

MASTERS ANSWER THE CALL...

BY LISA FEINBERG DENSMORE

It is difficult for ski racers to grapple with the concept of too much snow. We love snow, but enough is enough! El Nino wreaked havoc on the alpine masters circuit last year, dumping multiple feet on many host sites, particularly in the Far West.

The U.S. Alpine Masters Championships at Mammoth Mountain, Calif., were an exercise in patience, frustration and uncertainty, thanks to the fog and snow that blanketed the mountain for most of a week.

Will the scene in Colorado bring more of the same this year?

We won't predict the weather for the upcoming season, but a huge event this winter promises a repeated need for stamina, just as it did during the Colorado racing "marathon" of two years ago.

The FIS International Masters Cup (IMC) has two slaloms and two giant slaloms scheduled for Vail, March 16 to 19, which will be immediately followed by the 1999 U.S. Alpine Masters Championships at Winter Park, March 20 to 27.

As a prelude to these marquee events, true regional championships will take place for the first time in recent memory.

Sugarloaf USA, in Maine, will host the Eastern regionals, where racers can test their prowess on the slopes to be used for the U.S. Alpine National Championships in 2000. The Western regionals will be at Park



PHOTO: JIM MOORE

City, Utah, a regular stop on the World Cup and the major venue for the 2002 Olympics.

Last season, Mammoth Mountain demanded mammoth amounts of fortitude. In the end, after an abbreviated number of events, the most weather-proof racers won the medals. Between weather delays, the younger men (Group A/B) got in Super G, giant slalom (with a shortened second run) and slalom for a true combined result, while the women and older men (Group C/D) gritted their way through their downhill, giant slalom and slalom. The C/D combined medals became a test of technical tenacity, as downhill is considered a separate championship and no longer part of the alpine masters combined.

For the second straight year, Nicole Thompson (NO) and Greg Sarkis (EA) received USSA's Al Sise Award for Outstanding Masters Racing. Thompson would have repeated her performance of a year ago, when she posted the fastest time

in every women's event, were it not for the reappearance of Canadian Joan Wilson.

Even with Wilson's return after a four-year hiatus, Thompson aced the downhill and was top American in the technical events. Sarkis also maintained his momentum from the previous season, not only claiming the slalom, GS and Combined titles in Men's Class 3, but also posting the fastest

times among all of Group A in the technical events.

Joining the Sise Award winners as Ski Racing's Masters of the Year were Glenn McConkey (FW) and Haldor Reinholt (EA). McConkey and Corneil Russell (IM) had a tough battle in Women's Class 7. Russell was named to the 1999 Spyder U.S. Alpine Masters Ski Team, which is determined by place points at the nationals, with a gold in GS and a silver in slalom.

However, McConkey got the award based on her golds in the slalom, downhill and combined (which is based on race points) and her bronze in the GS. Reinholt was simply unbeatable winning the slalom, GS and combined in Men's Class 8.

Promoted

The USSA's new Masters Coordinator is Bill Skinner, a prominent Masters racer and coach in Intermountain. He replaced Ron Shepard mid-way through last winter.

the best

The 23 members of the 1999 Spyder U.S. Alpine Masters Ski Team are:

Class 1 (21-29)
Brian Walker (IM)
Nicole Thompson (NO)

Class 2 (30-34)
Christian Wolf (RM)
Susan Roberts (RM)

Class 3 (35-39)
Greg Sarkis (EA)
Joan Barthold (EA)

Class 4 (40-44)
Nick Maracich (IM)
Margaret Vaughn (EA)

Class 5 (45-49)
Gary Korza (CN)
Charlene Braga (FW)

Class 6 (50-54)
Knut Olberg (PN)
Nancy Godsil (RM)

Class 7 (55-59)
Toni Praxmarer (FW)
Cornel Russell (IM)

Class 8 (60-64)
Haldor Reinholt (EA)
Coralie Anderson (RM)

Class 9 (65-69)
Al Ansekis (NO)
Joan Skiff (EA)

Class 10 (70-74)
Bob Bernard (FW)
Diana Goodingham

Class 11 (75-79)
Bob Broadbent (NO)
Norma Lausmann (FW)

Class 12 (80+)
John Woodward

DIVISION CODE

AL	ALASKA	IM	INTERMOUNTAIN
CN	CENTRAL	NO	NORTHERN
EA	EASTERN	PN	PACIFIC NORTHWEST
FW	FAR WEST	RM	ROCKY MOUNTAIN

Ski Racing recommends checking out these sites for the latest results: Far West, www.farwestmasters.org; New England, www.nemasters.org; Intermountain, www.sunvalleyid.com/imd/masters; Rocky Mountain, www.rmmskiracing.org; and USSA, www.ussskiteam.com/masters.