

6 Diamond Peak skiers qualify for performance camp

By Lisa O'Daly

Far West 14 and under athletes gathered at Alpine Meadows for the North/South Series last weekend to compete in super G. While Sunday's race was canceled, the teams had the opportunity for a Friday training run and an exciting Saturday one-run race on a long course from the top of Summit down the Wolverine bowl and over Waterfall to the bottom of Alpine Meadows, a distance of three-quarters mile.

Icy conditions turned slushy as the day wore on, challenging the racers, along with the already difficult course. A mid-course jump and an unnerving athlete injury requiring evacuation during the training day had the racers exercising caution and on race day, included a 45-minute course hold to dig out a rock.

Diamond Peak's Casey Delaney still led the pack of 92 competitors for the men, finishing first.

Madison Idso, who often leads the Diamond Peak women, took a hard crash and was not able to finish.

"Casey Delaney is dominating the U14 races this season, at every resort and in every snow condition," commented Diamond Peak Ski Foundation Coach Mark Norton.

The Diamond Peak men once again rocked the competition with not only Delaney's top-of-the-podium finish, but also with Payton Norton's fifth place (1:13.67), followed by Winston Pretti in eighth (1:14.56) and Noah Cleary in ninth just 0.06 seconds later (1:15.02). Teammates Corey Huber (22nd, 1:16.36), Tommy Corcoran (48th, 1:19.75), Nick Fischer (57th, 1:21.85), Trent Funke (60th, 1:22.35), Jeff Miller (67th,

1:23.98) also finished the challenging race.

“The course was tough; the conditions were tough. Fortunately, Diamond Peak’s U14 athletes – men and ladies – are also tough and faced the challenges head-on,” said DPSF Coach Raquel Norton.

The Diamond Peak women skied the super steep, technical course extremely well and were led by Emily Donahue in 19th (1:18.67), with Sophia Holm following at 21st (1:19.13) and Bridgette Johnson 28th (1:21.43). Laurel Taylor finished 35th (1:22.48) after making a critical error on the face and had to dump all her speed. Emily White (44th, 1:23.93) and Katie Fisher (70th, 1:44.61) can join their teammates in proudly saying they completed their toughest race.

Six of the Diamond Peak athletes – Casey Delaney, Noah Clearly, Corey Huber, Payton Norton, Winston Pretti, and Madison Idso – qualified to attend the U14 performance camp, an invitation-only event at Sugar Bowl on March 15-17. Twelve men and 12 women are selected from the North Series to compete based on 2013 series races conducted by Feb. 17, while Idso and Huber were selected separately due to their seasons’ performances. Athletes will race SL, GS, SG events against the other top athletes of their age class. The entire team next competes at the U14 championships where the North meets the South and Central divisions to compete in all four events (SL, GS, SG, and PL) on April 4-7, also at Sugar Bowl.

And don’t forget that next weekend is the Diamond Cup at Diamond Peak, where everyone can be a ski racer. The entry fee of \$15 per racer includes two runs on a course set up for a duel. The race categories include: Individuals (age/sex groups), Family, Husband/Wife, Father/Son, Father/Daughter, Mother/Son, and Mother/Daughter.

Lisa O’Daly is a parent volunteer with the Diamond Peak team.