

Suggestions to improve racer starts/membership – Discussion Outline

Category 6: Ski area commitments/changes – Late fees

Issue: Most ski areas charge late fees if race entry and fee aren't received one week before the race. This may discourage first-time racers (an additional charge, along with temporary license, entry fee, bib deposit, lift ticket), and it also complicates the registration process on race day. It may also cause hard feelings when a FWM racer has done his best to get the entry and information to the ski area (via FAX, phone call, or mail) and for some reason the information is lost by the race department.

Background: Ski areas want to know in advance of race day how many skiers to expect. The Far West doesn't yet have a computer registration system, although Deb Lewis is working on it. Other regions have instituted computerized registration, often through contract. Some ski areas have instituted a policy of waiving late fees for first-time racer, but not for FWM racers. Some ski areas will waive the late fee for FWM racers on a case-by-case basis, if there is a valid reason for doing so. Late fees make providing an on-line registration system more difficult due to variables involved (which areas, how much, date, race vs. per event, etc.)

Benefits: Once in place, a computerized system could help do away with all late fees, both for FWM and for 1st time racers. A waiver of late fees only for first time racers would have little impact on the race department, and might encourage first-time racers, such as local league or club racers. Ski area race departments may support this, since it brings in new racers and would have little impact upon the registration process.

Barriers: The computerized systems used by other regions cost approximately \$2-3 per racer, paid for by the region (it's done by a third party). Additional research might need to be done, even if the decision were made for FWM to fund such a program. Webmaster is working on how to do this ourselves. *Late fee waiver:* Ski area race departments may be reluctant to institute a general waiver of late fees for all Masters racers, as it has the potential to encourage racers to postpone registration until race day, wait to hear about weather predictions, etc. Race day registration could become very complex and lengthy.

Possible solutions:

Late fee waivers:

1. Check with race departments to see if they will waive late fee for 1st time racers.
2. Send FWM letter to all race departments formally requesting this waiver (WHO?)
3. FWM (from budget) could cover late fee for 1st time racers, if race dept. won't waive it.
4. Request that ski areas continue case-by-case waiver for FWM racers.
5. Initiate "discount for early signup" process, w/ full rate (includes late fee) by x date.

Computerized registration process:

1. Continue to research this process as done by other regions, and put article in newsletter periodically so that members understand the pros and cons.
2. Survey members to find out if they're willing to pay \$2-3 fee for system (WHO?)
3. Continue work by webmaster to institute the process using FWM website (Deb)

Discussion/Recommendation: Insititute now? More information needed? Who?

Which of these can be instituted easily?

What other information is needed?

Who to take lead getting information or making contacts, if lead person is needed?