

**MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING
OF
USSA MASTERS NATIONAL WORKING GROUP
Held Wednesday, March 19, 2008 at 2:00 p.m.
Mammoth Mountain Inn
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546**

1. Introduction:

A. The meeting was called to order at 2:05 p.m. and all present were asked to sign roll-call sheet.

B. Approval of March 2007 National Annual Working Group Minutes.

It was moved (Steve Slivinski) and seconded (Gary Randall) that the minutes of the 2007 National Annual Working Group Meeting be approved. Bill Skinner reviewed some of the items included in the Minutes, including the approval in 2007 of the change in how the Division's Cup would be scored at the Nationals in that now only the best 80% of each team would be included in the scoring, and reviewed that the results from approximately the past five year's Nationals had been recalculated to see if in fact the winning result would have changed. He advised the group, that it would not, but that the reduction to 80% of the racers in attendance from each division was to help encourage participants who might have felt they would hurt their respective division's team from winning the division cup. In addition, Bill Skinner reported that in furtherance of the resolution that was passed at the previous year's meeting concerning masters and adherence to FIS rules, FIS ski lengths will be "recommended" but not enforced for Masters, but that "stand heights" must be within FIS requirements. Bill also stated that a late fee for Nationals' entries was instituted, and that the hosting area was happy with the additional fee income.

C. Additional Items for Agenda.

The Chairman advised that "voting issues" would be inserted into the Agenda as Item 3.C after "Membership Discussion" and the following items would be renumbered accordingly.

2. Introduction of Working Group and others in attendance:

Bill Skinner introduced Keith McCauley, Chairman elect, and emphasized Keith's concerns with membership, additions of students and/or competitor license holders, and advised that Keith had met with Walt Evans and others at the last USSA Fall Meeting.

The following members and individuals were present and introduced:

Working Group Members:

Keith McCauley, National Chairman, USSA Masters
Sam Crowell, Far West President
Steve Slivinski, Intermountain Division Chairman
Gary Randall, Alaska Division Chairman
Rick Murphy, Northern Chairman
Carolyn Phillips on behalf of Richard Zimmerman, for PNSA Division
Steve Foley on behalf of Nadine Price, V.P. New England for Eastern Division
Jennifer Kaufman on behalf of Jim Roberts for Rocky Mtn. Division
Steve Lindemer, Midwest Masters representing Central Division
Ann Nordhoy, Masters FIS Representative

Others participants in attendance:

Bill Skinner, USSA Alpine Masters National Coordinator
Rosie Moschel, Intermountain Division serving as recording secretary
Marietta Frinell, Far West Division and next President for 2008-09
Bob Sarchett, Intermountain and member of Site Selection Committee
Rees Palermo, Far West VP, member of Site Selection Committee
Pepi Neubauer, Eastern Division
Bob Dreyer, Intermountain Division
Keith Thompson, Intermountain Division
Deborah Lewis, Far West – Nat'l Scoring & Results Coordinator
Esther Delli Quadri, Nat'ls Entry and Results Coordinator
Rauli Karjalainen, Intermountain Division
Sherry Marco, Far West Division

Absent: Past Chairman, Ned Dolan.

3. Reports

A. Bill Skinner, USSA Alpine National Masters Coordinator

Bill reviewed the contents of the meeting packet, specifically reviewing the Masters Time Line schedule for submission of information for newsletters and the Masters Competition Guide, as well as the firm date for the Western Regionals. Bill also stated that the USSA website had recently been changed and that the Masters page was also changed. Bill suggested that Northern Division exchange information with both Intermountain and Pacific Northwest Divisions to run “joint events” in the hopes of bolstering their schedule and attendance as they have done in the past. Bill advised the meeting that as of the date of the meeting, the only firm date and location he has for the major events is the date for Western Region Championships to be held at Park City February 5-8, 2009. He advised that although he thought he had a firm site for the Nationals, that site was not feasible and is still in search of a site for next year's National event. One possibility is for Rocky (Winterpark) to take the event.

Bill advised that it is North America's turn in the rotation to hold the IMC Criterium with Canada being the country which is next in line. However, the U.S. is working on a possible bid as well.

Bill next reviewed the current Masters membership numbers, and stated that we are down approximately 100 members, or approximately 5% and put the challenge to each division to recoup that number and increase our membership in USSA. In light of a membership drive, students at BYU and West Valley College have been working on a project putting together a Masters promotional DVD. Bill presented the rough draft of the DVD for those in attendance to view. He stated that he is trying to determine the best use of the final product, and that the cost of production is approximately \$1.00 per to package it ready for mailing. Those in attendance suggested that the DVD be mail available for linking via e-mail, and other electronic means.

Bill reviewed the use of temporary licenses, and that all of the divisions have made them work in that the forms have been properly completed and submitted to USSA, and that this sport is the only one which allows a "temporary" membership. A discussion from the floor ensued concerning the addition of "student" members (18 years and older) to our racing group, not requiring that they purchase full Masters licenses, in an effort to increase our base of racers for now and the future. It was emphasized that Masters overall membership numbers cannot reduce in order to maintain our participation under the USSA umbrella. A discussion was also held concerning allowing those who are not full Master's holding a masters license to participate in the Regional and National Championships (specifically, those under 21 years of age, as you must be 21 to purchase a Masters license). It was also noted that a racer holding a Competitor's License can now race Masters without holding a Masters License. USSA looks at our overall membership numbers, not that we have cross-over racers. The goal is to increase the number of Masters Licenses.

B. Membership Presentation.

Keith McCauley opened the floor to a general discussion of membership drop over the past 10 years. It was noted that it has dropped approximately 1/3, or 3,000 to 2,000. It was also noted that the initial drop occurred when USSA membership dues were increased drastically approximately 10 years ago, and that the numbers have lingered around the 2,000 figure since that time, and that the drop out was because it became too expensive for some to maintain a Masters membership if they only wanted to receive newsletters and information, and not race in the program, so they simply dropped their Masters membership (which was approximately \$45 at that time, raised to \$85, and now is at \$100).

Pepi noted that we (World Cup ski racing) no longer have ESPN coverage of the World Cup, etc. A general discussion was held concerning the change in focus to "skier cross" and other skiing events other than World Cup.

Keith McCauley stated that we are missing a marketing program to sell our Masters Program. He advised he has met with the USCSA which has 5,000 members, who are potential Masters members in the future, and that it should be a long term goal to acquire some of these potential participants into our program, and that the numbers from these additional racers may now show up in our membership numbers for 10 years. This is a potential reason for lowering our participation age to only 18 for those students. Keith requested a volunteer to work with Laura Sullivan in the East. Steve Foley advised he would look into finding someone. Keith also requested a volunteer to put together a presentation package to be used at the ski shows and within each division as a marketing tool. The same package could be used nation-wide for presentation at the shows and at colleges. (See Membership Presentation 2008 flyer which was included in meeting packet re USCSA, Volunteer Needed, New Racer Incentives, etc.).

Keith and Bill also emphasized the need for a “National” sponsor (in addition to Skier’s Edge, assuming they renew their sponsorship) as we need additional money sponsors to promote our program. Emphasis should be made that it could be considered a “donation” to USSA and tax deductible.

Keith stated that it is his goal that membership be increased by 10%, thus recouping the 5% loss and increasing our overall membership by another 5%.

General discussion was held concerning electronic use to get new people, that we need to be sure our various divisional sites are picked up on search engines, get on links to PSIA, etc., that “adult racing” is on our sites so that search engines will pick up our information. There are designers who can properly set up our various sites so that Google and other engines pick up our Masters sites. Each division was charged with making this happen. Steve Lindemer stated that they have this type of person constantly updating their information

C. Voting Issues:

(1) Reverse Second Run Order: A proposal was presented by Bill Skinner to reverse second run order at the Regional and National Events, from slowest to fastest within each class. Bill’s reasoning for such a change was to encourage racers to attend if they knew they did not have to go last in their class because they were slow. He emphasized that the seeding for the first run still gives the better racers the advantage of running early on the first run. There was no discussion, other than some asked whether or not anyone had polled their own division’s racers on this issue. No one had. Bob Sarchett stated he did not believe this would encourage those who did not participate to come to a big event. There being no further discussion allowed, it was moved (Steve Lindemer) and seconded (Steve Foley) that there be a roll-call vote. The following members voted:

Intermountain, Steve Slivinski	NO
Alaska, Gary Randall	NO
Central, Steve Lindemer	YES

East, Steve Foley	YES
Far West, Sam Crowell	YES
Northern, Rick Murphy	YES
PNSA, Carolyn Phillips	NO
Rocky, Jennifer Kaufman	YES

The motion passed 5 to 3.

Bill Skinner queried of Deb Lewis and Esther whether or not the current timing program could reverse the order. They both responded "no" and that at present, it would have to be manually done in each class. Deb Lewis said she would check with the program writer about whether or not the program could be revised to accommodate the new running order for second run.

[Note from recording secretary: at this point Ann Nordhoy advised that she was allowed a vote, but was overruled by Rosie in error, and should have been allowed to vote on voting members as a member of the Working Group, as was pointed out after the meeting adjourned, as stated in the Masters Competition Guide 2008 on page 13].

(2) IMC Criterium Selection Criteria. Bill Skinner presented a proposal, that in the event the U.S. is awarded holding of the 2009 IMC Criterium, that some kind of quota system be used because only approximately 100 U.S. Masters racers are allowed to participate in the IMC Criterium when held in the United States (assuming that the entire allowed European field has been filled by European Masters racers). The group was advised that in the past, entries were accepted from U.S. Masters racers on a "first come, first served" basis, and the remaining entries received from U.S. Masters racers were waitlisted pending cancellations of U.S. racers, or the European teams not filling the remaining slots. It was noted that the age limits are different for participation in the Masters FIS races, starting at 30 instead of 21 years of age. Bill stated that the possible sites are Park City or Mammoth Mtn. for the 2009 event, if the U.S. receives the award. It was proposed (Steve Lindemer) that the quota system be similar to the quota system used for the Nationals, with the divisional chairman accepting the entries and filling their respective quotas, but that no bonus be awarded to the division who would be hosting the event, similar to that currently used for the National downhill field.

It was moved (Steve Lindemer) and seconded (Gary Randall) that a quota system be established for the IMC Criterium, based on the percentage of each division's membership in USSA, as currently established for the National downhill, based on percentage established by the division's Masters membership numbers to the total number of Masters members in USSA.

All divisions voted "YES" and the motion passed unanimously. [Recording secretary's note, Ann Nordhoy did not vote as FIS representative, on this issue and her vote should be sought and included].

(3) Proposed new wording for age 18 rule.

[KEITH, I'M NOT CLEAR ON THIS MOTION'S WORDING.... SO YOU MAY NEED TO CORRECT IT]

A discussion was held concerning the age limits to be established on allowing Alpine Competitor and Student License holders to race. Currently the rule reads (1) Alpine Competitor membership holders 18 years and older may race in Alpine Masters races; and (2) Alpine Student membership holders 18-22 years old may race in Alpine Masters races. It was pointed out that Student licenses are good until 25 years of age. Keith noted he had no attachment to his proposed language of 18-22 (shown on the back of the agenda as "Proposed new wording for age 18 rule") that it was just a random choice. Bill Skinner noted that USSA will not let us do what is proposed in the balance of Item 1 and Item 2 on the back of the agenda (i.e., allowing underage non-Master's license holders race in Regional and National events, or purchase temporary licenses because of liability issues, etc.). After a general discussion about getting more young racers into the program, the following resolution was moved and passed:

It is moved (Gary Randall) and seconded (Carolyn Phillips) that Alpine Student and Competitor membership holders 18 to 25 years old may race in Alpine Masters races, except Regional and National Championships.

The motion carried unanimously.

It was noted that the current age rules #3 and #4 would remain unchanged, therefore the current #3 would be renumbered #2 and the current #4 would be renumbered #3, as effectively, #1 and #2 have been combined.

D. Divisional Chairpersons Reports

Alaska. Gary Randall reported that there are currently 60 participants in the program; however, only 18 have Masters licenses. He advised their program is more of a "layback" program, races are not sanctioned because non-license holders are allowed to race. Short discussion (Bill Skinner) about eliminating Alaska's schedule from the handbook because the races are not sanctioned. Gary advised he will do what he can to get all racers licensed and sanctioning agreements sent in for their races.

Central. Steve Lindemer reported that a lot of races were scheduled because the membership seemed to want them, but as the season progressed, participation went down, so they have scheduled fewer races for next year in the hopes of increasing participation at each event. Steve noted they have an excellent website and a special link for each participant which contains a database of each participant's profile and history like a "baseball card" with all of racer's information. He stated that the "Midwest Masters" runs Central Division races. They had good snow early on. Steve also reported

he is already working with college kids setting courses, and has coached some of them, so will continue to try to recruit college racers into the Masters program.

Far West. Sam Crowell reported the division has an excellent website and web master in Deb Lewis. Results are posted by the next day. Also reported colleges as Stanford, Cal, Chico have participated, but the main problem is scheduling issues which Far West is attempting to address. This year Far West “bundled” races by having SL weekends, GS weekends and special speed series to reduce the amount of equipment racers needed to travel with to races. He noted that the weather affects the participation in and holding of Far West area races greatly. This year, did not have good snow early on, then bad weather and cancellation of other races. He noted Far West has a very aggressive and successful scholarship program in place, giving away \$37,000 last year, and over the term of the program, raising and giving over \$250,000 to athletes. He stated they have a lot of previous scholarship winners on the current USST, i.e., Marco Sullivan, Katie Hitchcock, Stacey Cook, all of whom have come back and helped the Far West program. Sam advised Far West had 20 new, first time racers this year, and each one is recognized at the races and given a bottle of wine and hat as acknowledgment for their participation as a “meet and greet” idea to make the new racers welcome. Sam praised Mammoth for stepping up at the last minute to take on the Nationals, showing scheduling flexibility to make it happen and to work around other events already scheduled on their calendar.

Intermountain. Steve Slivinski reported that Intermountain experienced a good year – that the weather cooperated in holding races. He noted that participation was off at some races where traditionally it had been higher, but that other events at smaller areas had higher than expected turnouts. Steve noted that the addition of college student racers added fun to the races, thanks to Bobby Skinner bringing many of the athletes he coaches as well as other college racers to the events. A good time was had by all, the mainstay as well as the new young racers to Masters.

Northern. Rick Murphy reported that he has increased membership by enforcing the rules that you must be a Masters license holder to race in sanctioned events, getting officials trained so that it is possible to have sanctioned races, offered deals to people who joined USSA by giving free entry, etc., and other miscellaneous perks. Joint meets with PNSA and Intermountain helps with membership, and scheduling races in the spring (now) for next year coordinates with junior and YSL races at areas so the races are more profitable for the areas. Rick noted they have an improved website, with the addition of his wife as webmaster. He advised it was the first time ever that Northern was able to procure sponsors for local races, and he was amazed at how easy it was to get the sponsors. He praised Bill Skinner for the good job he continues to do.

PNSA. Carolyn Phillips (sitting in for Rick Zimmerman) reported that their division has good e-mail contact with its members and through the website, that PNSA has had a good year with lots of snow, in fact, sometimes too much, in that one of the passes closed for 60 hours, but all races were held. She advised that they almost lost the PSNA Championship and did lose the Mission Ridge race, because of some of the

“masters attitude and complaining” and reminds everyone that they should work on their attitude if we want to maintain good relations with ski areas and the public. Carolyn noted that participation down, but doubling up on some races, i.e. running 4 races instead of just 2 on a weekend, more profitable for areas. They currently use Active.com to register, and Active charges an additional \$3.00 fee for using them per entry. There are two more race weekends to be held after the Nationals. Carolyn also stated that they have several Canadian racers (i.e. Bobby Swan) who come down and purchase “temporary licenses” to race in PNSA and PNSA pays the fee for them, as most are already Canadian masters, but must be covered by USSA, hence the temporary licenses.

Rocky. Jennifer Kaufman (for Jim Roberts). Jennifer reported that this year they filed for a 501(3)(c) nonprofit organization, they have a program for juniors, and that their division does all 4 events. They have had a new online registration program built and have a good website and get their results posted promptly. In regard to the online registration program, Bill Skinner noted that he looked into it for USSA, and that it is rather expensive. Jennifer concurred that they paid quite a bit for the program, but that it works great. Jennifer remarked that holding “big events” (i.e. the Region Championships) actually hurts their regular participation because it puts a lot of races onto the schedule, back to back weekends, so there are too many races. They also are trying to reach out to colleges and Nastar racers to participate in Masters.

East. Steve Foley (filling in for Nadine Price who was injured in the downhill race) reported that the East’s main focus is on participation and membership, and that they have had some non-renewals in those who did not participate much, but have picked up new people who race more. He noted that Bill McCollom is talking to Whitefish for next year’s Eastern Region Championships.

FIS Report. Ann Nordhoy, as our Masters FIS representative, reported that this year there are 20 U.S. Masters going to the Criterium in Austria. She noted that there are complaints generally from FIS counties about the way Austria schedules its races, in that they have 8-9 races, but get around the 2 per country rule by scheduling them before January 1st as they are then “not part of the system” and getting the Criterium, which also doesn’t count against their 2 per country race rule. Because of this, Austrian racers do not need to leave their own country to race. Ann is hoping that there will be a change in the overall Cup rules so that a racer must participate in two countries to qualify for an overall award. She stated it has also been suggested that FIS have races in New Zealand and Japan who are both member countries of FIS. There is also the issue that Europeans want “one run giant slalom races.” There are several other countries besides the U.S. that want two run GS races, i.e., Great Britain and Norway. Ann stated that for the most part, she has had no direction from the U.S. Masters Committee.

E. Presentation by Ryan Fuller on “The Ability Class System.” It was noted by Steve Lindemer that Ryan Fuller had been injured and would be unable to make the scheduled presentation, thus the presentation was tabled.

4. Old Business.

A. Divisions Cup Scoring – this item was covered earlier during the review of the 2007 Minutes.

B. Masters Website – this item was covered by Bill Skinner during his report at the beginning of the meeting.

C. Spirit of Masters Awards – no comments at this time on this item from the divisions.

5. New Business

A. Age 18 rule revised. This item was covered earlier under the voting issues in Section 3.C.(3).

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosie Moschel
Acting Recording Secretary

Attest:

Keith McCauley
Alpine Masters National Chairman