

Race day: GS today on Aspen Mountain

Winternational skiers racing into history

By Dale Strode
The Aspen Times

Giant slalom race day for the 2014 Aspen Winternational means fireworks — figuratively and literally.

The World Cup ski racing “fireworks” will play out today on the slopes of Spring Pitch, Summer Road and Strawpile on Aspen Mountain with the first and second runs of the women’s giant slalom set for 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.

The literal fireworks will explode over the Little Nell slope at 8:15 p.m. after the Reel Big Fish concert and the podium ceremony.

In the meantime, today’s giant slalom winner will join an elite list of Aspen World Cup winners — a star-studded roster that started in 1968 with the first races under the auspices of the current World Cup organization.

Canadian Nancy Greene dominated in the first women’s races in Aspen, winning the downhill, slalom and giant slalom (all three disciplines of the day) in ‘68.

The last year the women of the World Cup raced in Aspen was 2012, when Slovenian star Tina Maze, a former overall World Cup champion, won the World Cup giant slalom on Aspen Mountain.

One day later, Kathrin Zettel, of Austria, won the World Cup slalom, her second victory in Aspen. Zettel also won the Aspen GS in 2006.

SKI LEGENDS

They are the latest on the roster of the top women skiers in the world who have won on the slopes of Aspen: Green, Tamara McKinney, Janica Kostelic, Anja Paerson, Tanja Poutiainen, Marlies Schild and Tina Maze.

McKinney, a ski racer often compared with Eagle-Vail’s Mikaela Shiffrin, won the World Cup giant slalom in Aspen in 1981.

Two years later, McKinney was the overall queen of the World Cup.

Kostelic, a modern-era legend from Croatia, won twice in Aspen (2000) and (2004) — both slaloms.

Schild first won in Aspen in the 2006 slalom.

The Austrian won again five years later in the 2011 slalom.

The list of Aspen World Cup winners on the men’s side includes even more legends of ski racing: Ingemar Stenmark, Franz Klammer, Phil Mahre, Peter Muller, Todd Brooker, Bill Johnson, Pirmin Zurbriggen, Marc Girardelli, Alberto Tomba and Kjetil Andre Aamodt.



JEREMY SWANSON | SPECIAL TO THE DAILY

Mikaela Shiffrin, of Eagle-Vail, gets ready for her free-ski down the World Cup course in Aspen on Friday. Aspen’s giant slalom race is today.



JEREMY SWANSON | SPECIAL TO THE DAILY

A World Cup racer skis down the course overlooking Aspen on Friday morning. The ladies will take to the course today for a GS race.

For years, Aspen Mountain hosted America’s Downhill as a men’s World Cup event. Austria’s Klammer won that title in 1976 after his legendary Olympic downhill performance.

Sweden’s Stenmark, the greatest skier in World Cup history, won a slalom in Aspen the same year.

Thirteen years later, Stenmark won the 86th and final race of his storied World Cup career — the 1989 giant slalom in Aspen.

Muller, the Swiss powerhouse, won America’s Downhill on Aspen Mountain four times.

The colorful Tomba won here in 1991 (GS).

Aamodt, considered by many as one of the best all-around skiers in World Cup history, won two super-G World Cups in Aspen in 1992 and 1993.

The men of the World Cup will return to Aspen in the spring of

2017 when Aspen hosts the FIS Alpine World Cup Finals.

The event will include the best men and women in all four World Cup disciplines. The top 25 skiers in each category will race on Aspen Mountain March 15-19, 2017.

They will race giant slalom and slalom on the courses the women will use today and Sunday at the 2014 Winternational. And the World Cup Finals will feature a downhill and super-G on the historic America’s Downhill course.

The 2017 event in Aspen will be the first World Cup Finals in the United States in 20 years.

Aspen hosted the 1950 FIS World Championships, the first staged outside of Europe. Italian Zeno Colo and Austrian Dagmar Rom were the 1950 winners.

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AUDI FIS SKI WORLD CUP AT THE NATURE VALLEY ASPEN WINTERNATIONAL

NATURE VALLEY ASPEN 2014 WINTERNATIONAL ASPEN SNOWMASS. FIS Ski World Cup

WOMEN'S GIANT SLALOM AND SLALOM SATURDAY & SUNDAY NOV. 29-30, 2014

FINISH Winternational Arena and finish line viewings are accessible from Aspen off Monarch and Summit Streets.

A Giant Slalom - Start on skier's right near the bottom of Aztec trail below Ruthie's chair.

B Slalom - Start on skier's left at the top of Strawpile trail.

C Gondola Plaza - Sponsor Village, Bud Light Hi-Fi Concert, Giant Slalom Awards and Fireworks.

Course viewing and access from Aspen Mountain are contingent on snow conditions.

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