	SG/SG/SL/GS
Feb. 11-12	Bischofswiesen, GER	GS/GS/SL
Feb. 24-26	Piancavallo, ITA	SG/SL/GS
Mar. 4-5	Pec pod Snezkou, CZE	SL/GS
Mar. 11-12	Cerklno, SLO	SL/GS
Mar. 20-24	Meiringen-Hasliberg, SUI	SG/GS/GS/SL Criterium
Apr. 1-2	Strbski, SVK	SL/GS

Schedule subject to change. To register, contact Bill Skinner at USSA.

had become a reality. Bob Chavez, reporter for the Canandaigua Daily Messenger said it best: "Today, at the age of 70, his skis remain waxed, his heart remains fearless and his hunger to win remains voracious."

Congratulations, Pepi! Here's to Masters alpine ski racing! Old guys rule! —B.S.



Go for the Globe!

# 2016 Summer Fun Nationals at Mt. Hood, Oregon

By Hugh Mitchell

They've been to all 28 races: Joseph Mucci, Oliver Lajoie, Knut Olberg, Ann Ozuna and Meri Stratton greeted racers for the 28th annual Summer Fun Nationals at Mt. Hood July 15-17, 2016 under bright, sunny skies.

About a hundred racers came from all across the U.S., including from non-ski states like Texas, North Carolina, and Alabama to participate in GS on Saturday and SL on Sunday. Racing was divided into two courses, with men 16-69 years old on the west course, and men 70-85, all women and children under 16 on the east course. The hill conditions and course workers made for excellent race courses.

hard-charging Minam Cravens came back in the second run and took the overall number-one slot. Then, in the rest of the pack, second-run

comebacks came from Franz Fuchsberger, who started in 10th and moved up to 5th; Ken Park came from 7th to 4th; and Chris Maxwell moved from 8th to 6th. All this goes to show that age is not a barrier in ski racing. The older guys



Knut and his drill in a field of gates.

GS was Party Beach coach Lyndsay Strange and in the Sunday SL it was New Yorker Makena Gorman in Class 1. Fastest for the senior men both days was 75 year-old Knut Olberg.

Parties each day added to the festivity of the event. Friday, racers were greeted in Government Camp by Willy and Kerry Scroggins for the welcome party, complete with food and drink, ski product vendors and racer check-in. Saturday was the traditional chicken barbecue at Timberline Day Lodge, with GS awards, raffles and giveaways, including Atomic skis. Rob Cravens was awarded the Atomic Skier of the Year award for his contribution to Masters ski racing. The Sunday awards party was greeted with a warm, sunny pool party and lots of Korbel Champagne. Racers relaxed both poolside and in the pools while awards were given out and photos were taken. In addition to the SL awards, the Skoch Cup combined award (overall class winners from each class), the Eigenvector Fastest Family award (five families vied but it was taken by the Dan Golik family from Seattle), and the Fastest Man and Woman awards (Tim Hill and Makena Gorman) making for a festive event.

Final results and Special awards are available at [SummerFunNationals.com](http://SummerFunNationals.com). Photos of the weekend are available from [brianrobbphotos.com](http://brianrobbphotos.com).

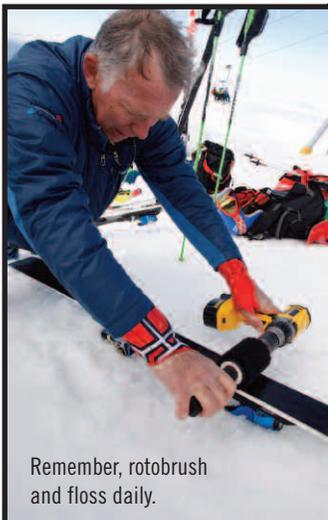
Mark your calendar for the 29th ... and possibly the last... Summer Fun Nationals, July 14-16, 2017.

GS Battle	Place	1st Run	Time	After 2nd Run	Time	Combined	Time	Age 2017 Season
	1	Tim Hill	43.63	M. Cravens	38.43	M. Cravens	122.49	18
	2	M. Cravens	44.06	Tim Hill	40.41	Tim Hill	124.04	54
	3	D. Davi	44.89	D. Davi	40.69	D. Davi	125.58	49
	4	Jesse Foster	45.76	Ken Park	41.19	Ken Park	127.31	56
	5	Mike Smith	45.80	Fuchsberger	41.24	Fuchsberger	127.83	58
	6	T. Milligan	46.04	C. Maxwell	41.65	C. Maxwell	127.90	54
	7	Ken Park	46.12	Jesse Foster	42.25	Jesse Foster	128.01	46
	8	C. Maxwell	46.25	W. Scroggins	42.25	Mike Smith	128.36	56
	9	W. Scroggins	46.46	T. Milligan	42.42	T. Milligan	128.46	54
	10	Fuchsberger	46.59	Mike Smith	42.56	W. Scroggins	128.71	56

Battles started out early in the race weekend. First was the battle for a slot in the coveted superseeds and continued for the final position. GS was the hardest-fought, making for exciting racing and viewing. First position was initially held by Tim Hill, but

can stay in there with the hot young guns! Go Masters! See chart above.

On the east course, 81 year-old Martin Sulser charged out of the gate first each time, bound and determined to make his best run ever. The women's star in Saturday



Remember, rotobrush and floss daily.



Summer Fun winners at poolside brandishing Lilluputan skis, suitable for the trophy rack or stirring paint.



Cheryl Puddy



Time spent getting used to the long boards is essential.

your personal comfort zone. Take small bites and chew your food. As a disclaimer, keep it safe and legal in the eyes of the Ski Patrol. Time spent getting to know the SG ski is money in the bank and will yield dividends on race day.

**Making your tuck work**

Learning to tuck is not hard. Flat or rounded back, ankles flexed, hands up and forward, elbows inside the knee width—you've heard it before. It is making that tuck useful that is the key. Modern speed courses have turns and those turns are fast. Grabbing your tuck, even for a moment, will gain hundredths and even tenths of a second, time that is needed to get you bragging rights at the end of the day.

On low-angled slopes with tons of lateral real estate make GS-size turns while getting into and out of your tuck. Initially grab that bully at the end of the turn just before transition.

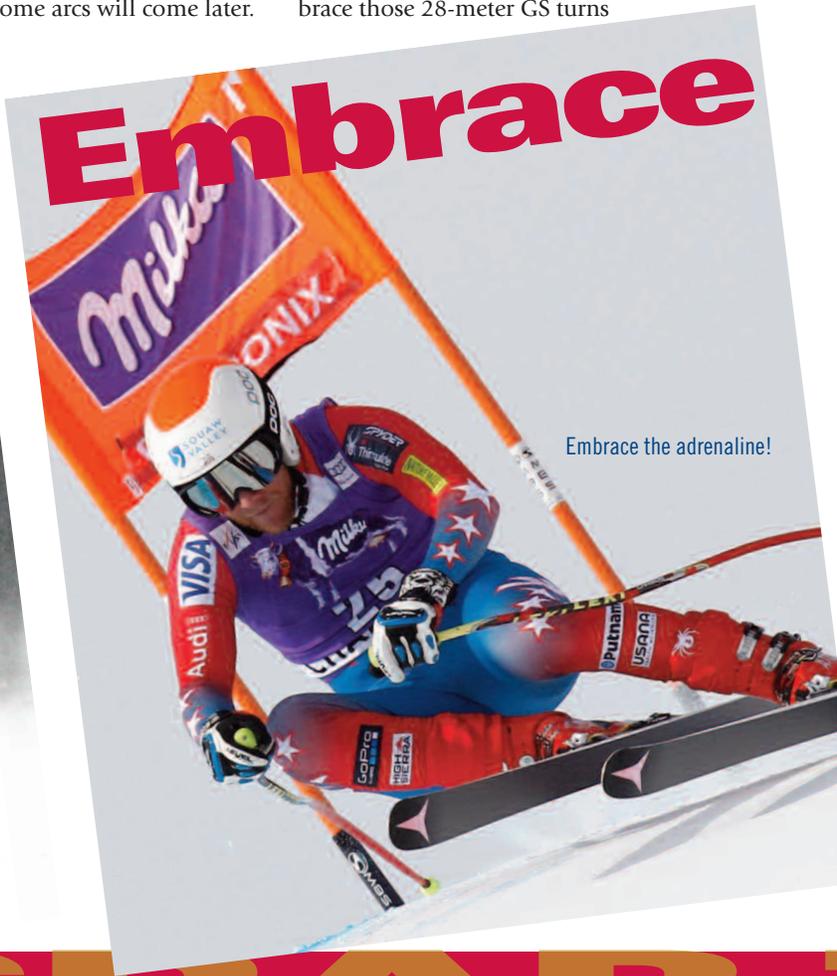
Obviously, this need to be quick. Getting into and getting out of the tuck quickly and efficiently is the trick. When this is comfortable, or should we say manageable, try some GS-size turns at slower speed, tucking through the turn itself. Don't obsess over the absence of carving. After mileage and time, your track will thin back down. Remember what you are mastering is the ability to get into and out of your tuck quickly. Sparking some arcs will come later.

**Mindset**

"Embrace the adrenaline!" is the mantra of Marco Sullivan. Marco should know, he has stood in the start house of more World Cup speed events than any other past or present U.S. Ski Team member. This is the mindset Marco uses when skiing over 80 mph in the shadow of Mt. Blanc on the World Cup downhill course in Chamonix France—a race that Marco has won. Marco also points out, that to back off is not only slow, but dangerous. Easy for the experienced Marco to say, but as he will tell you, this does not come overnight. Inching your way up to speed, even on your GS skis, is the key. Embrace those 28-meter GS turns



Grabbing the tuck—even momentarily—is what helped fuel Marco Sullivan to a successful World Cup career.



Embrace the adrenaline!

**GRAB**

# Adapt

Sullivan arcing into an aggressive line in Chamonix.



**Remember, you are going to be going very fast, so even the smallest undulation will buck you around.**



Marco Sullivan at the World Cup in Santa Caterina will move from his left ski to his right ski then initiate his turn.

until you find yourself looking for speed. In SG, you are just going to take your GS skills up to a new gear. Stand at the start and smile. Marco would.

## Adapting your inspection line

Inspection is an art. Finding your fastest line will not be the path that Marco chooses. Don't feel deprived and succumb to World Cup envy by buying into the "A" Team line. Your fastest route to the finish is based on the skills you have and youth you do not. That's okay, you are not competing against Speed Skier Sullivan, but trying to find the fastest line for *you*. If this speed thing is new to you, there are good odds that the line you inspected will not be the line you end up skiing. Therefore, you need to have a broader net when you inspect. Unless the gate is blind, focus your inspection on the terrain. Any rolls, sidehills, depressions, need to be catalogued.

Remember, you are going to be going very fast, so even the smallest undulation

will buck you around. Imagine a professional golfer lining up a putt noting every ripple in the surface. Knowing what to expect ahead of time will allow you to be proactive, as opposed to that confidence-killing reactive state. During inspection don't just stand at the gate, but lower your eyes, put them at the height they will be when you are racing. This is the view you will have at speed.

## Solid traditional technique

Think traditional GS turn transitions. This is what Chip White the World Cup's winningest speed coach preaches; weight transfer then pressure. Move to the new ski early from a flexed position before you transfer your weight, then establish pressure. Ideally this is when completing the previous turn. What Chip is adamant about is the order of events. Weight transfer then pressure. If you choose to reverse this order, inform the ski patrol so they can be ready. While it can be beneficial to have other turn transition

strategies in SL and GS, speed is a different animal. Establish a platform, then move the body into the turn. You are outside ski dominant and stick to it.

If you can ski GS, you can ski SG. Take small, logical steps. Keep an aggressive mindset. With sound technique and a bit of mileage on familiar terrain, you too can find that extra gear that allows you to feel confident on course and thrilled in the finish.

By Ron Kipp

Photos: Getty Images



Ron Kipp has worked with the U.S. and Norwegian Ski Teams and is currently with the Squaw Valley-Alpine Meadows ski team.

# The Coach-Athlete Connection

by Lisa Densmore-Ballard, Chair, USSA National Masters Committee

I've never been more excited about Masters ski racing. That's saying a lot, as this will be my 26th winter on the Masters circuit. I'm always eager for it, but here's what's making me brim with extra enthusiasm:

**1.** In May, as your USSA Masters chair, I attended my first USSA Congress in Park City, Utah, an annual gathering of coaches, officials and ski racing administrators from around the country. The first morning, Tiger Shaw inspired all of us with his opening address, during which he unveiled USSA's updated mission, vision, core values and goals ([ussa.org/ussa-vision-mission-goals-values](http://ussa.org/ussa-vision-mission-goals-values)). I'm pleased to say that as a Masters community, we measure up, especially the parts about striving for athletic excellence, having fun, and life-time inclusiveness.

**2.** In my own pursuit of athletic excellence and enjoyment, and after many years of anticipation, I finally attended the annual Chile Camp in September, hosted and coordinated by Bill Skinner, and have thrown my hat into the proverbial ring in pursuit of an FIS Masters Cup title. The conditions at Valle Nevado and La Parva were icy, the hardest snow I've scraped my turns on in a very long time, but the trip was still terrific! I bagged three good races, but more importantly, I was fully an athlete again, with no coaching responsibilities. (I have been both coach and Masters racer since 1991.) Former USST member Marco Sullivan and former Canadian team member Anna Goodman were among the eight coaches who accompanied us to Chile. It made my day when Sullivan, a veteran World Cup downhiller, told me I had a good tuck; however, Goodman's advice in slalom, "to feel the entire front of my ski pull through the top of the turn rather than just the ski tip," may do more to help me succeed in my quest for a crystal globe.

Or maybe not.

**3.** Looking back, both Sullivan and Goodman were masterful in the ways they coached me — one a cheerleader, the other a technician, and both when I needed it. Good coaches support their athletes both skill-wise and mentally. My experiences in Chile gave me renewed insight into what it means to be both coach and athlete. Perfect timing, as I've finally updated my book, *Ski Faster! Guide to Ski Racing and High Performance Skiing* ([LisaDensmore.com](http://LisaDensmore.com)). Thank my husband and Masters racer, Jack Ballard, for giving me the nudge to get it done. It's been 17 years since the first edition was published, which was much earlier in my coaching and Masters ski racing careers. Our sport has sure changed, and so have I—I believe

for the better, due to my experiences as both coach and athlete.

As an athlete who has competed most of my life, I've experienced what it's like to train and race year after year while staying current with the latest gear, technique and tactics. Now, as a Masters racer, I still do it and feel it firsthand, which helps me relate better to the people I teach. It also keeps me sharp as a demonstrator and course setter.

As a coach, I work with many different ages groups, personalities, ability levels and skiing styles, which forces me to be aware of nuances in each person's technique and tactics. I have to find just the right words, drills and/or visual examples to help them improve, which is often different than what I'm working on in my own skiing.

Over the years, I've found a definite link between coaching and competing. Doing both has made me better at both. Thanks for sharing my passion for masters ski racing! See you on the slopes!



Lisa Densmore Ballard wrote the book on going fast—literally.

## Have You Seen Me?

Check your email for our bimonthly newsletter!

Every other month, we send out an e-newsletter with the latest news and updates, with live links to information you need. Have you been getting it? If not, contact membership, 435-647-2666 to be sure we have your correct email.

Or, it may be going into your spam folder. Make sure to whitelist—give permission to download—any correspondence from Bill Skinner, the sender of the letters ([bskinner@ussa.org](mailto:bskinner@ussa.org)). He has promised not to send investment opportunities from Nigerian princes, or miracle cures for impotence.

# Division News



## PNSA

By Rob Cravens  
pnsa.org

Greetings from PNSA Masters! We have fresh snow in the Cascades as of October 1st. A full race schedule is on tap.

PNSA will offer 28 events and three scheduled speed trainings. The lineup includes eight SC's, eight GS's, 10 SL's, one GSt and three SGt.

We have several new Masters members trickling into PNSA. Peter Christian is our new member coordinator and is welcoming/assisting these members. Our division has several new alpine program directors: Brad Saxe, Mount Hood Race Team; Seth McCadam, Mount Hood Academy; Steve Loewy, Team Alpentel/Snoqualmie; and Dan Henry, Mount Spokane Ski Racing Association. The directors bring leadership and experience into their new responsibilities. These clubs are primarily junior race clubs. However, they support all levels of ski racing. PNSA Masters extend our congratulations to these individuals and look forward to working with them.

Please say a "thank you" to your fellow PNSA Masters leadership group. Contact information and pictures of these hard-working members can be found on our website at pnsamasters.org. Last season, we accomplished quite a list of projects: 501(c)(3) tax coverage for PNSA Masters funds, complete rebuilding of pnsamaster.org website, current and up-to-date Facebook page at "PNSA Masters," complete

updating of the PNSA Masters ACR (Alpine Competition Rules) section, welcoming of new members, RA prep and skiracereg updating, replacing of our PNSA Masters logo inventory, etc. We have also continued the annual tradition of donating to PNSEF, for junior scholarships. This donation is administered through PNSEF. PNSEF selects one junior female and one junior male recipient of the "PNSA Master Scholarship".

Keep the snow dances going! Forecasts are predicting a 100%-plus season for the PNSA division. I look forward to seeing you all on the slopes.



## Intermountain Masters

By Stew Marsh  
IntermountainMasters.org

Here it is, October, 2016. Snow has already made its way to the Utah mountains. It seems like every year we have that so-called September tickler. We are now officially seven weeks away from multiple ski resorts opening in Utah! Once again, I am looking forward to another great race season. As always, all divisions are looking for ways to increase the number of participants at races. If any of you have suggestions, I am open to any and all of them as we move forward this season and those to come.

Meri Stratton and Bill Skinner again have teamed up to make this winter's races exciting and fun. Where else in the country can you get that? Please check our Intermountain Masters website or skiracereg.com for schedules closer to the race date and for any changes. Again, there will be the ever-popular Sun Valley Skoch Cup SG, GS and SL on Warm Springs! Park City Mountain Resort will be hosting the

three-day FIS, Western Regionals and the Loritz/Pendelton Cup, Feb. 3, 4 and 5. This will be a three-scored

event, so make sure you are ready to compete on our home turf.

Once again, registration for Intermountain races remains easy. Just use the online race registration site, skiracereg.com.

Intermountain Masters continues to be partnered with Jans Mountain Outfitters. Be sure to check out jans.com for all your needs and the latest in race equipment. This web site makes it easier to locate and get product at incredible Masters racers-only discounts, while at the same time enhancing their sponsorship with Intermountain Masters with a small monetary give-back of all items sold online.

We welcome back our long-time race sponsors, team orthopedic surgeon and Masters racer Dr. Phil Davidson; Team Healthcare, Dr. Don Cofer; Tom Reinerth; Brent Amsbury at Park City Ski Boot and Sun Valley's Formula Sports for their support of the Sun Valley Skoch Cup races. Whenever you visit any of our sponsors, please be sure to let them know you shop their store because of their support to Intermountain Masters.

While many of you will be getting new skis, boots, for the upcoming season, this is a reminder that there are many of our friends and past competitors who have stopped racing. Many of them I have spoken to remind me that they do not have updated equipment anymore. I know all of us have a wall full of GS skis, SL skis and even SG skis that have very few miles on them. If you want to make them available,

we may be able to get the message out to those past competitors that there are skis available. Please reflect back on those friends who may have decided a few years back to not race anymore and remind them it is still fun and that they can get one-day licenses

to race. It would be great to see those faces again among our ranks. The Intermountain board is looking forward to another exciting, competitive racing, party-filled season. Get your boards out and sharpen the edges...it's game time!



Don Sears grits his teeth and flies at Big Sky.

# Division News



## New England Masters

Nadine Price  
nemasters.org

After The Winter that Wasn't, New England Masters is gearing up for a terrific season.

Your ever-diligent and hardworking board has planned a banner season of racing and parties, and we're working on more clinics and training opportunities.

This season, the fun will start early with the Boston Ski Expo, which is being held at the Seaport Convention Center Nov. 10-13. With USSA's generous assistance, we will be setting up at the show for the ninth straight season. We will be unveiling a new and improved look, and plan on continuing to build our brand recognition, and strengthen our existing connections with other industry stakeholders while forging new ones. The very cool 2016-17 USSA Masters National poster will be unveiled and available at the Expo. Make sure to stop by, check it out, and take a few posters for your tuning bench and favorite shop and watering hole!

And then, just in case the Ski Expo wasn't enough to totally turn your attention to ski racing, the World Cup will be coming to Vermont, holding ladies' SL and GS races at Killington on Thanksgiving weekend! Although not exactly part of our schedule, many of us will be working at the races; it will be an event not to be missed by anyone even remotely interested in ski racing!

Following closely on the heels of the

World Cup, we will be back at Killington in mid-December with our almost-annual seventh edition of the now-traditional joint venture with ASRA. Events will include an SL and a GS and, of course, a party! Thanks to the tireless efforts of our scheduling chair, Bill McCollom, and his committee, we have another fabulous roster of races. We will be visiting most of the old, and new, favorites and returning to Okemo and Suicide Six for Eastern Regionals at the end of February. The event will include a Saturday SL at Suicide, a Sunday GS at Okemo and two SC's on Monday. Both of these SG's, along with the two earlier SG's at Stratton, are all included in the National Speed Series. This will give New Englanders a real leg up on the National Speed titles, so don't miss them!

We will once again be returning to Waterville Mar. 3-4 for the Sise Cup Finals. In addition to being scored as usual for Sise Cup and Class points, the Friday GS will be our annual Legends Cup, a handicapped race in honor of those we have lost. Saturday's events include an SL and a gala Banquet and awards celebration. Both races will be counting toward season-long standings, so many final battles may not be decided until this event. Make your reservations now!

With just over two months before the first race, you still have enough time to get back in shape. So push those donuts aside and get to work! The foliage is perfect for enjoying a brisk hike or mountain bike ride and your skis are just waiting to be tuned and waxed. Do your snow dance,

say your snow prayers, cross your fingers, and Mother Nature will, no doubt, deliver a fantastic season.

As always, our series is made possible and enhanced by our sponsors. We especially thank Artech, for its generous and continued support. Please visit the Sponsors page on our website (nemasters.org) and when you have need or use for any of the products or services our sponsors provide, we hope you will visit them first.



## Rocky Mountain

Lauren McMath  
Beckos  
rmmiskiracing.org

The ski gear is coming out of summer hibernation! Several Rocky Mountain Division Masters racers

have been spotted wandering around in ski boots and washing dishes in helmets! The snowflakes started falling in the higher elevations in September, the snow-making guns came out in early October, and everyone is at the ready to jump on their skis as soon as the lifts start turning.

We will kick off the season with our annual fall awards party at the American Mountaineering Museum on Nov. 19. The race schedule is coming together (check our website for the latest updates). We are back at many of last year's venues, but are also revisiting some we have not seen in a few years. We continue to host DH, SG, GS, and SL events to cover the needs and wants of the speed fanatics and the tech

The Rocky Mountain Division team





Dan Simmons at Big Sky

Booka Law (Booka Smith), Tanya Muller and David Garner, Bob Benson, Charlie Hauser, Lee Kaufman, Barry Ottley & Bob Tengdin, The Minnesota Connec-

tion (Bob Benson, Charlie Hauser, Lilla Gidlow, Winfried Raabe, Tom Patterson and Jerry Sorensen), Jeanette Saylor, The Tengdin Family, and A Racer's Edge (Chuck Ginsburg.)

We look forward to seeing all our Rocky Division racers again soon, and hope to see many visiting from other divisions again—we have races, powder, AND sun! See you out there!

skiers. There are also many great season pass options, training programs, and training camps in Colorado. In the 2015–16 season, we welcomed 25 new racers in the Rocky Division. We hope to welcome them all back for the 2016–17 season and to continue to encourage more to join. Whether you come for challenge, camaraderie, or fresh Colorado mountain air, there's plenty of fun for everyone in the Rocky Division!

We will be working this season to grow both our membership and volunteer base and hope you will all join us in this effort. Thank you to the RMM board, officials, volunteers, and sponsors from last year—it takes many people to make it all happen! Thank you to our 2016–17 race sponsors: Aurum Food & Wine (Phillips Armstrong), McGrath Farms (Dennis McGrath), Lori Hamilton & Jonathan Wolf, Kevin Butler, Phillips 66, John Davis,



The spoils of victory at the Summer Fun Nationals

# Division News



## New York State Snow Masters Series

By Jack Eisenschmid  
nymasters.org

Welcome to the 2017 season!

With winter fast approaching, it won't be long before we get back on our skis and do what we all like to do best...race! This will be the 45th season for the NY State Masters, and we once again will have a great race schedule. This year we will have a total of 18 races and nine race days. We also have a very nice blend of races consisting of 11 GS's, five SL's, and two SG's to test all abilities! The great news is the Masters Eastern Regional Championships are at Okemo, Vermont again this year. The Okemo race crew did a great job at the 2014 Masters Nationals, 2015 and 2016 Eastern Championships. This year's event will include SG, GS and SL.

We will begin with a pre-season race at Holiday Valley on Dec. 18, we hope. This will be a joint race with our good friends, the Ontario Canada Masters. This will be a non-points event, with two-run GS races that day. Last year's event was a great day of racing, followed by an après race party, with food & beverages. This will be a good warm up for the season.

We are still in the process of setting the 2016 schedule and confirming race dates. The first points race will be at Swain on Jan. 8, a GS/SL. Swain is always a great hill to get the season going. We are also planning an Ellicottville weekend,

with an SL at Kissing Bridge and a GS/GS at Holimont. February will be a Central New York weekend, with Song Mtn. GS/SL and Greek Peak, Rockett Prentice and Joan Skiff Memorial GS/GS. The Hunt Hollow GS/GS is scheduled for Feb. 11. Hunt Hollow is always a fun and challenging GS race. The end of February will be the Eastern Championships at Okemo, Feb. 25-27. The SG, GS and SL will count for NY Masters points. We will finish the season at Swain for GS/SL NY Masters Finals.

Please note that some of the dates and events are subject to change. So make sure you check the NY Masters webpage, nymasters.net or our Facebook page for any updates.

As always, the NY Masters have a great day of racing, getting in two-run races by 2:00. This leaves time for free skiing, as well as fun après race parties. The NY Masters welcomes all adult racers of any abilities, whether you are a seasoned U21 racer, Nastar racer or an adult beer league racer. This year, we are hoping to increase our race attendance, we would like to have some new racers join us.

Check out our website, nymasters.net, for the 2017 schedule, contacts, and registration information. We have also added a NY Masters Facebook page for everyone to access. The schedule will soon be up to date on the website and Facebook, however,

the schedule on the USSA site may not be correct. We also ask that you please visit the links to our many sponsors that help make our series great.

See you at the Start!



## Alaska

By Gary Randall  
alyeskaskiclub.com

We are going into another year, with the days getting shorter and the leaves on the trees changing colors.

There's even new snow on the mountains.

Alyeska Masters are getting ready for the fall get-together and sign-up party which will be held at Carl Swanson's home.

The annual ski swap is just around the corner. It's a large fundraiser for the Alyeska junior program, held at the Alaska Air Line Center on the UAA campus.

Carl Swanson will be holding a Masters camp the first week in December. You can contact him at carl@davisconstructors.com.

The Masters program for this year is about the same as last year, with four GS races and four SL races beginning the first week of January.

That's about all the news from up north. Hope to see everybody at Nationals!



# Division News



## Far West

By Dan Simmons  
farwestmasters.org

The weather folks are predicting a good snow year for the Far West. Weather or not, we have great sched-

ule for the coming year, with 26 races. We kick out of the starting gate at Mammoth on Dec. 3 and 4 with a weekend of GS following a week-long Masters training camp, then on the shorter skis at Alpine Meadows for a weekend of SL Dec. 17-18. Other highlights for the season include the two GS's and three SL's at Heavenly Valley, and the Mammoth Memorial speed events at Mammoth, Jan. 19-22. The Mammoth Memorial is included in the National Speed Series. We also are looking forward to the Nationals at Mammoth, Mar. 13-18 and being joined by friends from across the country. The full schedule is at farwestmasters.org.

We welcome racers from other divisions at all of our events. Pack up the skis and take advantage of some of California's and Nevada's great mountains!



## Southern Masters

By Horst Locher  
sararacing.org

Looking back to the past winter season, it was unbelievable to experience the warm air penetrating the

eastern states in December and January. After cancelling races, it was hard to stay motivated for the remaining ski races.

Southern racers are anxious for an early winter, so we can make some crisp racing turns on hard-packed snow.

The first GS race will kick-off at Bryce Resort on December 18th. Thereafter, the races will be held at Sugar Mountain, North Carolina. Other races will follow at est Virginia and Wintergreen, Vermont. In addition to the master races, the NASTAR races are always well attended among the Southern racers. The final SARA Championship will be held at Massanutten, Virginia on Feb 25 and 26.



## Central

Ryan Fuller  
midwestmasters.org

We're back at it again this season, with a great schedule, including a return to Chestnut, Illinois, and

Welch Village for an SL weekend; our season opener at Afton Alps; and our Central Regional Championships in Granite Peak and Spirit Mountain. We're also running our annual Cyr Cup races at Buck Hill once more, as a special team event. We're planning once again to bring a huge contingency to the Rocky Mountain Ski Cooper speed races in January, as we continue to work to get more Central folks on speed skis. We're also holding our 5th Annual Koznick camp this year at Copper Mountain, in November.

Our direction, as a program, has not changed, and we will continue to focus on increasing participation at our races by promoting them as special events, each with a unique character. We continue to use social media, online advertising, and online marketing tools to aggressively reach out to our membership and potential members. As we are now also a NASTAR club, we will work with NASTAR for the Midwest Regionals event as well as the local Pacesetter Trials here in our division with the ultimate goal of bridging the gap between these organizations and introducing more people to USSA Masters racing.

Looking forward, we are very excited for this season. Our calendar is packed this year, as we look to rebound from a poor winter season last year. We are also excited to be introducing free coaching on race days to new members. We have several licensed USSA Coaches who have volunteered to help chaperone new racers through their first race day. We hope this will help new participants adjust to the format of our racing program. As of this publication, membership seems to already be trending upwards; we hope to see that trend continue here in Central!

If there are any questions about Midwest Masters, contact us at program.director@midwestmasters.org and we will get back to you.

We'll see you on the hill!



Mike O'Connor, Central Division

# Division News



## Northern Division Masters

By Fran Noel  
northernussa.org

Big Sky Resort and the Big Sky Ski Education Foundation got rave reviews from many Masters racers, coaches, officials and spouses regarding their experiences at last year's National Championships. Many of our Northern Masters are planning to drive out to this year's event at Mammoth Mountain, CA.

This season's activities will again begin in early December, with Lisa Densmore Ballard's "Get the Rust Off" training

camp, Dec. 7-11, at Red Lodge Mountain. For complete info and to request an entry form contact her at Densmore1@aol.com.

Our Masters race schedule will again be in conjunction with Intermountain and PNSA. See page three of this newsletter for the complete schedule. All of the races are open to competitors from any division, and most can be entered online at SkiRaceReg.com.

Training programs in Northern are again scheduled for Bridger Bowl, Big Sky, Lookout, Red Lodge and Whitefish.



## Helmet Rules for 2017

All USSA races now require FIS stickers on your helmet used for GS/SG/DH. No matter what your melon looks like,

let's keep the rind intact and the seeds inside.

Legends, age 85-89, from class 13: Bob Tengdin, Paul Rich and Gaetano Demattei



# NASTAR and Masters

by Bill Madsen, Director of NASTAR, U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association

More than 110 resorts and clubs across the country are hosting NASTAR races this season. The NASTAR national championships in Steamboat, Mar. 23–26 will be the culminating event.

The 2016–17 NASTAR season kicks off with the Putnam Investments National Pacesetter Trials at Copper Mountain, CO, Nov. 19. NASTAR spokesperson Ted Ligety and other members of the U.S. Ski Team will be racing to set the national standard that all NASTAR participants will compete against this season. Select Masters racers will also be competing to earn certified pacesetter handicaps against the U.S. Ski Team athletes, so that more Masters races can be scored as NASTAR events. In addition to current team athletes, U.S. Ski Team alumni and NASTAR regional pacesetters will be racing to earn their pacesetter handicaps. Daron Rahlves, Marco Sullivan and Casey Puckett will be hosting seven regional pacesetter trials across the country so that resort pacesetters can earn certified pacesetter handicaps.

We have been working closely with Global Reach Sports to upgrade the NASTAR timing and scoring software. The software package that has powered the

NASTAR program for 15 years is better than ever and scoring season-long race leagues has been vastly improved. In addition, the nastar.com web site is getting a new look and feel to improve functionality and navigation. The new site has been optimized for mobile phones and tablets so that results, rankings and NASTAR information is more easily accessed.

The NASTAR program has been through a number of transitions in its 48-

year history, but I am really happy that the program has found a permanent home under the USSA. I feel strongly that the sport of alpine racing needs to be tied together with a common scoring system so that recreational racers, the U.S. Ski Team and everyone in between can see where they fit into the alpine racing community. I look forward to racing with you this winter. Even if we are not on the same hill on the same day, we can still compete for the best NASTAR rankings.



Gary Randall, from Alaska, puts big hurt on a gate at Summer Fun Nationals.

# Phillips 66 Masters National Speed Series

## 2016 OVERALL CHAMPIONS

Group A/B Men	Pts
1 Luke Keenan (M02, PN)	234
2 Richard Slabinski (M07, IM)	143
3 John Beckos (M03, RM)	105
4(t) Franz Fuchsberger (M07, RM)	73
4(t) Kevin Vaughan (M04, IM)	73

## Group C Women

1 Jeanette Saylor (W07, RM)	125
2 Lauren Beckos (W02, RM)	102
3 Lisa Densmore Ballard (W06, N)	100
4 Chris Paup (W07, IM)	88
5 Dasha Kadulova (W04, IM)	77

## Pts

## Group D Senior Men

1 Knut Olberg (M10, PN)	170
2 Rand Little (M09, PN)	117
3 Graham Smith (M09, RM)	92
4 Lee Kaufman (M11, RM)	84
5 Nick Hudson (M10, IM)	79



2016 Speed series winners Knut Olberg (PN) and Luke Keenan (PN). Not pictured Jeanette Saylor (RM)

## 2017 National Speed Series Schedule

When	Where	What
Jan. 13–15	Ski Cooper, CO	DH/SG
Jan. 19–20	Stratton, VT	SG/SG
Jan. 19–22	Mammoth, CA	DH/SG
Jan. 23–25	Soldier Mt. ID	DH/DH
Feb. 3	Park City, UT	SG/SG
Feb. 17–19	49 Degrees N, WA	SG/SG
Feb. 23–26	Schweitzer, ID	SG/SG
Feb. 27	Okemo, VT	SG/SG
Mar. 13–16	Mammoth, CA (Nationals)	DH/SG



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Dana Alexandrescu  
 races at Summer Fun  
 Nationals.

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**The VISION** of the USSA Alpine Masters is to provide adult skiers with a lifelong opportunity to enjoy the challenges and rewards of alpine ski racing.

**The MISSION** of the USSA Alpine Masters is to make this vision a reality by developing, promoting, organizing and coordinating the highest level of alpine ski racing throughout snow country in the United States and internationally, and to fulfill our passion for and love of nature, the outdoors, mountains, freedom, self-challenge and accomplishment.

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### 2017 Major Events

**Phillips 66  
 Masters National Championships**  
 Mammoth Mt, CA, Mar. 13-18  
 DH/SG/GS/SL

**Phillips 66 FIS  
 Masters Cup/Western Championships**  
 Park City, UT, Feb. 3-5  
 SG/SG/SL/GS

**Eastern Championships**  
 Suicide Six, Okemo, VT, Feb. 25-27  
 SL/GS/SG/GS

**NASTAR National Championships**  
 Steamboat, CO, Mar. 23-26