

USSA Masters Race Operations using Split Second's Alpine Race Timing Software

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The USSA Alpine Race Scoring Software produced by Split Second has been enhanced for the 2010-2011 competition season to improve support for age class racing in USSA Masters competition. The information provided here supplements the Split Second user documentation with suggestions and tips for using the software most effectively for running a USSA masters race.

You should be working with version 6.21 rev. 1 or later of the Split Second National/FIS timing software for the 2011 season to take advantage of the features and suggestions provided here. If you are working with different timing system software, the specific procedures described here are not applicable, although some of the general approaches may be useful to consider.

The material that follows discusses the major activities involved in the administration and operation of a USSA alpine masters competition. The suggestions and procedures described here should help simplify the work you have to do and ensure smooth operation.

For questions and comments about the material in this document, contact Deb Lewis, the Director of Race Services and Scoring for the Far West Masters, at dlewis@farwestmasters.org. Additional information about Alpine Masters can be obtained from USSA, Split Second, and the ussamasters.org web site – see references in the [Contacts](#) section.

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Introduction

The principle difference between USSA Alpine Masters racing and the Alpine race organization for USSA and FIS races is that masters compete within age class groups, rather than being seeded by ranking points that reflect ability level and accomplishment. In addition, masters races at the division level usually are organized so that both men and women competitors race on the same course, in contrast to USSA races where the male and female competitors typically compete separately. (Regional and national masters races, however, usually have separate courses for men and women, generally split into 4 major groups of age classes). Finally, the rules for determining start order of competitors are different for masters, with age group classes used as the primary organizing factor for determining the racer start order.

The standard USSA Alpine race organization for USSA and FIS races separates male and female competitors, with races often run on separate courses and the results scored separately by gender. First run start order is determined by seed points for scored races, with well-defined rules from USSA and FIS for seed groups and start order based on the point rankings of the competitors. The second run start orders are generally determined by first run finish time. Additional factors used to determine the second run start order include qualification limits on the number of competitors and use of turn-15 or turn-30 “bibbo” order for the fastest competitors.

USSA masters races at the division level are usually organized with men and women competitors all racing on the same course. Regional and national competitions are frequently organized with multiple courses to accommodate larger field size, with specific age groups competing together. Start order of competitors on a course is always determined within age classes, with the standard age class covering a 5-year range. The relative start order of the age classes is specified by the division or national competition rules in effect for an event, based on a standard age class start order specified in the USSA Masters Competition Guide. Within each age group, the first run start order of the competitors is determined by random draw, while the second run start order is based on first run finish time. Second run start order within age class varies according to the division or national rules in effect, generally fastest-to-slowest or slowest-to-fastest or a flip-N “bibbo” within each age group. In addition to the standard age classes, some divisions add an “open seed” or “elite seed” group on the second run, formed by selecting the fastest racers across all age groups from the first run.

These differences between the organization of a USSA alpine masters race and that of a USSA/FIS race affect both the operation of the race on the hill and the administrative and timing operations before, during, and after the actual competition. The different point of view is reflected in how competitor data is entered and managed in the timing system software, so understanding the different points of view for these two types of alpine ski competitions can be helpful in understanding the operation of the software and how best to work with it.

The USSA Alpine Race Scoring Software from Split Second was originally developed for running USSA and FIS alpine competitions. Support for Alpine Masters races was added in the 2001-02 season to handle mixed-gender, age class racing. Corrections and additional improvements added in the 2011 season will greatly simplify race administration and operations.

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General Settings and Operations

Most of the settings and data entry procedures that are used for Alpine competitions are also used for Masters races. However, there are a few areas that should be reviewed and set up differently for a Masters race. In particular, you should turn off the autosort option and ensure that your race is set up as a Masters Alpine race (not Alpine as for USSA races).

Program Options: disable autosort

This is important: turn off the autosort option when you are working on a masters race!!! There are a number of situations where you will be sorting the competitors list manually and you do not want the list resorted automatically when a start list or results report is generated.

In the menu bar at the top of the Split Second window, select the **Options** choice from the Edit menu to open the Options editing dialog for Split Second. Ensure that the option is **Automatically Sort when generating reports** in **NOT** checked!!!

When autosort is turned off, you still have the option to have the standard sort performed when you generate a report – each time you run a report you will be prompted whether to have Split Second sort the competitors list according to the standard order for the report being created. When you have already sorted the competitors list manually, as described in later sections on the procedures for creating start lists and results reports, just say no!

Program Options: Data Files location

While you are in the Options dialog to ensure that the autosort option is turned off, you may find it useful to click on the tab labeled **Default Folder** to check the location on your computer where Split Second stores its data files. The Split Second data directory is ordinarily kept in your Windows **Documents** folder and is where Split Second stores your race data files, along with supporting files such as program settings and points lists and generated files created for submitting results data and reports.

Tip: *you can always access your Documents folder from the Windows Start menu. Unless you have chosen to store your Split Second data files in an alternate location, as some RA's may prefer, you should find a folder named SplitSecond in your Documents folder – double-click to open the SplitSecond folder and you will find another folder named National_FIS. (If you also use the Club version of Split Second you will also see a folder named Club). Opening the National_FIS folder will then show you a list of files – most of these are your race data files, so you should recognize the names of the races you have created – these files are stored in a format called XML Document – as well as some additional folders with names such as Points List and SkiData Files. You should NOT try to open these files directly or modify their contents – let Split Second do the work for you!! However, it is helpful to know how to locate and recognize a race data file so that you can send the actual Split Second file as an email attachment.*

Header tab: Discipline, Race Level, USSA Race Codes

The Header tab of a Split Second race file presents all the top-level settings about the race: name, date, location, type of race, organizer, venue, etc. You need to ensure that the **Discipline** choice has **Masters Alpine** selected; race level is a non-scored USSA race, race codes must be provided for both men and women as required by USSA schedule agreements.

Other settings on this page are prepared as usual – enter a descriptive name for the race (used on reports), set the race date, provide organizer and course/homologation information.

Discipline = Masters Alpine

On the Header tab, make sure that **Masters Alpine** is selected as the **Discipline**.

If you forge to select Masters for the race and have the default Alpine discipline selected, you won't have the necessary operations available for working with Competitors and generating reports.

Race Level: non-scored USSA race

A masters race is a non-scored USSA race: competitor results are not tracked as part of USSA's racer ranking system for alpine competitors. On the Header tab, select **USSA** as the **Race Level** and make sure that the **Scored** checkbox setting is **not** checked.

USSA Race Codes

For a Masters race, the **Header** tab has fields for entering the USSA race codes for both Men and Women. These are obtained when the organizer's schedule agreement is completed with USSA and the race is sanctioned on the USSA event calendar. Enter both values for each masters race that you set up.

USSA requires separate schedule agreements and race codes by gender, even though masters competitions typically are organized as a single race with both men's and women's age classes competing together on a single course as a single race. You can use the Event Lookup service on the ussa.org web site to look up and verify race codes for calendared events.

The race code(s) are used when results data is generated for the race. As discussed later, the results data file from a masters race can be generated as a single results file containing all competitors, men and women (the standard format used for results reporting and post-processing applications) or separately in split files containing only the men or women competitors from the race (required by USSA for submitting non-score race results).

Factors/Lists Tab: Masters points list

Click on the **Factors/Lists** tab and click the **Download Points List** button to ensure you have the most current masters points list file published by USSA downloaded and installed on your computer.

Select the current masters points list in the drop-down choices list – this makes competitor information available for data entry assistance for all currently licensed USSA masters competitors. Also select the current officials points list file for assistance in entering information on the Officials tab.

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Preparing the Entry List

Competitor entry for a Masters race is done in the usual fashion. Data entry assistance is provided as you insert competitors using the current masters points list information, so that age classes and license information is entered consistently. *(Setting the masters points list to use is done on the Factors/List tab, as described in the previous section)*

When entering a competitor who is not listed with a current USSA masters license, be sure to enter the **Year of birth** if at all possible – this allows Split Second to automatically set the age class correctly. Also check the **Gender** field – by default competitors are entered as **M** (Male), so you must change the value to **F** (Female) when entering women competitors. You will typically encounter this scenario in the following cases:

- Competitor has a masters license but has not renewed for the current season
- Competitor is new and their USSA masters license application has not yet been processed
- Competitor is applying for a temporary weekend license (allowed 1 weekend/season)

##ISSUE: data entry convention for new racers with no USSA license number (new member who just joined or will be racing with one-time temporary weekend license)? Reportedly Alice Anderson wanted all these specifically entered as 0000000, but Split Second won't allow dup license numbers in a race and doesn't have an exception for this special case of no-license

A new competitor who does not hold a USSA masters license can use a temporary weekend license once in the season; the nominal temporary license fee can subsequently be credited towards their purchase of a masters competitor license. Temporary licenses are NOT accepted at regional and national championship events.

Aside from new/temp license cases described above, you may also need to manually enter competitor information for a race that holds a participant license permitted to compete in masters (coach, alpine competitor).

Standard practice when preparing for a weekend event consisting of two or more races over several days (ordinarily as Sat/Sun event or a 3-day Fri-Sat-Sun series of races) is to prepare a single master race file with all competitors entered in the event. Where applicable, assign bib numbers for the event in the master competitor race file. *(Some masters divisions have permanent bibs assigned to their members and the division provides those numbers).*

When registration for the event is closed, make a separate copy of the master file for each race. Open each race file and set date/discipline/course information for the race, as well as entering the race codes from USSA. Delete any competitors who are not entered in this race, as some competitors entered in the event may not be entered in all races.

Note: in some cases, such as at regional and national championship events, races are conducted with separate courses for national groups A, B, C, D. For example, a regional championship SG may be conducted with all competitors in the event competing on the same course, or split into two distinct races for the A/B younger men and the C/D women/older-men's classes. GS and SL championship events are typically broken out with separate races held for each group, or by the A/B and C/D split. In these cases, it is recommend that the master race file include an indication of the national group in the Team or Club field to facilitate pruning the competitor lists to the appropriate set of age classes when the race files are spawned from the master file.

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Preparing the First Run Start List

The standard first-run start order for a masters race is random draw within age class, with age class start order as specified in the Masters Comp Guide rules.

Masters age class start order rules are built into Split Second as the **Running order by Class** sort:

- older classes 14 down to 10, women then men (F12, M12, F11, M11, F10, M10)
- All other women's classes by descending age (F9, F8, ..., F1)
- All other men's classes by descending age (M9, M8, ..., M1)

To generate the first run start order, randomize the competitors list then sort into age class running order:

- Select the Competitors tab; ensure no block selection of more than 1 racer
- Randomize the competitors: click Sort button, select **Random** order
- Organize into age class start order: click Sort button, select **Running order by Class** order
- (optional) assign start numbers to the competitors to "freeze" the start order
 - click Other Options button, select **Start Numbers, Reassign from 1...**
- Print the start list: click the Report button, select **First Run, Start List**
 - In the "Sort first?" prompt, say NO!!!
 - Include or omit the Full Header as desired
 - Review the start order report to verify random-in-class order and print

##ISSUE: believe this is standard across all divisions, but had input that NE has some additional ranking rules derived from their Sise Cup standings – check this out...

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Preparing the Second Run Start List

The standard second-run start order for a masters race is determined by first-run finish order within age class, with age class start order as specified in the Masters Comp Guide rules. However, the specific rules for order with age class vary between divisions and there are specific rules in the Masters Comp Guide that govern the second-run start order for regional and national championship events.

The variations customarily used are all supported directly by the 2011 version of Split Second:

- By first-run finish order within age class (fastest to slowest)
- Reverse first-run finish order within age class (slowest to fastest)
- Flip-5 bibbo within age class (fastest N finishers in reverse order, then remaining competitors in first-run finish order)

The flip-5 bibbo order is the new rule for 2011 for regional and national championship events; previously the 2nd run start order was reverse-finish order in class. Division races ordinarily use one of the first-run finish rules sort: by finish or by reverse finish.

Note: in some divisions (Far West, Intermountain), special classes are formed for the second run of a 2-run race by pulling out the fastest finishers overall on the first run into a separate class. When the rules for open/superseed classes are in effect, these special classes should be put in place prior to generating the second run start order. Details are provided below.

Preparing the second run start list is typically done in a couple steps – it's slightly awkward because the start order sort we want can currently only be accessed from the **Report** operation rather than from the **Sort** operation. Follow these steps:

- Select the **Competitors** tab; ensure no block selection of more than 1 racer
- Apply the second-run start order: click **Report** button, select **Second Run, Start List**
- A start list options dialog will open that allows you to select the desired ordering
 - Make sure the **Sort before creating report** option is CHECKED (on)
 - In the first set of choices, select the rule for ordering competitors within age class
 - Flip-5 bibbo – regionals/nationals rule
 - by first run order fastest-to-slowest (?intermountain?)
 - by reverse first run order slowest-to-fastest (Far West; other??)
 - In the second set of choices, specify handling of first-run DNF/DSQ racers
 - Run at end of class (customary for division races)
 - Run at end of the field (sometimes used depending on course conditions)
 - No second run allowed (nationals; jury decision for regionals)
 - Checkbox choice for full header can be ignored (we won't print this report yet)
- click OK when you've finished setting the second-run order options to apply to start order sort
- review the start order report that is displayed but then click **Cancel** to return to the competitors list page [you don't ordinarily want to print the report yet!]
- review the Competitors list to verify that the start order is as desired
- (optional) move special OP/SS classes into the correct class order position

- (optional) adjust positioning of first-run DNS/DNF/DSQ racers
- (optional) assign start numbers to the competitors to “freeze” the start order
 - click **Other Options** button, select **Start Numbers, Reassign from 1...**
- Print the start list: click the **Report** button, select **Second Run, Start List**
 - In the Start List Options dialog, make sure the **Sort before creating report** option is **NOT CHECKED** (off)!!!! (you’ve already done this!)
 - Include or omit the Full Header as desired
 - Click **OK** to print the start list report

Special Cases for Second Run Start Lists

###Far West Open classes: fastest 10 men, fastest 5 women overall pulled out into MOP, WOP classes which are inserted between 50’s and 40’s - between class 6 and 5 – in the start order. Sort all racers on first-run finish time, then sort by gender. Select 10 fastest men and change their age class to “OP”; select 5 fastest women and change their age class to “OP”. Competitors can “opt out” and remain in age class – typically some of the class 7 or 8 men will do this – masters officials for the race are responsible for determining OP participants and communicating that to the timer/RA preparing the second run start order.

###Intermountain Superseed class: fastest 10 men overall pulled out into SS class which is inserted between upper and lower 50’s classes – between class 7 and 6. Not used for women.

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Preparing the Race Results Report

To generate the race results report, sort the competitors list on combine time, then sort into age class running order:

- Select the **Competitors** tab; ensure no block selection of more than 1 racer
- Sort into finish order: click **Sort** button, select **Combined, Ascending** order
(for a 1-run, sort on first run time, ascending)
- Organize into age class start order: click **Sort** button, select **Running order by Class** order
- Print the results report: click the **Report** button, select **Race Results**
 - In the “Sort first?” prompt, say **NO!!!**
 - Select official/unofficial, include or omit the Full Header as desired
 - Review the results report to verify finish-in-class order and print

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Generating the Race Results Data File

There are two variations involved in generating the race results data file:

- Generate the race results data file for the race (all competitors)
- Generate gender splits of the race (separate men/women data for USSA reporting)

In almost all cases you will want the single results data file containing all competitors – everyone who was in the race you held is included. The exception is that when you are submitting data to USSA, it is required that separate files be submitted for men and women (even though there was in actuality a single race with both genders racing by age class).

Note that the race codes entered on the Header tab are used to identify the results data files; when generating the single results file containing all competitors the men's race code is used.

- Select the **Competitors** tab;
- Click the **Send SkiData Files** button to generate the results data file
- In the confirmation prompt “Is this being sent to USSA?”, select **No** to generate the results file containing all competitors
- Choose whether to email the data file or save to a file – select **Specify Path for SkiData File** to save the file for later use (send later as an email attachment or for uploading to a web site for race processing)

When you generate race results data, there are actually 2 versions of the results data file generated in the SkiData Files folder of your Split Second data directory. Each is named with the race code – one is a text file in an older reporting format known as USSA SkiData, while the second is a newer format known as FIS XML that is now used for submitting race data for USSA and FIS scoring.

Submitting Results to USSA

Use the **Send SkiData Files** as described above, but answer **Yes** when prompted to confirm whether or not the data is being sent to USSA. You will then be asked to select the gender for the data being submitted. Select **Male** to send the data for the male competitors, then select **Email** transmission to send the data file to alpineresults@ussa.org. Repeat to select **Female** gender and submit the women's data.

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Document History

21-Dec-2010 – D. Lewis –Initial draft.

16-Feb-2011 – D. Lewis – Publish v 1.0 procedure documentation for 2011.