

# THUNDERBIRD RACE TEAM

Newsletter: March 31, 2023



## Fourth Race Weekend: March 10-12:

The fourth (and final) race weekend of the 2023 MACC season took place on March 10-12. The races took place in typical cool winter weather conditions with some sun on Friday, mostly overcast on Saturday, and a sun/overcast mix with mild temps on Sunday. Friday's slalom was raced on North Boyne, Saturday's giant slalom was raced on FIS, and Sunday's Cantor Cup Super Combined (one run each of Super GS and slalom) was raced on FIS and Superbowl.

The T-Bird's that made the podium (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup>) are as follows:

### **Slalom (Friday):**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Brian Dusina (SVAM), Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM), Steven Foradori (VBM)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Will Heckman (E2M), Scott Soucie (AM),
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Dennis Parrott (VBM)

### **Giant Slalom (Saturday):**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Doug Gilmour (VE2M), Brian Dusina (SVAM), Scott Soucie (AM), Steven Foradori (VBM)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM), Jamie Pawelek (VBM)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Zach Jablonski (EM), Mike Altenburg (SVE2M), Will Heckman (E2M), Dennis Parrott (VBM)

### **Cantor Cup Super Combined (Sunday):**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Will Heckman (E2M), Brian Dusina (SVAM), Steven Foradori (VBM)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Zach Jablonski (EM), Mike Altenburg (SVE2M), Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Doug Gilmour (VE2M), Mike Jablonski (SVBM),

Our T-Bird "racers of the week" are **Brian Dusina** (SVAM) and **Steven Foradori** (VBM), each with three 1<sup>st</sup> place finishes. Not far behind, also with three podium finishes, are **Patrick Smithbauer** (SVBM) with a 1<sup>st</sup> and two 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishes, and **Will Heckman** (E2M) with a 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place finishes. A little further behind, with two podium finishes are **Scott Soucie** (AM) with 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishes, **Doug Gilmour** (VE2M) with 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place finishes, followed by **Zach Jablonski** (EM) and **Mike Altenburg** (SVE2M) with 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place finishes, and **Dennis Parrott** (VBM) with two 3<sup>rd</sup> place finishes.

The T-Bird's had 85% of our racers (11 of 13) make the podium this weekend, which is excellent.

## The World Cup Season Winners:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Brian Dusina (SVAM), Scott Soucie (AM), Steven Foradori (VBM)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Mike Altenburg (SVE2M), Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Zach Jablonski (EM), Dennis Parrott (VBM)

Our T-Bird "racer of the year" is **Brian Dusina**, who again dominated the SVAM class, winning every race that he participated in except one. This is the fourth year in a row that he has won the SVAM class, again achieving this without being upgraded to the E2M class (though he is getting ever closer to this). Congratulations **Brian!!!**

## This Weekend's Activities:

Because this was a three day race weekend with the MACC banquet on Saturday in the Boyne Mountain Civic Center (with all of the Race Team and friends in attendance), the only T-Bird dinner gathering was on Friday evening at the Barrelback restaurant in Walloon Lake, with a dozen of the Race Team in attendance. We had a great time at both events.

## **Mike's Musings:**

A number of T-Bird racers had very good seasons, becoming faster racers and setting the stage for future success. **Steven Foradori** was the 4<sup>th</sup> most improved male racer (and not far from being first) with a drop of 12.58 in his total handicaps, while **Scott Soucie** was the 5<sup>th</sup> most improved male racer, with a drop of 8.02 in his total handicaps. So, winning their classes was well deserved. Congratulations **Steven** and **Scott!!!**

The entire **T-Bird Race Team** did very well this season, placing 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Slalom standings (only 0.45 out of 1<sup>st</sup>), 6<sup>th</sup> in the Giant Slalom, and 4<sup>th</sup> overall of the nine teams in the MACC race program. Congratulations **Race Team!!!**

Of course, the Race Team's improved slalom performance may be at least partially due to the fact that both Jamie Pawelek and I both gave up on racing slalom (my decision based on recent injuries), which removed our typical mediocre performances from the team calculation.

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**

734-283-5510 (Home)

231-582-7339 (Cottage)

313-720-1216 (Cell)

[mtjablonski@wowway.com](mailto:mtjablonski@wowway.com)

# THUNDERBIRD RACE TEAM

Newsletter: February 27, 2023



## Second Race Weekend: February 3-5:

The second race weekend of the 2023 MACC season took place on February 3-5. The races took place in typical winter weather conditions during the three days of racing. Friday's GS was raced on North Boyne, Saturday's slalom was raced on Superbowl, and Sunday's Super GS was raced on FIS. Twelve T-Bird racers went through the courses this weekend.

The T-Bird's that made the podium (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup>) are as follows:

### **Giant Slalom (Friday):**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Janie Guiliani (E1W), Brian Dusina (SVAM)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Steven Foradori (VBM)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Will Heckman (E2M), Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM), Jamie Pawelek (VBM)

### **Slalom (Saturday):**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Zach Jablonski (EM), Janie Guiliani (E1W), Scott Soucie (AM), Steven Foradori (VBM)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Doug Gilmour (VE2M), Brian Dusina (SVAM), Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Mike Altenburg (SVE2M), Dennis Parrott (VBM)

### **Super Giant Slalom (Sunday):**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Doug Gilmour (VE2M), Brian Dusina (SVAM)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Janie Guiliani (E1W), Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM), Steven Foradori (VBM)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Mike Altenburg (SVE2M), Will Heckman (E2M), Dennis Parrott (VBM)

Our T-Bird "racers of the week" are **Janie Guiliani** (E1W) and **Brian Dusina** (SVAM), each with two 1<sup>st</sup> and one 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishes. Not far behind, also with three podium finishes, are **Stephen Foradori** (VBM) with one 1<sup>st</sup> and two 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishes and **Patrick Smithbauer** (SVBM) with two 2<sup>nd</sup> and one 3<sup>rd</sup> place finishes. Racers with two podium finishes include **Doug Gilmour** (VE2M) with one 1<sup>st</sup> place and one 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishes, followed by **Mike Altenburg** (SVE2M), **Will Heckman** (E2M), and **Dennis Parrott** (VBM), each with two 3<sup>rd</sup> place finishes.

The T-Bird's had 83% of our racers (10 of 12) make the podium this weekend, which is very good. Hopefully, we can do this well in the next race weekend.

## Third Race Weekend: February 25-26:

The third race weekend of the 2023 MACC season took place on February 25-26. The races took place in typical Michigan winter weather conditions, mixing some sun, some clouds, and some wind during the two days of racing. Saturday's slalom was raced on Superbowl, and Sunday's Super GS was raced on FIS. Eleven T-Bird racers went through the courses this weekend.

The T-Bird's that made the podium (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup>) are as follows:

### **Slalom (Saturday):**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Zach Jablonski (EM), Brian Dusina (SVAM), Scott Soucie (AM), Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM), Steven Foradori (VBM)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Mike Altenburg (SVE2M), Will Heckman (E2M), Dennis Parrott (VBM)

### **Giant Slalom (Sunday):**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Brian Dusina (SVAM), Scott Soucie (AM),
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Steven Foradori (VBM)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Mike Jablonski (SVBM), Dennis Parrott (VBM)

Our T-Bird “racers of the week” are **Brian Dusina** (SVAM) and **Scott Soucie** (AM), each with two 1<sup>st</sup> place finishes. Not far behind, also with two podium finishes, were **Steven Foradori** (VBM) with a 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishes and **Dennis Parrott** with a 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place finishes.

The T-Bird’s had 82% of our racers (9 of 11) make the podium this weekend, which is very good, just 1% below the previous race weekend. Hopefully, we can carry this level of success into the final race weekend.

### **This Weekend’s Activities:**

With only a two day race weekend, the Race Team gathered for dinner on Saturday evening at the Lake Street Pub in Boyne City. The dinner was generally acceptable, but the restaurant was unpleasant in dealing with the request for separate checks for the nine participants at two separate tables at payment time.

### **Mike’s Musings**

During Sunday’s GS race, Mike Altenburg had a very fast first run down a very fast course on FIS at Boyne, in fact it was almost two seconds faster than the next fastest racer in his class. In his second run, he was well on his way to another fast run when he realized that he was rapidly gaining on the racer in front of him who had a glitch and lost a lot of his speed. He felt that as long as he finished behind him the timer would get both of their times. As it worked out, he was so close to the racer in front of him (mere inches) that the timing equipment could not tell the difference between their times and he had to take a re-run. On the re-run he fell and got a DNF for the run which took him from a sure first place to no place. What made this even worse, the zero points for a DNF versus the 25 points for winning the race left him in third place for the season versus having a commanding lead going into the final race weekend. This is a bummer!!!

My nephew, Zach Jablonski, loves the tight gates of slalom courses and does not enjoy the few and wide gates of GS and super GS race courses. Not that he skis slowly in the wide open courses, just slowly relative to his competitors. In slalom, he beats the nearest competition by up to eight seconds in a race, which is quite significant. In fact, he enjoys slalom so much, that he has chosen to skip the speed races this season. I guess you can’t argue with doing what you really enjoy and doing it very well.

On the other end of the age and ability spectrum, is me. If you recall, at this time last season, my season ended with my first trip down the ski hill in a ski patrol sled (after 56 years of skiing) with a badly dislocated shoulder. Over the summer, the more I thought about it, I realized that my skiing/racing injuries have all taken place racing slalom courses. It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to realize that eliminating slalom from my race activities will lengthen my skiing career and make it more fun. So, that is what I have done. I am now a speed specialist and enjoying it more. I am getting slower in my old age, but still having fun skiing fast.

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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mtjablonski@wowway.com

# THUNDERBIRD RACE TEAM

Newsletter: January 30, 2023



## 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).
- The classes are set up by ability levels, with Open Elite (O) being the fastest racers, followed by E1, E2, A, B, C, and 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 21-22:

The first race weekend of the 2023 MACC season took place on January 21-22, as the originally scheduled first weekend of January 7-8 was cancelled due to the lack of sufficient snow, which is the same thing that happened in 2021 and 2022. The races took place in barely freezing (30-32F) weather conditions with marginally acceptable snow conditions on both Saturday and Sunday. Both GS and slalom were raced on North Boyne, as neither FIS or Superbowl had sufficient snow cover.

For the T-Bird Race Team, this weekend was somewhat successful, with 9 T-Bird Racers going through the courses on Saturday and Sunday. The T-Bird's that made the podium (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup>) are as follows:

### **Giant Slalom (Saturday):**

2<sup>nd</sup> Steven Foradori (VBM)

3<sup>rd</sup> Scott Soucie (AM), Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM), Jamie Pawelek (VBM)

### **Slalom (Sunday):**

1<sup>st</sup> Zach Jablonski (E1M), Scott Soucie (AM), Steven Foradori (VBM)

2<sup>nd</sup> Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM), Dennis Parrott (VBM)

Our T-Bird “racer of the week” is **Steven Foradori** (VBM) with a 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place finish. Not far behind, also with two podium finishes, are **Scott Soucie** (AM) with a 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish, followed by **Patrick Smithbauer** (SVBM) with 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place finishes.

The T-Bird's had 67% of our racers (6 of 9) make the podium this weekend, which is very good. Hopefully, we can do this well in the next race weekend.

## This Weekend's Activities:

On Friday evening, ten Race Team members and friends gathered at Stiggs Brewery in Boyne City for dinner and drinks. It felt good to get together in an indoor social setting for the first time since the 2022 race season. On Saturday evening, twelve Race Team members and friends gathered at the Weiss Acres chalet in Boyne Falls for a BC Pizza dinner with drinks and stimulating conversation. Hopefully, this will continue for the rest of the race season and beyond.

## Mike's Musings:

We are not sure of the reason, but something has continued to take its toll on the number of racers registered, both in the overall MACC program and in the number of T-Birds registered. We are all hoping that this problem (virus or whatever) goes away, so that everyone can and will return to ski racing in the future.

There is some good news for this season for the Race Team. **Will Heckman** (E2M) has returned to racing after a few seasons off. His full form hasn't returned yet, but he's not far out of contention. A number of the T-Birds are continuing to improve their racing performance, including **Steven Foradori** (VBM) and **Scott Soucie** (AM). The team prospects are looking good.

From a personal perspective, my racing has changed. After my last (of three) dislocated shoulders happened last February, shortening my ski season by a month, I realized that all of my injuries (including a broken bone in my foot) took place racing slalom. My 76 year old body can go fast just fine, but cannot make the tight and quick turns that slalom requires. So, I am only going to race giant slalom and super giant slalom in the future. My new motto is “fast is fun”. Hopefully, I can still go fast enough to be competitive. I'm too young to retire from 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.

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