

THUNDERBIRD RACE TEAM

Newsletter: March 25, 2021



Third (Final) Race Weekend: March 5-7:

The final race weekend of the 2021 MACC season took place on March 5-7. The actual third race weekend (the fifth scheduled) took place in very pleasant weather conditions, with below freezing nights and sunny days. Friday's slalom was raced on Superbowl, Saturday's GS was raced on FIS, and Sunday's Super Combined (Super GS and slalom) were raced on both Superbowl and FIS. Eight T-Bird Racers went through the courses on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. The T-Bird's that made the podium (1st, 2nd, or 3rd) are as follows:

Slalom (Friday):

- 1st Brian Dusina (SVAM)
- 2nd Janie Guiliani (E1W), Jeffrey Burnette (E2M), Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM)
- 3rd Mike Jablonski (SVBM), Dennis Parrott (BM)

Giant Slalom (Saturday):

- 1st Brian Dusina (SVAM), Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM)
- 2nd Janie Guiliani (E1W), Jeffrey Burnette (E2M)
- 3rd Mike Jablonski (SVBM)

Make-Up Giant Slalom (Saturday):

- 1st Brian Dusina (SVAM),
- 2nd Janie Guiliani (E1W), Mike Jablonski (SVBM)
- 3rd Jeffrey Burnette (E2M), Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM)

Make-Up Super Giant Slalom (Sunday):

- 1st Brian Dusina (SVAM)
- 2nd Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM)
- 3rd Jeffrey Burnette (E2M)

Make-Up Slalom (Sunday):

- 1st Jeffrey Burnette (E2M), Brian Dusina (SVAM), Dennis Parrott (BM)
- 2nd Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM)
- 3rd Mike Jablonski (SVBM)

Cantor Cup: SGS and Slalom (Sunday):

- 1st Jeffrey Burnette (E2M), Brian Dusina (SVAM)
- 2nd Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM)
- 3rd Mike Jablonski (SVBM)

Our T-Bird "racer of the week" is **Brian Dusina** (SVAM), with six 1st place finishes. Not far behind, also with six podium finishes, are **Jeffrey Burnette** (E2M) with two 1st two 2nd and two 3rd place finishes, and **Patrick Smithbauer** (SVBM) with a 1st, four 2nd, and a 3rd place finish. This is followed by **Mike Jablonski** (SVBM) with five podium finishes, with one 2nd and four 3rd place finishes. Also with multiple podium finishes are **Janie Guiliani** (E1W) with three 2nd place finishes and **Dennis Parrott** (BM) with a 1st and 3rd place finish.

The T-Bird's had 75% of our racers (6 of 8) make the podium this weekend, which is a quite good way to end the season.

The Season Long World Cup Awards:

With two full race weekend cancellations, it was very difficult to get in a reasonable number of races this season. This was accomplished with a large number of make-up races (mostly one run) in the final two race weekends. This made for a LOT of extra work for the crews running the races, but, even with the much reduced racer participation this season, everyone worked extra hard to pull it off. Fortunately, the weather for the final race weekend cooperated and we were able to run a lot of races to make the season a success.

Here are the T-Bird racers that made the World Cup podium for the entire season:

- 1st Jeffrey Burnette (E2M), Brian Dusina (SVAM)**
2nd Janie Guiliani (E1W), Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM)
3rd Mike Jablonski (SVBM)

The T-Bird “Racer of the Year” for 2021 is Brian Dusina. He won every race this season, some by impressive margins. He also managed to do this while keeping (probably unintentionally) within the handicap range of the SVAM class, though he has been creeping toward the point where he will become a SVE2M racer in the future. **Congratulations Brian on a GREAT season!**

Our other 1st place World Cup finisher, **Jeffrey Burette**, also deserves recognition for his 2021 season accomplishments in the very tough E2M class. Even though he missed two races, he still finished in a tie for 1st and won the tie breaker, with the 3rd place finisher only one point behind. It can’t get much closer than that. In addition, he is still getting faster, and was the 6th most improved racer in the entire program this season, so there are better things still to come in the future. **Congratulations Jeff!**

Injury and Illness Report :

This has been a strange year for the race team and the MACC program as a whole. The T-Bird Race Team is down by six racers from 2020 to 2021. This is a combination of covid concerns and injuries, in addition to the injuries that took place during this season. Hopefully, the world will be back to normal by the 2022 season and Scott and Tanya Soucie, Jamie Pawelek, Zach Jablonski, Mike Altenburg, Art Ellwanger, Will Heckman, and Tim Loula will return to action.

Mike’s Musings:

One of the key players in making the 2021 race season happen is long time racer Dennis Parrott. In addition to trying to go fast down the race course, Dennis is the man that fills the many course operations positions that make MACC races possible. With the acute decline in racer registrations for 2021, this task has become a major headache and challenge. Fortunately, Dennis has taken the challenge and successfully filled the worker positions, sometimes even resorting to filling some of the job slots himself. This has had a somewhat negative effect on his racing performance, but you won’t hear him complain. All T-Bird and all MACC racers owe him a big thank you for being instrumental in making this season happen. The good news is that Dennis is now cruising the western USA visiting friends and skiing for a month long respite from his MACC duties.

My skiing this season has been a mixed bag. My racing has been below my expectations, though I got a bit better as the season progressed, eventually managing to salvage a 3rd place finish for the season. Off of the race course, this season was a lot of fun as my three children and six grand children visited our cottage a number of times and the five older (age 5 to 8) grand children and really improving in their skiing. All of them are progressing from greens to blues and from blues to black diamonds. I had a lot of fun skiing with them this season. We also had our youngest grandchild skiing this year at just over two years old. He has amazing balance for a child that young and I expect that he will progress rapidly (as long as he is rested and fed before he gets to the ski area). I also got to ski with my surrogate grandkids next door to our cottage more than their grandfather (wannabe racer Bob Blair) did.

When the ski season started with the covid problems and the many race cancellations (both in the weekend MACC program and in the Boyne Mountain Wednesday race league), I felt that I would be fortunate to ski 25 days this season. However, even with all the cancellations and crazy weather, I managed to ski 40 days this season, for which I consider myself quite fortunate.

As I have said many times before, “skiing is fun”, but racing with the T-Birds is “more fun”. All T-Bird skiers, regardless of their ability level, should give racing a try. It is not only a good time (on and off of the slopes), but will make you a much better skier. If you would like to find out more, please call or e-mail me. You will not be disappointed. Have a great off season (summer).

Your T-Bird Race Team Director,

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THUNDERBIRD RACE TEAM

Newsletter: February 25, 2021



Second Race Weekend: February 20-21:

The second race weekend of the 2021 MACC season took place on February 20-21. Just as the originally scheduled first weekend of January 9-10 was cancelled due to the lack of sufficient snow, the originally scheduled third race weekend of February 5-7 was cancelled each day due to too much soft snow each day. The actual second race weekend (the fourth scheduled) took place in moderate winter weather conditions. Saturday's slalom was raced on Superbowl and Sunday's GS was raced on FIS, both of which had fairly firm course conditions. Saturday's race included a third run which became a one-run make-up race for a previously missed GS race.

For the T-Bird Race Team, this weekend was somewhat successful, with 7 T-Bird Racers going through the courses on Saturday and Sunday. The T-Bird's that made the podium (1st, 2nd, or 3rd) are as follows:

Slalom (Saturday):

- 1st Jeffrey Burnette (E2M), Brian Dusina (SVAM)
- 2nd Doug Gilmour (AM), Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM), Dennis Parrott (BM)
- 3rd Mike Jablonski (SVBM)

Giant Slalom (Sunday):

- 1st Brian Dusina (SVAM)
- 2nd Mike Jablonski (SVBM)
- 3rd Doug Gilmour (AM), Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM)

Make-Up Giant Slalom (Sunday):

- 1st Brian Dusina (SVAM), Doug Gilmour (AM), Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM)

Our T-Bird "racer of the week" is **Brian Dusina** (SVAM), with three 1st place finishes. Not far behind, also with three podium finishes, are **Doug Gilmour** (AM) and **Patrick Smithbauer** (SVBM), each with 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place finishes. This is followed by **Mike Jablonski** (SVBM) with 2nd and 3rd place finishes.

The T-Bird's had 86% of our racers (6 of 7) make the podium this weekend, which is very good. Hopefully, we can do this well in the final race weekend.

This Weekend's Activities:

Since the coronavirus restrictions continue to limit our in-person interfaces, there was no Race Team social gathering this weekend. We will see if the restrictions will be lifted in time for the final 2021 race weekend.

Injury Report :

While free skiing on Superbowl, future racer and long time Race Team supporter **Tanya Soucie** (and also wife of racer **Scott Soucie**) took an unexpected fall and found that she had a hard and painful time in attempting to get up. A ski patrol trip down the hill and a visit to the hospital determined that she had fractured her tibia. She has already had one operation to stabilize the leg and an upcoming second operation will insert a pin or plate to allow the bone to heal permanently. This ski season is over for her, but she plans to rejoin Scott and their two sons on the slopes next season. Please keep Tanya in your thoughts and prayers for a quick and complete recovery.

Mike's Musings:

As you can see by this weekend's race results, our SVAM speedster, **Brian Dusina**, continues to dominate the competition with victories in all three races. He won Saturday's slalom by over 4 seconds, and followed up in Sunday's GS, winning by over 5 seconds and the single run make up GS by over 2 seconds. His only concern at this point is that he is very close to being upgraded to E2. However, having won every race this season and is still in the A handicap range, he cannot be upgraded until after the end of the season, so things are looking very positive for him. We would all like to be in that position.

Our younger "A" racer in the AM class, **Doug Gilmour**, is also skiing very fast, with handicaps in all three races in the E2 range, which is very impressive and also placing him closer to being upgraded to the E2 class, which fortunately cannot happen this season. He is leading the AM class going into the final race weekend and will hopefully continue to ski fast.

Our speedy E2M racer, **Jeffrey Burnette**, won Saturday's slalom by over 5 seconds. Unfortunately, he was not able to participate on Sunday in the two GS races. Based upon past performance, if he had been there and finished, he would probably be leading his class for the season. If he can race the final race weekend he should be on the World Cup podium (which he is one point off of, even having raced two races less than his competition).

My skiing this weekend improved a bit with two podium finishes. My Saturday slalom was not great, but better than usual allowing me to make the podium in 3rd place. In Sunday's GS, I was competitive, taking 2nd place in the first race a little over a half second out of 1st. In the one run make up race (essentially run three of the first race), I had my slowest GS run and finished 4th even when I was less than a half second out of 1st place. Oh well, that's racing.

As I have said many times before, "skiing is fun", but racing with the T-Birds is "more fun". All T-Bird skiers, regardless of their ability level, should give racing a try. It is not only a good time (on and off of the slopes), but will make you a much better skier. If you would like to find out more, please call or e-mail me. You will not be disappointed.

Your T-Bird Race Team Director,

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THUNDERBIRD RACE TEAM

Newsletter: January 27, 2021



A Ski Racing Refresher Course:

The MACC (Michigan Alpine Competition Council) ski race program is structured as follows:

- The racing is both individual and teams, with most teams being clubs that are members of the MDSC (Metropolitan Detroit Ski Council).
- Racing classes are divided by ability levels, with Elite (E) being the fastest racers, followed by E1, E2, A, B, C, D
- Classes are divided by sex, with M for men and W for women.
- If there are enough racers, classes are further divided by age, 60 and over are Super Veterans (SV), 40 through 59 are Veterans (V), and 39 and younger have no age designations.

First Race Weekend: January 23-24:

The first race weekend of the 2021 MACC season took place on January 23-24, as the originally scheduled first weekend of January 9-10 was cancelled due to the lack of sufficient snow. The race took place in cool winter weather conditions. Saturday's GS and Sunday's slalom were both raced on Superbowl with quite firm snow conditions.

For the T-Bird Race Team, this weekend was somewhat successful, with 10 T-Bird Racers going through the courses on Saturday and Sunday. The T-Bird's that made the podium (1st, 2nd, or 3rd) are as follows:

Giant Slalom (Saturday):

- 1st Janie Guiliani (E1W), Jeffrey Burnette (E2M), Brian Dusina (SVAM), Doug Gilmour (AM)
- 2nd Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM)
- 3rd Steve Foradori (BM)

Slalom (Sunday):

- 1st Janie Guiliani (E1W), Brian Dusina (SVAM)
- 2nd Jeffrey Burnette (E2M), Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM), Steve Foradori (BM)

Our T-Bird "racers of the week" are **Janie Guiliani** (E1W) and **Brian Dusina** (SVAM), each with two 1st place finishes. Not far behind, also with two podium finishes, are **Jeffrey Burnette** (E2M) with a 1st and 2nd place finish, followed by **Patrick Smithbauer** (SVBM) with two 2nd place finishes, and **Steve Foradori** (BM) with a 2nd and 3rd place finishes.

The T-Bird's had 60% of our racers (6 of 10) make the podium this weekend, which is very good. Hopefully, we can do this well in the next race weekend.

The **Race Team** also did very well this weekend, finishing 1st in giant slalom, 4th in slalom, and 2nd overall.

This Weekend's Activities:

Since the coronavirus restrictions limited our in-person interfaces, there was no Race Team social gathering this weekend. Hopefully, the restrictions will be lifted soon so that we can gather as a group, something that we all miss.

Injury Report :

The fastest racer on the Race Team, **Zach Jablonski**, has yet to race this season. In a late summer baseball game, he failed in a slide into second base and injured his ankle. He thought that it was near healed when he tried skiing on it on a visit to his sister in Colorado. He found that his ability to put pressure on it when skiing did not work. It is getting better,

but is not yet ready for the race course. He is hoping to race the next race weekend. On another note, he is now listening to his physical therapist girl friend regarding how best to resolve this issue.

After racing Saturday's GS race, **Jamie Pawelek** did his usual free skiing at Boyne Mountain. He loaded on the Victor chair, which is old and has boards after you load to keep your ski from digging into the snow since this chairlift rises off the ground very gradually. There was a pile of snow at the end of the boards and Jamie's ski tip dug into the snow and flipped him off of the chair, twisting his left foot. This ended up requiring a trip to the ski patrol room and an ambulance ride to the hospital. Fortunately, doctors confirmed that there were no broken bones, but the pain was still there when his team mate Patrick Smithbauer picked him up and returned him to his motel in Boyne City. Since it was his left foot, he was able to drive himself home on Sunday, stopping only to fill a bag with snow to ice down his injured foot. We are rooting for a speedy healing process so that he can return to the ski slopes (and race course) soon.

Mike's Musings:

The corona virus has taken its toll on the number of racers registered, both in the overall MACC program and in the number of T-Birds registered. To my knowledge, none of the racers has contracted the virus, but a number of racers have close family members that are at high risk, so the racers are taking this season off to limit their risk of contracting the virus and potentially spreading it to the at risk family. Hopefully, all of these racers will return to racing in the future.

Our SVAM speedster, **Brian Dusina**, continues to dominate the competition. He won Saturday's GS by almost 6 seconds and followed up in Sunday's slalom winning by over 7 seconds. His only concern at this point is that he is very close to being upgraded to E2. We should all have that kind of problem.

After a truly mediocre GS on Saturday where I finished off of the podium, I followed it on Sunday with a slalom run where I fell while going through the course. I didn't lose a ski and I returned to the course quickly, taking myself out of contention for the slalom podium as the clock continued to run. The only redeeming fact of this run was the compliments that I received for an old guy getting up quickly and continuing to race. Take any positive that you can!

As I have said many times before, "skiing is fun", but racing with the T-Birds is "more fun". All T-Bird skiers, regardless of their ability level, should give racing a try. It is not only a good time (on and off of the slopes), but will make you a much better skier. If you would like to find out more, please call or e-mail me. You will not be disappointed.

Your T-Bird Race Team Director,

Mike Jablonski

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It has been a strange year. It started when the 2020 race season finished just before the corona virus lockdowns started. Almost all of the ski areas in Michigan, around the US, and around the world closed for

the season in early March, forcing us to miss a lot of good late season ski conditions. The good news is that most of the ski areas and ski racing organizations had the rest of the year to plan to make the 2020-21 season as functional as possible, given the restrictions imposed by the various governmental bodies. Our racing organization, the Michigan Alpine Competition Council (MACC) did a great job of planning on how to race in these conditions, as did our host ski area, Boyne Mountain. Unfortunately, Mother Nature did not cooperate as well as we would have liked, with the cold weather and snow starting later than usual (a month later than last year) and the corona virus staying around.

All that being said, most of us, and especially me, are not willing to give up the time spent enjoying our winter season on the ski slopes, both on the race course and just cruising the ski hills with family and friends, just because of a little inconvenience. I didn't stop my activities in the summer (sailing and racing my sailboat) and I'm not going to do

it in the winter with my skiing and racing. Hopefully, most of you in the Thunderbird Ski Club will feel the same and stay active and healthy this winter in the great outdoors, especially on the ski slopes and racecourse.

With that in mind, the T'Bird Race Team opens our season on January 9-10, 2021 with the MACC races at Boyne Mountain, continuing every two weeks until the season finale weekend on March 5-7, 2021. Even with the social distancing required, we are still a very social group and participating will make the winter pass quickly and be much more enjoyable than sitting locked up in your house.

If you need more information about the race program, please give me a call or send an email and I will provide the information that you need to make this a winter to remember, not forget.

Mike Jablonski, Race Team Director

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