



Jim Fain's NASTAR Newsletter

Jim Fain
8409 Pickwick Lane, #269
Dallas, Texas 75225-5323

In Dallas:
Tel. (214) 368-0913
Fax (214) 368-0916

In Steamboat Springs, CO:
Tel. (970) 879-7511



Miller Lite Years

The Finals Get A New Sponsor

By Jim Fain

© Copyright, 2005, JF Newsletters, Inc.
(This article is the second in a
series on the Finals)

Zeno Beattie recalls that 1982 was a "pivotal" year in his life. In rapid succession, he: (1) graduated from college; (2) saw the birth of his first son; and (3) went to work for World Wide Ski Corp., the Aspen ski marketing company that managed NASTAR.

"Several very important actions took place that year which would influence my life for decades," said Beattie.

In sharp contrast, the 1981-82 ski season was a period of drift and indecision for the NASTAR program and its showcase event, the Championships weekend. Before the season, officials of the Joseph Schlitz Beer Co. had informed World Wide that it was experiencing major financial difficulties. It would be unable to pay the cost of the 1982 NASTAR Finals and must abandon sponsorship of the program.

As title sponsor, the beer company had paid full expenses — travel, lodging, meals — for all racers who qualified for the Finals. The event grew from 39 competitors in 1969 to 80 in 1981. So the cost of producing the Championships weekend was the largest expense of sponsoring the overall NASTAR program.

Schlitz, once the No. 2-selling beer in the nation, was publicly known to have some cash flow problems for at least two-and-a-half years. But its management originally thought the difficulties were "temporary" and genuinely wanted to continue its relationship with NASTAR.

"Schlitz was a very loyal sponsor from the start of our program and saw us through our early, struggling years," recalled Mark Driscoll, a top-level NASTAR administrator during the period. "We definitely wanted to give them every opportunity to work out their money problems."

"Unfortunately, when their final decision (to abandon the program) was made, we did not have adequate time to obtain another sponsor for the 1982 Championships."

For the first time in fourteen years, NASTAR leaders needed to find a new title sponsor. In 1968 John Fry had a difficult struggle convincing Schlitz to sponsor an untested pilot program for a new concept of racing for recreational skiers.

Since then, NASTAR had grown into the largest alpine ski racing program in the world. With such broad exposure, several major corporations were eager to assume the role of title sponsor, whose responsibilities included paying for the substantial expenses of the Pacesetter Trials in December as well as the Finals in springtime.

Driscoll, who was in charge of marketing for NASTAR and World Wide, said the program was sold to Miller Lite Beer Co. in one brief conversation without needing to talk to anyone else.

"I met with Kevin Wolf of Miller Lite in the bar of the Jerome Hotel in Aspen," said Driscoll. (Continued on page 8)



Maria Morant, the most dominant recreational ski racer of her era, is shown winning the 1983 Championships at Steamboat.

Program Influences U.S. Skier Habits

By Jim Fain

© Copyright, 2005, JF Newsletters, Inc.
(This article is the second of a
series on the general program)

By the beginning of the 1980s, NASTAR had grown to become a major force in the United States ski industry.

The little pilot program that John Fry and his *SKI Magazine* associates launched in 1968 with only eight ski areas moved beyond the 100-resort mark for the first time in 1980. It finished the 1980-81 season with 114 participating areas.

In 1981-82 NASTAR headquarters reported that the nation's skiers recorded 223,783 "racer-days." (A racer-day consists of one individual making one or more official runs per day through a NASTAR course.) That number was nearly 100 times the 2,297 racer-days logged in 1968-69.

(Continued on page 12)



Billy Kidd (sporting 1970s hairstyle) is shown with Eleanor Davidson of Bend, Oregon, at the 1975 Finals at Steamboat. Kidd still retains a pin he won in the Stowe Standard Races when he was nine years old.

Rival Racing Programs

From its inception, NASTAR grew rapidly into an organization of robust health.

Skiers who had no racing experience prior to 1968 were enjoying the competition in increasing droves. Major corporations were hopping on the bandwagon, eager to provide money as sponsors and advertisers.

These two factors -- broad public participation and solid financial backing -- made NASTAR an attractive target for mergers, takeovers and copycat programs from other ski industry organizations hoping to cash in on the rising popularity of recreational racing. Most observers were convinced that such widespread popularity was created primarily by NASTAR, a program owned by SKI/Times Mirror Magazines, Inc.

One of the more interesting episodes in this regard involved the United States Ski Association, the governing body that rules practically all ski competition in the country except NASTAR.

Memorandums from two high-ranking SKI Magazine officials describe how the

Work on Photos

Many of the photos in this publication were more than 20 years old and needed to be restored for clarity. The work was done by Cooter's Village Camera in Dallas.

Tel: 214-521-4553

USSA:

-- 1) First approached Commissioner Bob Beattie in 1984 investigating the possibility of buying the recreational program.

-- 2) Then sent a letter threatening to create a program in direct competition with NASTAR.

"Bob Beattie has received a letter from Howard Peterson of the U.S. Ski Association informing him that the Ski Association intends to create a 'Ski Team Challenge' national race series in direct competition with NASTAR," wrote George Bauer of SKI in a memo dated January 19, 1985.

Bauer continued: "Beattie's advice, given the politics of the Ski Association and the current turmoil, is to remain aloof and not to respond to these exploratory queries. He advises that we be alert to the situation and feels that the current strength of NASTAR will enable it to survive a challenge if mounted by the USSA."

Responding to Bauer's memo, John Fry wrote: "At present, USSA has fewer than 25,000 members (about one quarter of NASTAR's annual participation) and lacks the money.....to mount a program that could compete successfully against NASTAR."

(Continued on page 4)

Old-Time Standard Races

John Fry, the creator of NASTAR, credits the French Chamois races for giving him the idea in the 1960s for a *truly national* ski racing standard.

But several U.S. ski areas had experimented years earlier with a similar race format on a strictly local basis. A top professional ski racer would run a course to establish a time for local recreational skiers to shoot for. Those who performed well would win a pin from the area.

One of the first areas to employ this format was Stowe, Vermont. Olympic silver medalist Billy Kidd still retains a pin he won in the Stowe Standard Races when he was only nine years old.

"The race was held on a run named 'Standard'," recalls Kidd. "Townpeople of all ages got a big thrill out of racing against a standard set by world-class competitors like Othmar Schneider, Anderl Molterer and Toni Sailer."

Kidd would go on to become the first American male to win an Olympic alpine medal in 1964. He also won both the amateur and professional World Championships in 1970. But he still cherishes that first pin he won as a nine-year-old in 1953.

"The fun and success I had as a child in those old Stowe Standard Races became part of the motivation that influenced me to choose ski racing as a career."

Similar races were held at several other old-time ski areas. But there was no national standard, and rules varied widely from one local area to another.

(Continued on page 4)



Claudette Colbert...a determined recreational racer



Maria Morant



George Hovland



Margi Albrecht



Ernest Alger



Beverly Francis



Lilla Gidlow



George Goodrich



George Hulbert



Phil Letourneau



Andrea Neiley



Margarethe Richter



Carol Sweeney



Tom Temple

In addition to the 13 persons pictured above, Steve Graham and Margareta Lambert were also multi-year champions.

Offshoot NASTAR Programs

In addition to its major event, the National Championships weekend, NASTAR developed many programs that demonstrated the organization's philosophy of inclusiveness for all ages and all forms of snow-sliding.

Most of the offshoot programs involved publishing rankings lists of racers with the best national handicaps in the various snow-sliding disciplines. Since results from all public NASTAR races around the country were sent to the company's computer center, it was a simple task for the computer to process those results into rankings by low-handicap performance.

The lists received excellent publicity in *SKI Magazine* and also in the Official NASTAR Guide, which was published yearly by World Wide Ski Corp. between 1980 and 1993. The Guide was financed by ski industry advertising sales and was distributed free to racers. Along with the publicity they received in the two publications, top racers sometimes were awarded merchandise prizes from various ski-related retail companies.

Most of the rankings programs were started in the 1970s and 1980s. Some still exist today and can be viewed on NASTAR's webpage. Details of specific programs include:

-- **Junior Rankings.** The program with the longest life which also involved the most persons was the rankings of junior-age alpine ski racers.

Apparently to avoid conflict with the school year, juniors were not included in Championships weekend until the year 2000. However, very shortly after the 1968 inception of NASTAR, listings of top junior racers
(Continued on page 14)

The "Fabulous 15" Multi-Year Winners

Since the NASTAR National Championships were revived in 1998, racers have been allowed to qualify and compete as often as they wish. Because of the new rules, several individuals have already built an impressive record of national titles, medals won, etc. (Six persons have raced in all eight events since 1998, and three have won medals every year.)

That definitely was not the practice during the 22 years the Finals were sponsored by either the Schlitz or Miller Lite beer companies. Management leaders of both companies

and the NASTAR organization wanted to make the Championships -- and the all-expenses-paid trip that went with it -- as accessible to as many different persons as possible. So stringent regulations were imposed regarding how often an individual could be invited to compete.

With such restrictions, only fifteen elite ski racers -- nicknamed "The Fabulous 15" by a NASTAR publicist -- were able to win more than one national championship during the period.

continued on page 4

<u>Racer (Home Town)</u>	<u>Years as Champion</u>
5-Time National Champion	
Maria Morant (Windham, NY)	1979, '83 '87, '89, '91
3-Time National Champion	
A--George Hovland (Duluth, MN)	1971, '78, '87
2-Time National Champions	
Margi Albrecht (Seattle, WA)	1973, '88
Ernie Alger (East Haven, CT)	1976, '90
Beverly Francis (Bend, OR)	1983, '89
Lilla Gidlow (Wayzata, MN)	1986, '91
George Goodrich (Cincinnati, OH)	1977, '86
Steve Graham (Strafford, PA)	1986, '90
George Hulbert (Sun Valley, ID)	1980, '84
Margareta Lambert (Dillon, CO)	1975, '86
Phil Letourneau (Duluth, MN)	1984, '88
Andrea Neiley (Langdon, NH)	1978, '87
Margarethe Richter (New Haven, CT)	1979, '89
Carol Sweeney (Rocky Hill, CT)	1978, '87
Tom Temple (Bend, OR)	1973, '83
Note A: George Hovland. In 1998 (after the conclusion of the Schlitz/Miller Lite years) George Hovland returned to the Finals and won his fourth NASTAR national championship.	

Equitable Family Racers



Rosvita Wolk (left) and Jim Bosch are two modern-day racers who enjoyed their experience in the Equitable Family Challenge Finals.

Rival Programs

(continued from page 2)

USSA leaders, upon reviewing the situation, apparently agreed with Fry's assessment. The "Ski Team Challenge" never got off the ground, and no formal buyout offer was made directly to *SKI Magazine* management.

However, a few copycat recreational racing programs did succeed. One of these was the Marlboro Ski Challenge, a coin-operated, dual-course format in which a racer's time was electronically shown at the finish line. Some of the coin-operated courses are still around today at modern ski areas.

Equitable Family Challenge

NASTAR's most successful and popular rival was the Equitable Family Challenge.

Equitable's competition was divided into four parts: (1) father-son; (2) mother-son; (3) father-daughter; and (4) mother-daughter. The race times of parent and offspring were added together to determine total time for the team.

Equitable sponsored several qualifying competitions around the country. Winners were invited on an all-expenses-paid trip to the Equitable Family Challenge Finals -- just like the NASTAR Finals.

Unfortunately, most race results and other written documentation of the Equitable program have been either lost or destroyed. All that remain are the memories of a few modern-day NASTAR Finals racers.

"I was fortunate to go to two Equitable Family Finals with two different sons," said Rosvita Wolk of La Crescent, Minnesota. "Equitable flew us to Colorado and treated us like royalty for the entire trip."

"In 1987 at Vail my younger son Chad and I won the mother-son national title," continued Wolk, who has won eight medals at the NASTAR Finals since 1998. "Chad went on to make the U.S. Ski Team as an adult. But he got his start racing NASTAR and Equitable events."

Jim Bosch, who won the 2004 NASTAR Championships in his age division, remembered the Equitable Finals as a delightful experience: "My son Vince and I qualified the last year Equitable sponsored the competition. They put us up in the Lodge at Vail and staged a torchlight parade just for our group."

Bosch added: "The banquets were very impressive. I remember going to one party with Phil Potvin and his daughter Amy. There was a giant ceramic clam shell filled with shrimp and a chef ready to cook for you. All of us enjoyed getting to know great ski racers like Moose Barrows and Kiki Cutter. Vince and I had a wonderful time throughout the event."

World-class ski racer Jim "Moose" Barrows, who became famous for his spectacular crash in the downhill race at the 1968 Grenoble Olympics, was involved in the leadership of both the Marlboro coin-ops and the Equitable Family Challenge.

"We spent a lot of money trying to make the Equitable Challenge as good as or better than the NASTAR Finals," said Barrows. "We thought the recreational racing market was big enough to accommodate more than one program."

Speaking from his home in Steamboat Springs, Barrows continued: "The primary beneficiaries of a variety of programs were the public racers. They got to race in several premier events without having to pay for their ski trip expenses."

One veteran competitor who raced in both the NASTAR Finals and the Equitable Family Challenge agreed with Barrows. "The competition between the two organizations to produce the most memorable and best event



Jim "Moose" Barrows...Olympian was the pacesetter at the 1975 NASTAR Finals and also a leader of the Equitable Family Challenge and Marlboro Challenge.

was great for the public."

"Every year they tried to out-do each other in terms of hosting lavish evening parties. We racers were just average recreational skiers, but we were wine and dined like we were Jean-Claude Killy or Picabo Street. It was wonderful!"

Old-Time Standards

(continuing from page 2)

Claudette Colbert

Sun Valley, Idaho (generally regarded as America's first "destination" ski resort) opened in 1936. From the start, pins were presented to amateur guests for racing achievement.

The award was given a formal name by the resort's marketing department: the Silver Sun Racing Pin.

The races attracted large participation from guests at the Sun Valley Lodge and Challenger Inn. Guest lists of those two hotels included such celebrities as movie stars Gary Cooper, Norma Shearer, Clark Gable and Groucho Marx, novelist Ernest Hemingway and famed radio commentator Lowell Thomas.

In the movie star set, one of the most enthusiastic and determined skiers was popular, Academy-Award-winning actress Claudette Colbert. When powerful -- and autocratic -- studio boss Darryl F. Zanuck demanded that she leave Sun Valley and return to Hollywood to begin production on a new movie, Colbert refused.

"To hell with making another movie for that jackass Darryl Zanuck," she said. "I am NOT leaving Sun Valley until I win a Silver Sun Racing Pin!"

Zanuck threatened legal action if the actress were not on the Hollywood set in time to start production of the movie on schedule. Fortunately, the disagreement was resolved before it got to the courts.

But Colbert demanded (successfully) that her movie contract be re-negotiated to give her lengthy vacation time in winter to enjoy skiing and racing in Sun Valley.

The story has a happy ending. "Claudette Colbert was thrilled to win several Silver Sun Racing Pins throughout the 1940s," according to Sun Valley historian Dorice Taylor. That was about twenty years before John Fry invented a nation-wide racing standard that became NASTAR.

"Fabulous 15"

(continuing from page 3)

Maria Morant led the group with five national titles. George Hovland had three. The thirteen others had two victories apiece.

Only two communities -- Bend, Oregon, and Duluth, Minnesota -- could boast of being home to more than one multi-year winner. Details of the Fabulous 15, including the years of their victories, are shown on page 3.

NASTAR's National Pacesetters

Some of the greatest ski racers in the history of the sport have acted as pacesetters for NASTAR. Among them are Olympic gold medal winners and world professional champions. There follows a season-by-season listing from 1968-69 through 1990-91. Included are racers who set pace at the Finals, "zero" handicappers and national traveling pacesetters.

The Schlitz Era

1968-69

Jimmie Heuga

1969-70

Pepi Stiegler

1970-71

Pepi Stiegler

1971-72

Pepi Stiegler

1973-74

Pepi Stiegler

1974-75

"Moose" Barrows (at Finals)

Pepi Stiegler

1975-76

Pepi Stiegler

1976-77

Ken Corrock (at Finals)

Tyler Palmer

1977-78

Otto Tschudi

1978-79

Doug Woodcock

1979-80

(Not Available)

1980-81

Bill Shaw (at Finals)

Lonnie Vanatta

1981-82

Bill Shaw
(No Finals held)

The Miller Lite Era

1982-83

Mack Lyons

1983-84

Jan Stenstadvold
(at Finals)

Mack Lyons
Reidar Wahl

1984-85

Jan Stenstadvold

1985-86

Gunnar Grassl (at Finals)

Jarle Halsnes

1986-87

Jan Stenstadvold
(at Finals)

Gunnar Grassl
Reidar Wahl

1987-88

Reidar Wahl (at Finals)

Troy Watts

Jan Stenstadvold

1988-89

Mike Brown (at Finals)

Tiger Shaw
Reidar Wahl

1989-90

Nate Bryan (at Finals)

Felix McGrath
Bob Ormsby
Mike Brown

1990-91

Mike Brown (at Finals)

Nate Bryan

Memories of the Miller Lite Racers

The following quotes come from participants in the Miller Lite era of the NASTAR National Championships:

1983 Steamboat

Carol Bonn (Rowlett, TX): "This was the first Finals sponsored by Miller Lite.

Zeno Beattie met us at the airport and rode with us on the bus to Steamboat. He explained the new rules (a 60-plus age division was added in 1983) and the schedule of activities. Zeno's talk gave us a great start for a fun, exciting trip."

★ ★ ★

Pat Laxar (Allentown, PA): "Billy

Kidd came to a lot of our activities. With his cowboy hat, he is the human symbol of Steamboat. Because my maiden name is Needham, I was very pleased to meet **Dick Needham** (the long-time editor of *SKI Magazine*). He is a first-rate ski journalist."

★ ★ ★

Angie Smith (Endicott, NY): "I raced in the Championships twice at Steamboat Springs, and I fell in love with the friendliness of the western town. They set up picnic tables right at the bottom of the race course. It was fun!"

1984 Aspen

George Hulbert (Sun Valley, ID): "Tom Shanklin and I tied for Fastest Overall Racer with exactly the same handicap. NASTAR leaders decided not to use exact times to break the tie. Tom and I are both from Sun Valley, and we are best of friends. But we still enjoy arguing about who would have won if they had made a decision based on fractions of a second."

★ ★ ★

Pamela Fitzgerald (Ironwood, MI): "We stayed at a hotel (the Continental Inn) very near the base of Ajax Mountain. It had a big outdoor-indoor swimming pool where you could swim right up to the indoor bar and order a drink. We had a wonderful trip."

(Continued on page 10)



National Champions Through the Years 1969-1991

Here are the Nastar national champions!

The following is a year-by-year listing of first-place winners in all age divisions during the 22-year period (1969-1991) that the National Championships were sponsored by either the Schlitz or Miller Lite beer companies.

First-place Winner (Home State) Division

No. 1 1969
HEAVENLY VALLEY, CA
MEN
Edwin Blakely (VT) amateur, gross time
Manfred Krings (VT) professional, gross time
Edwin Blakely (VT) amateur, net time
Bill Evans (MI) professional, net time
WOMEN
Martha Friberg (CT) amateur, gross time
(No women pros)
Thelma Lowman (WA) amateur, net time

No. 2 1970
VAIL, CO
MEN
Kent Webster (VT) amateur, gross time
Eric Strum (NY) professional, gross time
James Heard (NY) amateur, net time
Pat Hunter (CA) professional, net time
WOMEN
Jean Gillespie (CA) amateur, gross time
(No women pros)
Jean Gillespie (CA) amateur, net time

No. 3 1971
MT. SNOW, VT
MEN
George Hovland (MN) M40 & Over
Alan Davison (VT) M19-39
Michael Lehmann (CA) professional
WOMEN
Sue Week (WA) F all ages
(No women pros)

No. 4 1972
ASPEN HIGHLANDS, CO
MEN
Jack Armstrong (NH) M40 & Over
Dennis Johnson (MI) M30-39
Charles Carlberg (MN) M19-29
FASTEST OVERALL - Jack Armstrong
WOMEN
Barbara Gardenier (CA) F40 & Over
Sue Cobb (CA) F30-39
Betty Morrell (ME) F19-29
FASTEST OVERALL - Betty Morrell

No. 5 1973
ALPINE MEADOWS, CA
MEN
Tom Temple (OR) M40 & Over
Joe Lisac (OR) M30-39
James Hanson (ME) M19-29
FASTEST OVERALL - James Hanson
WOMEN
Thelma Armstrong (AK) F40 & Over
Margi Albrecht (WA) F30-39
Pixie Ross (WA) F19-29
FASTEST OVERALL - Pixie Ross

No. 6 1974
SUN VALLEY, ID
MEN
John Mulhollen (ID) M50 & Over
Peter Klausen M40-49
Rainer Ritthaler (CO) M30-39
Steve Miller (VT) M19-29
FASTEST OVERALL - Rainer Ritthaler
WOMEN
Naomi Wain (CA) F50 & Over
Mary Inkster (OR) F40-49
Carol Lawson (CO) F30-39
Kris Lindvik (ON) F19-29
FASTEST OVERALL - Kris Lindvik

No. 7 1975
STEAMBOAT, CO
MEN
Francis Lathrop (NH) M50 & Over
Trygve Berge (CO) M40-49
Billy Dittmar (CO) M30-39
Larry Kite (OR) M19-29
FASTEST OVERALL - Larry Kite
WOMEN
Margareta Lambert (IL) F50 & Over
Claudia Elliman (VT) F40-49
Pamela Jezukawicz (MA) F30-39
Barbara Nash (VT) F19-29
FASTEST OVERALL - Pamela Jezukawicz

No. 8 1976
SNOWMASS/ASPEN HIGHLANDS, CO
MEN
Ernie Alger (CT) M50 & Over
James Whiteley (CA) M40-49
Butch Reilly (ME) M30-39
Pat Seelye (NY) M19-29
FASTEST OVERALL - Pat Seelye
WOMEN
Jean Hodgkins (ME) F50 & Over
Edna Rae Gross (NM) F40-49
Kay Geitner (PA) F30-39
Dominique Laneyrie (CA) F19-29
FASTEST OVERALL - Dominique Laneyrie

No. 9 1977
KEYSTONE, CO
MEN
George Goodrich (OH) M50 & Over
Casper Stoeri (CA) M40-49
Daniel Mornet (VT) M30-39
Perry Bryant (NH) M19-29
FASTEST OVERALL - Perry Bryant
WOMEN
Mary Dresser (MA) F50 & Over
Arline Ely (MA) F40-49
Buffy Smith (ME) F30-39
Mary Sorum (MN) F19-29
FASTEST OVERALL - Mary Sorum

No. 10 1978
SQUAW VALLEY, CA
MEN
George Hovland (MN) M50 & Over
Josef Guggenberger (VT) M40-49
Peter Greenlaw (CO) M30-39
David Marshall (CO) M19-29
FASTEST OVERALL - David Marshall
WOMEN
Betty Evans (WI) F50 & Over
Carol Sweeney (CT) F40-49
Betty Maticic (DC) F30-39
Andrea Neiley (NY) F19-29
FASTEST OVERALL - Andrea Neiley

No. 11 1979
PARK CITY, UT
MEN
John Gianotti M50 & Over
Richard Berbeka M40-49
Tim Loughlin M30-39
Lon Whitman M19-29
FASTEST OVERALL - Tim Loughlin
WOMEN
Maria Morant F50 & Over
Margarethe Richter F40-49
Susan Severson F30-39
Heidi Christensen F19-29
FASTEST OVERALL - Heidi Christensen

No. 12 1980
VAIL, CO
MEN
Dewey Davidson (OR) M50 & Over
Jim Brennan (OR) M40-49
Eiel Eielson (OR) M30-39
George Hulbert (ID) M19-29
FASTEST OVERALL - George Hulbert
WOMEN
Joan Skiff (NY) F50 & Over
Angie Grass (KS) F40-49
Andrea Rudnick (NY) F30-39
Dana Temple (OR) F19-29
FASTEST OVERALL - Dana Temple

No. 13 1981
HEAVENLY, CA
MEN
Martin Bovey (MA) M50 & Over
Stanley Evans (NY) M40-49
David Thorson (MN) M30-39
Chuck Goller (CT) M19-29
FASTEST OVERALL - Chuck Goller
WOMEN
Gerda Joseph (IL) F50 & Over
Val Gibson (MI) F40-49
Tania Weiss (IL) F30-39
Tallu Hampshire (VT) F19-29
FASTEST OVERALL - Tallu Hampshire

1982
(No race-held)

First-place Winner (Home State) Division

**No. 14 1983
STEAMBOAT, CO**

MEN
Earl Cruickshank (VT) M60 & Over
Tom Temple (OR) M50-59
Jakob Schwaiger (VT) M40-49
Wolf Koban (CO) M30-39
O.J. Merrill (OR) M19-29

FASTEST OVERALL - O.J. Merrill

WOMEN
Maria Morant (NY) F60 & Over
Joanne Walker (MI) F50-59
Louise Van Winkle (ME) F40-49
Beverly Francis (OR) F30-39
Lisa Armbrister (CA) F19-29
FASTEST OVERALL - Lisa Armbrister

**No. 15 1984
ASPEN MTN., CO**

MEN
John Christianson M60 & Over
Phil Letourneau M50-59
John Winchell M40-49
George Hulbert M30-39
Tom Shanklin M19-29

FASTEST OVERALL - (Tie)

George Hulbert & Tom Shanklin

WOMEN
Connie Bladen F60 & Over
Dawna Hayes F50-59
Emmy Healy F40-49
Cathy Eddy F30-39
Kathleen Radtke F19-29
FASTEST OVERALL - Kathleen Radtke

**No. 16 1985
SUN VALLEY, ID**

MEN
Earl Allers (CO) M70 & Over
Adie Rienzsch (WA) M60-69
Richard Newman (OR) M50-59
Bob Sarchett (ID) M40-49
Tim Carter (ID) M30-39
Bill Bent (NJ) M19-29

FASTEST OVERALL - Tim Carter

WOMEN
(No women 70 & Over)
Marjorie Burrows (CO) F60 & Over
Chick Schultz (MI) F50-59
Anna Droege (ID) F40-49
Mary Fenich (VT) F30-39
Shelly Adams (MN) F19-29
FASTEST OVERALL - Anna Droege

**No. 17 1986
KEYSTONE, CO**

MEN
Thomas Paulsen (WI) M70 & Over
George Goodrich (OH) M60-69
Jim Brandon (ID) M50-59
Jukka Mahonen (MN) M40-49
Peter Bell (NY) M30-39
Steve Graham (PA) M19-29

FASTEST OVERALL - Steve Graham

WOMEN
(No women 70 & Over)
Margaret Lambert (CO) F60 & Over
Nancy Baker (MA) F50-59
Lilla Gidlow (MN) F40-49
Maureen Hammond (NJ) F30-39
Nancy Morehouse (NY) F19-29
FASTEST OVERALL - Nancy Morehouse



George Hulbert of Sun Valley, Idaho, is the only racer to capture the "Fastest Overall Racer" award at the Finals more than once. He won it outright in 1980 at Vail, then shared the top spot in 1984 at Aspen.

**No. 18 1987
SNOWMASS, CO
(Racing at Aspen Mountain)**

MEN
Bruno Maki (MA) M70 & Over
George Hovland (MN) M60-69
David Adams (NY) M50-59
Charles Baran (VT) M40-49
Jeffery Darrow (MA) M30-39
Robert Bartsch (WA) M19-29

FASTEST OVERALL - Robert Bartsch

WOMEN
(No women 70 & Over)
Maria Morant (NY) F60 & Over
Carol Sweeney (CT) F50-59
Lolita Pace (PA) F40-49
Andrea Neiley (VT) F30-39
Andrea Graziadei (PA) F19-29
FASTEST OVERALL - Andrea Graziadei

**No. 19 1988
STEAMBOAT, CO**

MEN
Olav Pederson (CO) M70 & Over
Phil Letourneau (MN) M60-69
Cooper Black (CO) M50-59
Craig Jennings (MN) M40-49
Steve Futterknecht (NJ) M30-39
Eric Seaborg (MI) M19-29

FASTEST OVERALL - Eric Seaborg

WOMEN
(No women 70 & Over)
Doris Martin (OR) F60 & Over
Margi Albrecht (WA) F50-59
Pamela Lawrason (ME) F40-49
Tamara McCrae (ID) F30-39
Carole Hill (WA) F19-29
FASTEST OVERALL - Carole Hill

**No. 20 1989
BEAVER CREEK, CO**

MEN
Fred Glover (CO) M70 & Over
Richard Morant (NY) M60-69
Andrew Wala (KY) M50-59
Manfred Karlhuber (VT) M40-49
Kelly McCann (WA) M30-39
Don Shipp (MN) M19-29

FASTEST OVERALL - Kelly McCann

**No. 20 1989
BEAVER CREEK, CO**

WOMEN
(No women 70 & Over)
Maria Morant (NY) F60 & Over
Margarethe Richter (CT) F50-59
Beverly Francis (OR) F40-49
Heidi Joyce (NH) F30-39
Leigh Davey (FL) F19-29
FASTEST OVERALL - Leigh Davey

**No. 21 1990
WINTER PARK, CO**

MEN
Ernie Alger (CT) M70 & Over
John Quinn (WA) M60-69
John Harney (MN) M50-59
Timothy Acocks (MI) M40-49
Steve Graham (PA) M30-39
James McKenna (MN) M19-29

FASTEST OVERALL - James McKenna

WOMEN
(No women 70 & Over)
Helen Brace (MI) F60 & Over
Jacqueline Bearden (IL) F50-59
Sherry Morris (OR) F40-49
Karen Dalury (VT) F30-39
Lianne Wiley (MA) F19-29
FASTEST OVERALL - Lianne Wiley

**No. 22 1991
SNOWBIRD, UT**

MEN
Ben Yamamoto (CA) M70 & Over
Roger Vanderzee (MN) M60-69
Odo Struger (OH) M50-59
Rick Francis (OR) M40-49
Steve Smith (WA) M30-39
Chris Eagon (MN) M19-29

FASTEST OVERALL - Chris Eagon

WOMEN
(No women 70 & Over)
Maria Morant (NY) F60 & Over
Lilla Gidlow (MN) F50-59
Kitty Fowler (CO) F40-49
Wendy Saliga (MA) F30-39
Cami Silverberg (MN) F19-29
FASTEST OVERALL - Wendy Saliga

Facts & Figures About Miller Lite NASTAR Championships

<u>Year</u>	<u>Finals Site</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Number Actually Racing</u>	<u>Leading Finals Pacesetter</u>	<u>Hotel Headquarters</u>
1983	Steamboat	April 6-10	99	Mack Lyons	Steamboat Sheraton Hotel
1984	Aspen	April 12-15	98	Jan Stenstadvoid	Aspen Woodstone & Continental Inn
1985	Sun Valley	April 11-14	105	Jan Stenstadvoid	Sun Valley Lodge
1986	Keystone	Dec. 10-14	98	Gunnar Grassl	Keystone Lodge
1987	Snowmass (a)	Dec. 9-13	99	Jan Stenstadvoid	Snowmass Wildwood Hotel
1988	Steamboat	Dec. 7-11	99	Reider Wahl	Steamboat Sheraton Hotel
1989	Beaver Creek	Dec. 13-17	96	Mike Brown	Beaver Creek Hyatt Regency
1990	Winter Park	Dec. 12-16	97	Nate Bryan	Winter Park Vintage Hotel
1991	Snowbird	Dec. 11-15	92	Mike Brown	Snowbird Cliff Lodge

Note A: 1987 Finals at Snowmass. Because of a lack of adequate snow in December, 1987, the races were held on the Little Nell section of Aspen Mountain rather than on Snowmass Mountain.

Miller Lite Finals

(continued from page 1)

"I laid out the recent racer participation numbers and the expenses to be paid by the title sponsor."

"Wolf bought the full program immediately. The entire conversation lasted as long as it took us to drink one beer, and NASTAR had a new sponsor."

Miller Lite signed on to handle the adult portion of NASTAR beginning with the 1982-83 season. (Coca Cola would replace Pepsi Cola as sponsor of the junior program in 1984-85.)

Miller Lite Innovations

Starting with its first Final in Steamboat in April, 1983, Miller Lite sought to imprint its own individual stamp on the event.

In addition to the free dinners and receptions that had been a part of all Championships weekends, the beer company came up with a distinctive special gift: a top-of-the-line, luxury-class winter parka with a unique "Miller Lite Finalist" logo on the front. A parka was presented each year to every competitor – not just the medal winners.

Because of the growing popularity of

recreational racing, Miller and NASTAR administrators decided to add a 60-Plus age division for both men and women. This boosted the total number of Finals participants from 80 to 100. A 70-Plus division was added in 1985 for men only.

There was a very important difference in the rule governing how often a racer in the older divisions could qualify for an invitation to the Championships.

In 1975 a regulation was installed limiting all racers to only one Finals invitation (and with it an all-expenses-paid trip to a major western resort) in each 10-year age

bracket. The policy was adopted to make the Championships more accessible to a larger number of individuals. NASTAR leaders thought this would help make the program grow. It would also offer a wider exposure for the sponsor's product.

The rule played an important role in the growth of NASTAR, but it also had one very negative effect: it killed incentive for racers to remain in the program after they had been in the Finals. This was particularly true in the more mature age divisions.

Fearing that the skiing quality of racers in the older age *(continued on page 9)*

Want to Ski Better?



Billy Kidd

Photo by Russ Atha

Billy Kidd

PERFORMANCE CENTER



Steamboat

(970) 879-6111

Major Awards and Gifts of the Finals



A Schlitz Cup was awarded to the top three finishers in all age divisions. A Miller Lite Finalist parka was given to all competitors who qualified for the Championships. (The photo of the Schlitz Cup was done by two-time champion Ernest Alger of Connecticut.)

Miller Lite Finals

(continued from page 8)

divisions might drop dramatically if the one-invitation-per-age-bracket rule were applied, NASTAR officials tweaked the eligibility requirements to read:

1. All racers 60 and over could be invited every other year.
2. Only one racer from each of five geographic divisions would be invited in the two oldest divisions (Men 70-Plus and Women 60-Plus). This led to only five competitors in those brackets and held the total number of invitees to 100.
3. The original rule of one invitation per age division would continue to be applied to all racers under 60.

Because of the differences in how frequently a racer could qualify, all record holders for number of victories, medals, etc. wound up in the older age divisions.

The more relaxed ruling may have rekindled the enthusiasm of older racers to stay in the program. But the overall eligibility policy definitely accomplished the major objective of the leaders of both NASTAR and Miller Lite. That goal was to make the Championships accessible to a very large number of different participants.

During the nine years the rules were in effect, there were a total of 883 entrants. Of those, 808 were different individuals. Only five elite racers – Beverly Francis, Lilla Gidlow, Maria Morant, Steve Graham and

Phil Letourneau – captured a national championship more than once.

Maria Morant

Among the multi-year winners, one competitor deserves special mention.

While George Hovland (with his many medal-winning appearances) earned the nickname “King of the Schlitz era,” the queen of the Miller Lite years was unquestionably Maria Morant.

She raced five times in the Miller Lite period (the maximum possible under the every-other-year policy for invitations), winning four national championships and one second-place medal. She and her husband Richard captured titles at Beaver Creek in 1989, the only time the feat has been accomplished by husband-wife racers in the same year.

Maria was simply the most dominant recreational ski racer of her era. Her five overall national championships stood as a record for 14 years until Helen Brace won for the sixth time in 2005.

Morant’s only Miller Lite loss came on a very hot mid-April weekend at Sun Valley in 1985. Marjorie Burrows, who lost to Maria at Steamboat in 1983, handled the radical spring snow conditions better and won the national title by one handicap point.

“Winning the national championship over Maria was the biggest thrill of my racing career,” Burrows recalled recently from her home in Colorado Springs. “She was a truly

great ski racer, and that made the feeling even more special.”

Change to December

The slushy snow at Sun Valley may have been the final straw in a series of events that influenced NASTAR management to make its most dramatic change in the Finals format: to move the dates of the event from late spring to December.

The main reason was that there was not enough time between the qualifying deadline and the Finals weekend to allow many racers to make arrangements for vacation time from their jobs.

“We normally set March 10 as the deadline for qualifying races, and it took three or four days to inform all the racers that they had invitations to the Finals,” remembered Zeno Beattie, who had become national coordinator of NASTAR.

“Even when we pushed the Finals weekend deep into April (and risked radical spring snow conditions), there were still only a few weeks to plan for the trip. A lot of employers would not give vacation time to the racers on such short notice.”

The irritation level ran high when a person learned that he had qualified for a free trip worth several thousand dollars -- and then was denied the chance to take the trip. NASTAR officials were forced to scramble at the last minute for substitute racers to replace those who couldn’t take part.

(continued on page 10)

Memories

(continuing from page 5)

Lisa Ruskin (Park City, UT): "They held the races high on the mountain (at Tourtelotte Park) so the April snow did not get slushy. But the sun was so strong that I got sunburned."

1985 Sun Valley

Margi Albrecht (Seattle, WA): "Sun Valley is the site of so many historic events, starting the day that **Averell Harriman** and the Union Pacific Railroad opened it in 1936 as America's first destination ski resort. Olympian **Dick Durrance** won the Harriman Cup races before World War II. And Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist **Ernest Hemingway** wrote *For Whom the Bell Tolls* in Suite 206 at the Sun Valley Lodge."

★ ★ ★

Marge Burrows (Colorado Springs, CO): "Ski racing was my passion in those years; and winning the national championship was my goal. I wanted to quit on top, so I retired from competition shortly afterward."



★ ★ ★

Ernest Alger (East Haven, CT): "I thought the Sun Valley Lodge was fascinating. Particularly the hallway with the many photos of all the old-time movie stars who had stayed in the hotel."



★ ★ ★

Jim Yohn (Colorado Springs, CO): "The temperature was very hot, so the snow got slushy pretty quickly. I spent lots of time in the evenings selecting and applying the correct wax to my skis."

1986 Keystone

June Williams (Heath, TX): "The December snow stayed firm all day long, so the race courses were in excellent condition for a lot of runs. Family members and guests had good free skiing throughout the afternoon."



(Continued on page 12)

Miller Lite Finals

(continuing from page 9)

Because of the confusion regarding travel plans, there were times when both the original invitees and the substitutes showed up at the Finals ready to race. At Sun Valley in 1985, there were 105 competitors who actually raced in the event. (This was the only occasion when more than 100 persons were allowed to compete.)

Advantages of December Move

Starting at Keystone in 1986, the Championships were scheduled for the second weekend in December. This was at the beginning of the next ski season following all qualifying races.

The move solved many administrative problems for NASTAR officials.

Qualifying racers were given all summer and autumn to work out such travel problems as vacation from work, baby sitters, etc. This applied not only to the racers themselves, but to spouses, family members and friends who wanted to come along.

As a result, the six December Finals drew a much larger crowd of spectators at the races and guests at social events than previously in springtime. The move insured that the top qualifiers from each region were given every opportunity to compete and enjoy the free trip.

The switch to December also allowed NASTAR to use the entire spring season for qualifying races, rather than having a cutoff in early March. With the incentive of winning an expenses-paid trip to a major ski resort, sign-ups for public NASTAR races showed a dramatic springtime increase.

Snow Crisis

Another reason for the change was the expectation that colder December temperatures would provide more consistent snow conditions for the racers, plus better all-day free skiing for the growing number of guests.

But that idea backfired in 1987 when a lack of early-season snow nearly forced the Championships (originally scheduled for Snowmass) to be canceled or postponed. Snowmass Mountain could not be opened for public skiing, even by mid-December.

Fortunately, a small area of man-made snow was found on the Little Nell section of Aspen Mountain.

Racers were transported by bus each day from their Snowmass hotel to Aspen, about 17 miles away. "We looked out the bus window and saw people playing golf at the Snowmass Club by the highway," said Marian Coonrod, a participant from Texas. "It did not appear very promising for ski racing."

Little Nell offered the only patch of marginally-skiable snow in the four-mountain Aspen complex, and all skiers in the area were crowded onto it.

(Continued on page 11)

Most Frequent Racers

A total of 1,811 entrants competed in the NASTAR Finals between 1969 and 1991. However, because of strict limitations on the frequency of invitations, only 32 persons raced in the event three or more times.

The leaders were **George Hovland** (eight times), **Maria Morant** (seven times), and **Richard Morant** (six times).

The complete list of 32 follows. Please note that several racers have added to their total appearances since 1998. The annual numbers shown here include only the Schlitz/Miller Lite era.

6-Plus Years in Finals (3 Racers)

George Hovland (8)
Maria Morant (7)
Richard Morant (6)

5 Years in Finals (2 Racers)

Ernest Alger
Jack Armstrong

4 Years in Finals (7 Racers)

Margi Albrecht
Harry Blair
Eleanor Davidson
Maurice Gale
Angie Smith
Ben Yamamoto
James Yohn

3 Years in Finals (20 Racers)

Nancy Baker
Bob Carlberg
Rick Francis
Bengt Hakansson
Craig Jennings
Marlene Knapp
Jack Krantz
Margareta Lambert
Phil Letourneau
Bill Lucchesi
John Lysobey
Doris Martin
William Meckem
Tom Paulsen
Hans Quehenberger
Jack Snider
Tom Temple
Alan Thrasher
George Toyama
Itsue Yamamoto

Miller Lite Finals

(continuing from page 10)

NASTAR officials set a course on a narrow strip at the side of the run and managed to complete the two-day event. "If you skied a little wide around the gates, you were in danger of running into the fence," said participant Jim Yohn (who still competes in the Finals through 2005).

The 1987 race was notable in one other way. It was the only time that Finals superstars Maria Morant and George Hovland competed in the same event. (Both won their divisions.)

The lack of snow in 1987 was the last weather-related crisis faced by the Championships. The next four years offered great snow, allowing competitors as many as seven racing runs. Handicaps from the best four runs were averaged to determine a racer's final handicap score.

In 1990 at Winter Park, racer Jim McKenna used his four best runs to record a handicap better than the score of Mike Brown, the professional NASTAR national traveling pacesetter that season. (Brown was only one of several pacesetters used at the Winter Park event.) This was only the second – and last – time an amateur participant defeated a pro pacesetter during the Championships.

The End of an Era

America's recreational racers were very happy with NASTAR. Participation of both individuals and ski areas was increasing, and the lure of winning a trip to the Finals was a major reason for the growth.

But public satisfaction with the program carried very little weight at a 1990 budget meeting of the marketing department of the Miller Lite Beer Co. Marketing leaders had been asked by higher-ups in the company to undergo a monetary belt-tightening process.

Much had changed since the first Championships were held at Lake Tahoe's Heavenly Resort in March, 1969. And most of the changes cost a lot more money.

When the Finals began there had been no trouble in the Middle East and oil prices were very low. By 1975 the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries had quadrupled the price for a barrel of oil, boosting the cost of air travel exponentially. Other costs in the ski resort and travel industry had been forced upward by inflation.

Beer company executives at the meeting wanted to see a detailed report of the expenses that Miller Lite was paying (either by itself or together with other sponsors) to produce the Finals. An itemized listing included:

-- 1) **Travel.** Round-trip air fare from all parts of the country for all qualifying racers. Racers who traveled by automobile received generous mileage reimbursements. Guests often got discounts on air fare.

-- 2) **Lodging.** Four nights free lodging at five-star, ski-in-ski-out hotels. (The Hyatt Regency at Beaver Creek, the Sun Valley Lodge and Harrah's Hotel at Lake Tahoe are examples.) Guests of racers received discounted room rates.

-- 3) **Meals.** Three meals a day, including seated dinners and receptions.

-- 4) **Lift Tickets.** Free for racers and discounts for guests.

-- 5) **Gifts.** A luxury-class free Miller Lite winter parka for all racers, plus other top-quality gifts.

-- 6) **Liquid Refreshments.** All the beer you could drink. (Miller Lite, of course.)

An accounting firm recently estimated that the average retail value of the free giveaways was \$3,375 per racer, adjusted to 2005 dollars.

And there were now 100 racers - - more than two-and-a-half times the 39 persons that raced in 1969. Plus administrative officials from *SKI Magazine*, World Wide Ski Corp. and Miller Lite.

"We really enjoyed our years of sponsoring NASTAR," said a former Miller marketing executive who was active with the program. "But the cost had grown to where we could not justify it as part of the company's budget. Particularly when we were benefiting only 100 potential adult beer drinkers."

The last Miller Lite Championships was held at Snowbird in 1991. No other corporation showed much interest in taking on the sponsorship under the format of paying all expenses for the racers.

When Budweiser Beer took over as title sponsor the next season, the Bud Lite All-Star Top Ten rankings program was launched. Posters were mailed to racers with the ten best handicaps in each age division. This included not only in the nation, but in each of the 50 states. The program involved printing the names of as many as 6,000 adults.

"The total cost of the new rankings



Helen Brace finished in second place in this 1988 race at Steamboat. It was her only loss in a NASTAR final. Since then she has won six national titles. In 2005 she became the all-time leading champion.

program for 6,000 racers was less than what Miller Lite was paying for the Championships weekend for 100 racers," remembered Bill Madsen, who went to work for World Wide in 1989 and is now NASTAR's Director of Operations.

"It was disappointing to see the old Miller Lite Finals fold," said Angie Smith, who took part in four Championships before 1991 and continues to race today. "Getting to know people well was a lot easier at the smaller dinners and receptions."

Veteran Finalist Ken McKenna is one of a small number of persons who raced in all three eras of the Championships: the Schlitz years (Heavenly Valley in 1981); the Miller Lite years (Snowmass/Aspen in 1987); and the "modern" years (Beaver Creek in 1999).

McKenna put it this way: "Both the on-mountain racing and the evening activities were fantastic when the number of competitors was limited to 100. The camaraderie and ease of social contact were wonderful. That atmosphere is very hard to achieve after the group became so much bigger."

"With costs going up, I guess it was inevitable that the Finals would change," Ken continued. "Today the NASTAR organization must deal with a much more difficult climate regarding monetary sponsorships."

The era of the all-expenses-paid ski trip was gone forever. When the Championships weekend resumed in 1998, it had an entirely new format -- one in which the event's expenses were sustained by racer entry fees.



Memories

(continuing from page 10)

Jerry Taylor (Arvada, CO): "I had only a short distance to drive from Denver to Keystone. But the NASTAR and Miller Lite people insisted that I accept a generous gasoline mileage reimbursement. They wanted to make certain that all Finalists didn't have to pay for their travel expenses."



★ ★ ★

George Goodrich (Cincinnati, OH): "The Keystone Final had great racing and wonderful evening activities. I continued to ski for many years at Perfect North Slopes, a small midwestern area. I'm delighted that my good friend **Fred Fushimi** is still winning at the National Championships."



1987 Snowmass

Ken McKenna (Duluth, MN): "Snowmass is a very well-planned ski resort. Almost all the hotels and homes are located above the lowest chairlift, so everything is ski-in-ski-out. Unfortunately, the snow conditions were so bad the year of the Finals that we had to race in Aspen."

★ ★ ★

Marian Coonrod (Fairview, TX): "Aspen is one of the oldest destination resorts in America. It opened in 1946 with what was advertised as "The World's Longest Chairlift," a single chair that went from the bottom to a point above Ruthie's Run."



★ ★ ★

Dennis Novak (Madison, WI): "Considering how little snow there was, the NASTAR leaders did a great job to get the race completed. I was so favorably impressed that I have returned to the National Championships eight times since then."



(Continued on page 15)

NASTAR's Influence

(continuing from page 1)

As NASTAR expanded, it began to change the habits of skiers throughout the North American continent.

One of the first communities to embrace the NASTAR program was the town of Bend, Oregon, adjacent to the Mt. Bachelor ski area.

As coach of the U. S. Ski Team, Bob Beattie had been taking his world-class racers to Mt. Bachelor for summer training camps since 1963. When he became commissioner of NASTAR in 1969, it was easy to add sessions for recreational-level skiers. Many of Beattie's first customers were locals from Bend.

"Many of our Bend residents really enjoyed the camps and took advantage of the very high-caliber coaching," remembered Tom Temple, who later became a two-time winner at the NASTAR Finals and also a Masters champion.

When Beattie opened his camps to recreational skiers, some of his early-year coaches included Olympians Bill Marolt, Jimmie Heuga, Billy Kidd and Jim "Moose" Barrows. Beattie later was a founder of the World Professional Racing Circuit. Coaches at what later became officially named the Bob Beattie NASTAR Racing Camps included top pro racers Jan Stenstad, Gunnar Grassl, Reider Wahl and Bill Shaw.

At the 1980 NASTAR Championships in Vail, no less than four Bend racers -- Jim Brennan, Dana Temple, Eiel Eielson and Dewey Davidson -- captured national titles. Since there were only eight divisions at the time, fully one half of the champions lived in Bend and were products of Beattie's summer camps.

This was unquestionably the most dominant performance by racers from a single community in the 30-year history of the NASTAR Finals.

Summer Ski Camps

Summer and other off-season ski camps had existed long before the creation of NASTAR. (The Timberline Lodge introduced its first camp in 1956 on the Palmer Glacier at Mt. Hood, Oregon.)

However, the participants were all expert skiers with USSA and/or international ambitions. (Future Olympic medal winner Penny Pitou was a camper in Timberline's 1956 camp.) Recreational skiers -- particularly adults -- were never included in the marketing of off-season programs.

Beattie's camps were the first that catered to recreational racers, but they weren't alone for long. As the popularity of NASTAR grew, the number of ski camps multiplied exponentially.

Although no official statistics are kept regarding the exact number of camps, a good indicator involves how many advertise in *SKI*



Jeff Nesrsta....former TSC president says that NASTAR is very important to the major ski councils.

and/or Skiing magazines, the two leading industry periodicals of that era. In 1971 there were only three ski camp listings; by 1984 the number had skyrocketed to 47.

Many of the advertisements included such sentences as: "Come to our camp and improve your NASTAR handicap." Clearly, the ski camp industry was fueled by the public's growing interest in the recreational racing program.

Large Travel Groups

Another area where NASTAR wielded a powerful influence concerned the efforts of major resorts to attract the largest ski-and-travel groups to book vacation trips.

With its high, majestic mountain peaks, its dry climate and moderate winter temperatures, the Rocky Mountain region is home to the largest concentration of ski areas classified as "destination resorts." It is the only region of the country where there are more out-of-state skiers than locals.

The resorts compete to attract large groups of skiers to book their vacations. Some of the biggest groups are the state-wide ski councils from Florida, Texas, Ohio and other states.

As an example, the Texas Ski Council is composed of 17 clubs from cities and towns throughout the state. They have joined together to negotiate high-volume discounts on airline tickets, hotel rooms and other vacation expenses. The TSC often brings as many as 500-600 persons to a resort for a full-week stay. That many people represent big money to even the largest of ski resorts.

Ski area managers soon learned that a major factor in luring the big councils was providing the availability of NASTAR and a well-managed recreational ski racing arena.

"NASTAR racing is a very important part of a TSC ski week," said Jeff Nesrsta, a former president of the Texas Ski Council. "We don't like to book trips to U.S. ski areas that don't offer official (Continued on page 13)

NASTAR's Influence

(continued from page 12)

NASTAR.”

“A few areas may want to set up a recreational race that is not part of the NASTAR program, but you can't use the race to qualify for the Finals,” continued Nesrsta, a seven-time participant in the Championships, “Nor do those races count in the Top Ten rankings that only NASTAR provides.”

Steamboat Ski Corp. executive Mike DeGroff looked at the growing popularity of recreational racing from a resort's perspective. “We promoted NASTAR tirelessly to attract the big, state-wide councils. We even opened a racing arena with its own chairlift right beside the race course.”

In the middle 1980s, Steamboat became the No. 1 NASTAR area in the nation, surpassing much larger resorts like Vail, Aspen and Breckenridge.

“Our promotion of NASTAR was definitely worth it. Our reputation for quality racing brought the big councils to town very regularly,” said DeGroff, who managed Steamboat's race program during the period. “The business the councils brought to the hotels, restaurants and shops played an important part in the success of the entire Steamboat community.”

Midwestern Ski Racers

The region of the U.S. most influenced by NASTAR may be the upper midwestern states -- particularly the hilly, northern sections of Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Compared to the Rockies, the ski hills in the Midwest are tiny. Most have vertical descents of only a few hundred feet. The number, length and variety of ski runs is limited.

“After you learn the basics of turning and stopping, the free skiing can become fairly boring with all the very short ski runs,” said Ted Chally of Mercer, Wisconsin.

“Without NASTAR and the USSA-spon-



Two-time champion Andrea Neiley springs into a turn at the 1978 Finals at Squaw Valley.

sored racing programs, alpine skiing in the Midwest would have much less appeal to a lot of people,” continued Chally, a former NASTAR national champion in his age division. “I imagine that some of the alpine areas would have to go out of business.”

Also unlike the Rockies, snow conditions in the Midwest are invariably icy and hard-packed, making pleasure skiing more difficult. But ice forces a skier to concentrate on mastering edge control and angulation -- techniques that are vitally essential to successful ski racing.

Chally said that much midwestern skiing is done by persons in weekly Ski Leagues which always offer a NASTAR race. With such great emphasis on competition, it is small wonder that 40 per cent of the individuals listed in NASTAR's annual National Top Ten handicap rankings reside in just three states: Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Famous Ski Families

NASTAR attracted the sons and daughters of some of America's most famous skiers, including the greatest U.S. ski racer of the 1930s, Olympian Dick Durrance.

Dick Durrance Jr. won a second-place medal at the 1973 Championships at Alpine Meadows. When Bud Lite started the rankings program in the 1990s, David Durrance achieved the National Top Ten listings.

Judy Dercum captured a third-place medal at the 1975 Finals at Steamboat. She is the daughter of Max and Edna Dercum, founders of the Arapahoe Basin and Keystone resorts in Colorado. Like Dick Durrance Sr., both Dercums have been voted into the U.S. Ski Hall of Fame.

Another skier who would make a big name for himself was Doug Coombs, a second-place winner at the 1989 Finals at Beaver Creek. He later starred as an extreme skier in several Warren Miller movies.

Troubled Years for NASTAR

The numbers reported by NASTAR headquarters for individuals, racer-days and participating ski areas climbed steadily throughout the 1980s. The only interruptions came in seasons when there was a major drouth of snowfall.

Record-high performances were recorded: (1) in 1987-88 when approximately 250,000 racer-days (continued on page 14)



This photograph of an old newspaper clipping shows six residents of Bend, Oregon, who competed in the 1980 Finals at Vail. From left are Dana Temple, Eiel Eielson, Jim Brennan, Dewey Davidson, Dan Garber and Eleanor Davidson. The first four won national titles. Dewey Davidson later won a Subaru automobile in a Subaru Super NASTAR race.

NASTAR's Influence

(continued from page 13)

were logged; and (2) in 1993-94 when exactly 246,284 were posted.

But storm clouds were building on the horizon for the NASTAR program. Other forms of snow-sliding were gaining popularity to compete with recreational ski racing for the hearts -- and pocketbooks -- of America's winter sports public.

The chief challenge was provided by the skyrocketing enthusiasm for snowboarding that swept the U.S. during the 1990s. But snowboarding was not alone. Other forms of snowsport -- moguls, aerials, telemark skiing, cross country and extreme skiing -- played a role. In the last few years, they were joined by halfpipes and terrain parks.

Suddenly, recreational ski racing was no longer "the coolest" or "most macho" thing to do on the mountain. Participation dropped, especially in the younger age groups. Just as important, the dollars coming in from corporate sponsors and advertisers were now being diluted by all these other mountain activities.

Commissioner Bob Beattie had originally signed a ten-year management contract with *SKI Magazine* in 1969. The contract was routinely renewed in 1979 and 1989 during happier, more prosperous times.

By the 1998-99 season (Beattie's last as commissioner), the number of racer-days had plummeted to 108,875, less than half of what it had been a decade earlier. The list of participating ski areas dropped to only 110, down from its high of 180 in 1991-92.

Faced with these depressing statistics, Beattie and *SKI Magazine* leaders made the mutual decision to allow World Wide's management contract to expire without renewing it. Beattie would focus his energies on his other career as a television commentator, while the magazine looked in a different direction for NASTAR leadership.

Kaleidoscope Sports and Entertainment (which later changed its name to Octagon) was signed to handle the program, starting in summer, 1999. A general-purpose marketing and management firm, Octagon works with the events and programs of many sports. John Arrix supervises the firm's ski-related business from offices in Connecticut.

Only one former World Wide Ski Corp. employee remained with the program after Octagon took over. Bill Madsen started with World Wide in 1989, was NASTAR's national traveling pacesetter for three seasons in the early 1990s, and became Director of Operations in 1995. He continues to hold that title with Octagon, and he is NASTAR's only full-time employee.

The program was at a very low point in 1999. In order to turn it around, Madsen and his new firm would need to make major changes regarding competitive age divisions and webpage organization.



Racers from the Buck Hill Ski Area celebrate at a recent Finals in Park City. Buck Hill produces many outstanding technical-event racers. It is one of a large number of midwestern ski areas that has benefited from the NASTAR program.

The decisions that were made would revitalize public interest in recreational racing as NASTAR moved into the 21st century.

Offshoot

NASTAR Programs

(continued from page 3)

appeared in *SKI Magazine*.

Juniors were split into six age divisions for both boys and girls: 4 and under; 5-6; 7-9; 10-12; 13-15; and 16-19 years old. These same six groupings would continue until the 1999-2000 season.

The Junior Rankings were sponsored originally by Pepsi Cola. When Coca Cola took over in 1984-85, the junior program was given new and vigorous emphasis.

Twice each ski season, race results were tallied and the top 300 juniors (the best 25 boys and girls from each age bracket) were listed on the Coca Cola Junior Mid-Season Leaderboard and the Season-End Leaderboard. The two leaderboards were distributed as posters and became a tremendous source of pride for both children and parents.

At the end of the season, the top 300 juniors were given plaques and patches by their local bottler of Coca Cola. Their names were published in *SKI Magazine*, and press releases were mailed to the local newspaper of each child.

-- Listing of Adult Finals Qualifiers.

SKI Magazine also published lists of the ten adults in each age division who qualified for the adult Championships weekend, normally in order of lowest handicap.

Because only two racers from each of five geographical regions could qualify for the Finals, the published lists were probably

seldom a true numerical National Top Ten.

Take this case for an example: If one strong region had four racers with handicaps under 5.0, and another weaker region's two best racers had handicaps of 8.0 and 9.0, only two of the strong region's racers would see their names printed in *SKI*. The others were supplanted by persons from the weaker region. This situation would continue until 1991-92, when the Bud Lite All-Star posters were introduced with accurate numerical Top Ten rankings.

-- High School Team NASTAR. In 1973-74, Hi-Star was introduced. This competition had a head-to-head, dual-course format for high school teams. The idea was conceived jointly by John Fry and Tom Corcoran, the former Olympic racer who founded and developed the ski area at Waterville Valley, New Hampshire.

-- Subaru Super. Subaru Super NASTAR was introduced in 1979 on longer, more challenging courses than the typical public NASTAR courses. A racer needed to win a pin in regular NASTAR before being eligible for the Subaru Super competition.

Although no National Finals event was held, there was at least one Pacific Northwest Regional Meet that offered a fantastic merchandise prize to the winner. (See below.)

-- Family Rankings. The competition began in 1981-82 and was divided into four parent-child categories. The race times of parent and offsprings were combined to determine the team score.

-- Telemarkers. Telemarkers were added to the rankings mix in 1982-83.

-- Ski Clubs. Beginning in the early 1980s, U.S. ski clubs competed in a variety of categories. (Continued on page 15)

Offshoot NASTAR Programs

(continued from page 14)

Included were total racer participation, number of NASTAR pins won, etc. The clubs were divided into brackets according to the size of their memberships.

-- **Canadian Expansion.** Canadian ski resorts already had a copycat program called MOLSTAR, sponsored by the Molsen Beer Co. When that race organization foundered, NASTAR obtained a Canadian patent for its own program in September, 1984. NASTAR races are now offered in many ski areas north of the border.

-- **Physically Challenged.** Starting in the middle 1980s, physically challenged snow-sliders were included in the rankings. They were split into a large variety of categories.

-- **Cross Country.** On two separate occasions in the 1970s, World Wide Ski Corp. tried to initiate a cross country competition. The program drew public interest in only a few small regions where the sport was popular. So the race was abandoned.

This is the only instance where NASTAR's attempt to start and sustain a program ended in failure.

-- **Misc. Programs.** Such offerings as the AMF Head Handicap Card, the Gerry Race Pass and the Hotfingers Gloves Gift may be lumped under the classification of "Miscellaneous Programs."

The Biggest Prize:

A Subaru Auto

NASTAR developed a well-deserved reputation for presenting first-class gifts and awards to participants at its National Championships weekend event. However, by far the biggest merchandise prize ever given came at a Pacific Northwest Regional Meet of Subaru Super NASTAR racers at Sun Valley, Idaho, on April 8, 1984.

The prize? A brand new Subaru automobile, donated by a Portland, Oregon, dealership.

Rules of the competition employed an "Age-Discounting Method" handicapping system that allowed men and women of all ages to race against each other for the car. The winner was 55-year-old Dewey Davidson, who narrowly defeated Tom Temple. (Both men were from Bend, Oregon.)

"Pinch me! I can't believe this is real," exclaimed Davidson as he was handed the keys to a new 4x4 Subaru hatchback. "My present car has 130,000 miles on it, and I can really use a new Subaru!"

The Canadian national slalom champion in 1952, Davidson was also a two-time finalist in the regular NASTAR National Championships. He won his age division at Vail in 1980.

Zeno Beattie, NASTAR's national coordinator, noted: "Dewey skied really well. It was amazing to see a 55-year-old man ski as well as the guys in their twenties -- even without the age discount."

Beattie continued: "With the age discount, Dewey achieved a minus-4 handicap. That means, considering his age, he defeated the national pacesetter."

Memories

(continued from page 12)

1988 Steamboat

Jack Armstrong (Holderness, NH):

"The ski mountain is named for **Buddy Werner**, a Steamboat native who was killed by an avalanche. He was American's greatest racer in the 1950s and early 1960s. There is a bronze bust of Buddy at the top of the mountain. It was done by a talented local sculptor (**Jack Finney**) who later did a full statue of **Billy Kidd** at the entrance to the gondola."



★ ★ ★

Gretchen Cash (Farmers Branch,

TX): "The starting gate (of the Finals race course) was on a road high above the public NASTAR racing area. The first section was pretty steep, so you could build up a lot of speed. Then you hit a transition onto a much flatter section, and another road crossed the race course right at that point. If you didn't set up early for the transition, you would be in deep trouble. You would get low on the next gate and lose speed getting back on a good line. It's almost impossible to regain lost speed on the flats"



★ ★ ★

Margi Albrecht (Seattle, WA):

"Steamboat in 1988 was my last of four races in the Championships. No, I did not realize that I was the only person to defeat **Helen Brace** at the NASTAR Finals. My congratulations to Helen on a great racing career."

1989 Beaver Creek

Richard Morant

(Windham, NY): "Winning the national championship in the same year that my wife did at Beaver Creek was our biggest thrill in many



years of NASTAR. Between the two of us, we raced in the Finals 13 times."

★ ★ ★



Brigitte Langer (Wayland, MA): "I've raced in five Finals since 1998, but I still enjoy wearing the "Miller Lite Finalist" parka I was given in 1989 at Beaver Creek."

★ ★ ★

Maria Morant (Windham, NY):

"We stayed at the Hyatt Regency, which is one of the more luxurious hotels in ski country. I remember the ice rink in the center of Beaver Creek village and the escalators taking skiers from one level to another."

1990 Winter Park

George Hovland

(Duluth, MN): "Everybody who lived in Duluth was very proud of **Jim McKenna** (who defeated the national traveling pacesetter). He was one of the very best ski racers from our town."



★ ★ ★

Betty Harty (Fort Worth, TX): "I

really love the skiing at Winter Park. Unfortunately, I didn't race very well in the 1990 Finals there. My husband and I enjoy the ski area so much that we recently bought a condo nearby."



★ ★ ★

Patti Zehner

(Steamboat Springs, CO): "Winter Park was my first trip to the Finals. I enjoyed it so much that I've returned to the event three times in recent years."



★ ★ ★

(continued on page 16)

1991 Snowbird

Eva Polakiewicz

(Burnsville, MN):
 "Snowbird is a delightful resort with a large tram that transports skiers all the way to the top of the mountain. We stayed at the Cliff Lodge, a high-rise hotel with a beautiful spa on the top floor."



★ ★ ★

Jim Yohn (Colorado Springs, CO):

"The race course was very flat coming out of the starting gate. The fellow (Ben Yamamoto) who won my age division got a great skating start across the flats and took a big lead of several seconds during the first day of the race. He almost lost his lead the second day, but he held on for the victory."



★ ★ ★

John Keller (Newburgh, NY):

"Snowbird's first managing director was a guy named Ted Johnson, who was a legendary powder snow skier. The owner of the resort is a Texan (Dick Bass) who, at that time, was the oldest man to climb Mount Everest. I ski in Utah a lot because my sister owns a shop in Alta (just up the road from Snowbird)."

★ ★ ★

Dave Perrigo (Arvada, CO):

"Snowbird was my first trip to the Championships. Unfortunately, I had my skis and bindings worked on the night before the race, and I crashed the first day. But I enjoyed the Finals. I've returned six times since 1998, winning in 2001 and 2005."



★ ★ ★

Eleanor Davidson

(Bend, OR):

"NASTAR gave me the chance to try racing. I noticed that the best skiers on the hill were those who

had raced. Winning the trips (to the Finals) encouraged me to do some additional training and even participate in Masters competitions. Thanks for your NASTAR research. It has been fun to remember those days."



Margi Albrecht (VA)

Schlitz/Miller Lite Photo Memories



Mickey Armstrong of the Buck Hill (MN) Ski Area.



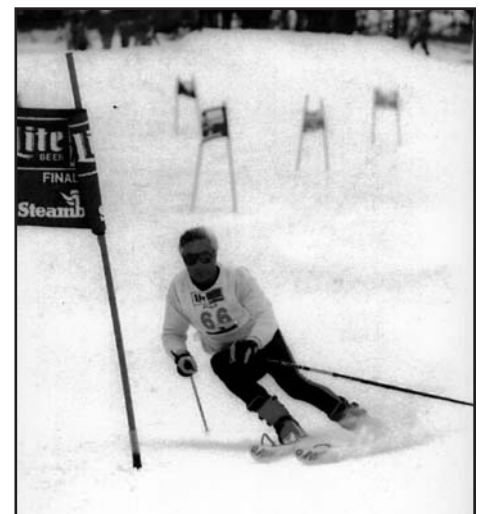
Jim Brennan (OR)



James Jalbert (VA)



Pat Rupp (VI) with 1989 Finals pacesetter Mike Brown.



Jack Armstrong (NH)



Joe Pino (RI)

Homes States

In several cases in this section of photos, the home states of NASTAR racers are identified by postal service abbreviation.

Schlitz/Miller Lite Photo Memories



Tom Shanklin (ID) tied for Fastest Overall Racer at Aspen in 1984.



Two-time champion **Marge Albrecht (WA)** wearing her Miller Lite Finalist parka at the top of the mountain.



Maria Morant (center) shown getting trophy at Park City in 1979 for her first of five national championships.



Helen Brace (MI) with Billy Kidd.



Carol Sweeney (CT) with Bob Beattie.



Richard Morant (NY) raced in the Championships six times, winning in 1989 at Beaver Creek.



Tom Temple (OR) with Bob Beattie.

Photo Memories of the Schlitz/Miller Lite Years



1986 Championships at Keystone

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



1985 Championships at Sun Valley

Photo Memories of the Schlitz/Miller Lite Years



1988 Championships at Steamboat

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



1987 Championships at Snowmass / Aspen



This poster was created for the last Miller Lite Championships at Snowbird in 1991. The handwritten inscription was done by national pacesetter Mike Brown for Richard and Maria Morant.



Jim Fain
 8409 Pickwick Lane, #269
 Dallas, TX 75225-5323