

# FAR WEST MASTERS

## SKI RACING



## THE FORERUNNER

APRIL 20, 2024

### Mission Statement

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

### Membership Info

- Both a Far West Masters and a USSA membership are required to race with us.
- Far West Masters membership for 2023-2024 for new and renewing members:  
[masters.AdminSkiRacing.com/farwest](https://masters.AdminSkiRacing.com/farwest)
- USSA Alpine Masters membership: [Masters Getting Started: usskiandsnowboard.org](https://usskiandsnowboard.org)
- First time racers get a temporary bib.
- Questions? Contact [membership@farwestmasters.org](mailto:membership@farwestmasters.org)

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### President's Message: The season's not over!

Palisades and Mammoth are planning to stay open until at least Memorial Day, 2024. So, get out there and enjoy those Spring mornings in the mountains!

Although we started out this season with very meager snow conditions, February and March storms have brought the snow pack up to slightly above average. My favorite memory of the weather this season was holding 2 days of slalom training in significant rain this December. Although we ended up only holding 9 1/2 races out of a scheduled 18, it was a helova lot better than last season! And, at least Mammoth was able to provide a couple of GS's for us in mid-January. Sorry about the weather.

But those of you who went out of Division to Wisconsin, Colorado, or British Columbia were treated to some extra wonderful events. We do try to schedule around these so not to be in conflict with races locally.

And, were you aware Sun Valley will be hosting the World Cup Finals, March 16-24 next year? Seriously! A week-long event with 8 races including DH's! I recently heard they have been dumping millions of dollars into making this a top-notch event!

Congratulations to Bernard Cup winners Linda Crowell & Doug Fulton. Well done!

And, some other Season-Long awards go to:

- Damian Palfini, Best New Racer
- Dennis Yim, Most improved
- Cherie Williams, Spirit of The Masters
- Don Smith, Lifetime Achievement (he doesn't know yet!)

Also, the Far West Board of Directors has created a new position, Membership Recruitment Chairman, and Damian Palfini has agreed to take this position. Thank you, Damian!

We must have greater participation at our races or areas will simply not find it worth their while to host us. That said, let's all plan to race as much as possible next season, and get in better shape!

My thanks to all involved in making this program viable, and especially to the members of the Board. They put in a lot of time and work behind the scenes.

Have a great summer everyone!

- Rees

## Coach's Corner: The Times They Are A Changin' by Dick Banfield

*Dick Banfield is a coach with Palisades Tahoe Masters*

As a coach of both U14's and Masters for the past 40+ winters, I have seen a major shift in the arena of Inclusion, Diversity, and Acceptance. I am, by no means, an expert on this subject, and have found myself teetering on the edge of this slippery slope more than once. Crossing the line is easy to do and things can escalate quickly!

As society evolves, so do the norms of what is accepted or tolerated. What was once considered funny can now be hurtful, sexist, or contain many other forms of offensive language. For the sake of reference, Web up a Don Rickles video. People in our demographic might find it funny, others not so much... and that's the point. Offensive language is all in the ear of the beholder! It's all about how things are perceived, not about how it was intended.

As a culture, we have entered an era of hyper-sensitivity. As coaches, we now have to be very mindful of what we are saying and how it could be misconstrued and possibly used against us. This is not all bad. It forces one to really think about the content of one's statement before it is said, 'cause once you say it, there's no going back! My rule of thumb when working with kids is to never say something to a child that I wouldn't say if the parents were present.

With the emergence of "Safe Sport," coaches now have the added challenge of monitoring our actions, in addition to our words. Gone are the days of rubbing a skiers legs in the start!

Things are constantly shifting. Adapt or die. Don't fight change and it will keep you young. And, if things get sticky, take the high road... apologize early and often.

**All rules are in the 2024 Alpine Competition Guide:**

[https://usskiandsnowboard.org/sites/default/files/files-resources/files/2023/2024\\_Alpine\\_Guide.pdf](https://usskiandsnowboard.org/sites/default/files/files-resources/files/2023/2024_Alpine_Guide.pdf)

**Also review the 2024 Masters Competition Guide:**

[https://usskiandsnowboard.org/sites/default/files/files-resources/files/2023/Masters\\_Book.pdf](https://usskiandsnowboard.org/sites/default/files/files-resources/files/2023/Masters_Book.pdf)

## Race Report: Bernard Cup at Palisades Tahoe by Dennis Yim

*Dennis Yim is a racer with Mammoth Mountain Masters. He is also this year's recipient of the Far West Masters Most Improved Racer award.*

Without any racing experience nor professional training until I joined the Mammoth Masters Racing Team 4 years ago, every race was pretty challenging and the Olympic Valley GS race at Palisades Tahoe wasn't an exception.

My first day began as I raced to the parking lot at 7:15 am, just in case I might not find the registration desk at Olympic village in time. I was one of the first to arrive. (It was a good race.) And soon many familiar faces showed up wearing racing suits, chatting about the weather forecast and local conditions. The weather was pretty cloudy and snowy with low visibility. Inspection started on time and coach Pierre Jeangirard explained to us how to prepare for the ROAD and attack it and with what direction, how to carry the speed and how to dump it. I felt like I needed another degree to memorize it. The gates were pretty tight at the pitch and had quite a big offset for the rest. The surface was quite firm, well ripped and bumpy as usual with 45 racers ahead of me.

The 2nd run gates seemed familiar - kudos to coach Pierre, nevertheless my mission was how to attack the Road. I ran too straight and it cost me, I screamed and barely managed to finish the first day race.



Dennis Yim at the top of the course with coach Pierre Jeangirard.

The second day was a bluebird day and the mission was the same - how to attack the Road - managed to finish 2 runs but the lesson I've learned was how important to



execute the little details during the training, it cost me several seconds.

During the race, I was truly inspired by the M12 racers (wishing I could ski like them when I am in that group.) thru the M1 racers (wishing I was able to ski like them when I was young. ). Many of us gathered at the finish line and watched the competition hooting and hollering as the leader board kept on changing to the end.

The 23-24 season final race was extra special to me - the Most Improved Skier Award - truly honored and humbled. Thanks so much Coach Pierre and please do not give up on me, I can improve every year!!

Special thanks to Palisades Tahoe Racing Department to facilitate World Cup level preparation under the weather conditions! We had 4 runs in 2 days, every run was quite a little different. Can't wait to go back next year! You guys are awesome!!!

## **Race Report: Bernard Cup at Palisades Tahoe by Nancy Gieske**

*Nancy Gieske is master's racer with Mammoth Mountain Masters and Diamond Peak Ski Education Foundation*

Many of the racers arrive around 730-8am to check in. One can feel the excitement and perhaps anticipation in the air for two days of racing on Exhibition at Palisades. It's been 4 years since a race was held for FW Masters on Exhibition - the course with the road ~1/3 way down followed by a blind gate, then it's all downhill.

By 830am racers are getting anxious to get on the hill to inspect the course (from 915-945am) and warm-up for a 10am start. Some question, "why can't we load before 9am?" Must be the pre-race jitters as Palisades publishes well lifts operate daily 9am - 4pm.

Watching racers routines: some racers arrive with one pair of skis, some with two pair of skis. For those racers with two pair of skis, some leave the race skis at the bottom, some bring the race skis and warm-up skis to the top of the course. Mike Braun asks me after I'm through the lift gate, "Nancy, you want a tip [sure], leave the race skis at the bottom, why carry them to the top?" Frankly, I never gave it a thought. I started carrying an extra pair of race skis just the last couple years thinking they should naturally be at the top. It was a good suggestion as it's more than a fair amount of effort carrying race skis on the lift along with a boot bag containing whatever might be needed (e.g., extra pair of gloves in case one is dropped on the lift, extra pair of

goggles, an extra top layer and buff, hand warmer, snacks, water, that special race wax, a cork and gummy, etc.). I get on the lift and Coach Wenceslao Lada, whom I hadn't met before kindly asks "are you good, okay" once I loaded with all my baggage.

Day 1: Friday, April 5th was cloudy with on/off snow conditions and wind while racing and standing around.

Racers are a hardy breed, however. Some of us unused to contending with various ruts/bumps on a course early on thought it was a quite the ride but were still elated to race and finish in one piece. It's rewarding being around so many athletes that have a race ready mindset despite the conditions and appreciate the effort to prepare a course.



Nancy Gieske at the top of the course on Friday, April 5 (Day 1).

J.C. Fat

Day 2: Saturday, April 6th. All arrive with a smile on their face - it was a beautiful, warm, bluebird race day! We look up the course to see what Exhibition will bring us (the gates, surface condition). The course initially was not racer ready (what?), however, the slipping crew did a nice job preparing the course for Runs 1 and 2. Whew! During inspection as we're standing above the road, I inquire on how to tackle the delays before the road and the gate after the road, coach Pierre says: "it depends on the exit, position of the gate after/below the road, which we can't see yet." Ahh, I forgot that part of training. Coach Ryan asks, "if I'm good with the road, any questions?" I'm thinking, I hope I don't screw this up (again)! The last race of the season resulted in an uplifting day as many gathered at the bottom of the course under the Palisades Tahoe clear blue sky and warm sun replaying our turns between gates with a smile or grimace.

Finally, there is an end of season banquet - first one since 2019. The evening provided a fun and relaxed way to end the season. Folks mingled outside their ski

attire and enjoyed a good meal along with storytelling and awards. The audience was entertained with FW Master's President Rees Palermo's history of some of the FW Master's characters over the years – great stories to hear and more to look forward to with the FW Master's members. Already looking forward to seeing everyone next race season!

### 2024 Bernard Cup Results

The Bernard Cup is awarded to the top man and women racer in the overall combined standings of both GS races of the event based on age-handicapped total time. Congratulations to all of our racers!

Women	Competitor	Time (hdcp)	Actual time
1	Linda Crowell (W09)	3:06.38	3:52.98
2	Deb Lewis (W09)	3:10.90	3:58.63
3	Nancy Gieske (W08)	3:12.49	3:53.33

Men	Competitor	Time (hdcp)	Actual time
1	Doug Fulton (M09)	2:44.19	3:25.24
2	Mike Braun (M08)	2:44.74	3:19.69
3	Dan Simmons (M11)	2:45.89	3:41.20
4	Wences Lada Munoz (M08)	2:47.98	3:23.62
5	Rees Palermo (M09)	2:52.00	3:35.00

## Coach's Corner: You learn to ski in the summer by Steve Lehr

*Steve Lehr is a coach with Palisades Tahoe Masters, PSIA 3, USSA 200*

You learn to ski in the summer.

You can learn to ski in the summer if you use your head. Mental imagery is a powerful tool that can significantly enhance sports performance. Let's delve into this fascinating aspect:

### 1. What Is Mental Imagery?

- **Imagery** involves creating or recreating experiences in your mind. It's like a vivid mental rehearsal where you simulate actions, sensations, and scenarios related to your sport.
- Unlike dreams, imagery occurs when you're awake and consciously aware. It engages multiple senses, including sight, taste, sound, smell, and touch<sup>1</sup>.

### 2. Why Use Mental Imagery in Sports?

- **Enhanced Cognitive Skills:** Imagery improves focus, concentration, and decision-making. Athletes visualize successful techniques, tactics, and race scenarios.
- **Emotional Regulation:** It positively impacts emotions, reducing anxiety and stress. You can mentally rehearse handling pressure situations.
- **Physical Benefits:** Imagery activates neural pathways similar to real movements. It strengthens muscle memory and coordination.

- **Technical Precision:** Visualizing correct techniques and tactics helps refine skills.
- **Tactical Insights:** Athletes imagine race scenarios and their own tactical responses.

### 3. How to Use Mental Imagery: Try It Yourself

- **Relax:** Find a quiet space. Close your eyes and take deep breaths.
- **Create Vivid Images:** Imagine yourself performing flawlessly. Feel the sensations—the rolling of the foot to the edge, the rush of wind while skiing, or the precision of clean turns.
- **Engage All Senses:** See, hear, and feel every detail. Visualize the run, a series of turns, or a section of a course. Feel the skis, the contact with the slalom pole, the sounds of the ski on the snow. For free skiing visualize a smooth mogul run, a series of powder turns, or dropping into a steep chute and using all the right tactics and techniques.
- **Repetition:** Regular practice reinforces mental pathways.
- **Context-Specific:** Adapt imagery to different situations (free skiing, training, competition, injury recovery).
- **Positive Focus:** Picture success, not failure.

### 4. Use Imagery from other sources:

- **Memory:** Recall a memory of a skier or racer you actually watched that was technically and tactically good skiing.
- **Media:** Watch a skier or racer on digital media making turns, a run, or skiing in a tactical situation.
- **Pick Memories or Media** that will provide you with a beneficial performance goal. Focus on the movement of the hands for slalom pole contact, the upper body movement into the turn, or the aggressiveness out of the start gate. Or maybe the rhythm of powder turns on an untracked slope or snaking through the bumps on West Face using your full range of flexion and extension with a perfectly timed pole touch.
- **Overlay your image** into memory or media. Imagine it is you in the memory or media. Feel yourself making the movements, feeling the sensations. Rinse and repeat as summer is long.

This season is almost over for most of us. Some of the lucky ones will go to an on snow camp sometime during the summer or fall. For the rest of us we have Mental Imagery. Please give it a try. At least we don't have to lug our equipment around the airport!!





Racers at the top of the course at Palisades Tahoe on Friday, April 5th.

J.C. Fat



J.C. Fat and David Reeves at Palisades Tahoe on Friday, April 5th

J.C. Fat



Racers inspecting the top gates of the second course at Palisades Tahoe on Saturday, April 6th.

Melissa House





Racers inspecting the bottom gates of the second course at Palisades Tahoe on Saturday, April 6th.

Melissa House



Brad and Judy Colton



Sam Crowell and Brian Smith



Judy Colton and Joan Blumenfeld



Sam and Linda Crowell





First time racer Oren Jacob cutting the cake made by Liesl Panke which he purchased at our silent auction for the Far West Masters Scholarship Program



Women's Open Class Podium  
Linda Crowell, Nancy Gieske, Deb Lewis



Ron Beck, Dan Simmons, and Brad Colton



Men's Open Class Podium (day 1)  
Ryan Ritchie, David Law, Mike Shklovski



Men's Open Class Podium (day 2)  
Michael Braun, David Law, Mike Shklovski





Far West Masters Scholarship Program recipients. Each recipient gave a speech at the banquet talking about their racing experiences and goals for the future.



Bernard Cup Winners  
Doug Fulton and Linda Crowell



Far West Masters 23-24 Open Class Winners  
Linda Crowell and Ryan Ritchie



Damian Palfini, Best New Racer award  
winner and new Membership  
Recruitment Chairman



Rees Palermo with Cherie Williams, Spirit of the  
Masters award winner



## Be a race official

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

## Helmet & wax info

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

## Race reports

The best way to get to know our racers this season has been through race reports! Thank you to all of our racers who have submitted reports to The Forerunner.

If you would like to write about your experience at any of our races, we would love to hear about your experience. The best reports talk about the race in general but also include something personal about the race from the author - a goal, or experience, or something funny or unusual that happened at the race. For reference, a single column without photos is about 400 words.

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

## 2023-2024 Far West Masters Board

The Far West Masters board met on May 7, 2023 and voted on new board members for the 2023-2024 season. Many of our board members are returning, but a few have changed. Here is the list of our board members for this season, effective June 1, 2023. New positions are noted in the list.

President	Rees Palermo	<a href="mailto:president@farwestmasters.org">president@farwestmasters.org</a>	new for 23-24
Past President	Ray Tulloch		
Officials	Mark Mirviss	<a href="mailto:mmirviss@farwestmasters.org">mmirviss@farwestmasters.org</a>	
Race Scheduling	Mike Braun		
Membership	Mary Feddis	<a href="mailto:membership@farwestmasters.org">membership@farwestmasters.org</a>	
Communications	Melissa House	<a href="mailto:forerunner@farwestmasters.org">forerunner@farwestmasters.org</a>	new for 23-24
Secretary	Linda Crowell		new for 23-24
Treasurer	Hamish Butler		new to this role 23-24
Chief Technical Officer	Deb Lewis	<a href="mailto:dlewis@farwestmasters.org">dlewis@farwestmasters.org</a>	