

Racer Turnout for 2001 (And What It Means for 2002)

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Short Summary

All 20 classes in 2001 had reasonable turnout and should be offered again in 2002. We could possibly offer a women's vet-A class, but the current women's A class is not bad—similar in size (average=14) to VBM, VE1M, VE2M, and E1M. What do the current A women think?

The main losses in numbers since 1992 are with young, less-advanced classes. Our numbers have grown in the elite classes, particularly the faster women's classes. Supervet numbers have remained steady.

This year, our numbers dropped to a new low. The previous low was in 1998, after a bad-weather season (1997 had races cancelled due to rain and a power-blackout). 2000 ended with bad weather, so the downturn this year is not totally surprising. However, some bad news was that as the season progressed, we lost racers from course 4. Was the main reason the timing equipment, or were there other factors?

Analysis and Possibilities

Current Racers

Our racers can be put into three categories:

1. Those who will leave the program no matter what, because of injuries, job changes, babies, etc.
2. Those who will stay with the program no matter what, because they love racing.
3. Those who will stay if things go well, but will leave if we screw up or take the fun out.

Group 3 is the one we try to influence. The weather and snow conditions were good this year, and we generally avoided doing stupid things. However, the timing problems in the first two weekends might have cost us some racers.

New Racers

Here are four categories of new potential adult racers:

1. People who have decided to get involved in ski racing, and go out of their way to find out about available programs such as ours.
2. Those who would join if they knew we exist.
3. Those who could be talked into trying it out.
4. Those who would never consider racing, no matter what.

Group 4 is beyond our control. Unfortunately, most ski club members fall into this group,

along with most of the population of Michigan.

Groups 1 and 2 are the ones we should focus on. The existing web site and club network is probably adequate to cover group 1, so we should think about targeting group 2. Bob Simpson is arranging to get mailing lists for league race series in Crystal and Cannonsburg, so we might be able to find some new people that way.

Traditionally, clubs have provided new racers from group 3. But with the aging club memberships, this isn't working except for a few of our member clubs (Skiwi and Toledo).

Allow High School Racers?

An idea that has been suggested is to open the MACC program to high-school kids. Some arguments against doing this are that this is traditionally an adult program, and that we would interfere with existing kids programs such as CUSSA and high-school teams.

On the other hand, here are some arguments for opening the program to younger racers:

1. We need new racers. We need younger racers. This is one way to get them, and nothing else has been very effective.
2. It lets parents (and family friends) do the work of recruiting.
3. It offers an inducement for parents to get excited again about the program—if not for themselves, then for their kids.

Data for 2001

Table 1 shows our turnout for each year since 1992 (except 1995—no data). Note that all numbers shown in this report are based on attendance, not registration. Our numbers this year were the lowest on record since 1992. (Race 10 was the Searchmont rainstorm, but all other race days had good weather.)

Last year about 60% of the Saturday racers participated in the Cantor Cup. This year it was 75%. Feedback from participants (who did not work indoors) was very positive, so this should work if we can manage the work assignments without burning people out like we did this year.

The last column in the table shows the ratio of racers on the last Saturday compared with the number on the first Saturday. Last year, with the warm Marks weather following the rainy Searchmont weather, we had the lowest turnout. The best was in 1997.

Table 2 shows the attendance for the courses. It's about right, and the same courses should be used next year unless new registrations change the distribution. The table also shows we had the biggest losses on course 4, which is where the timing problems were worst early in the year. We had 6 racers upgrade from course 5, so the loss there is not as bad as it first looks.

Table 3 shows our attendance by class. It looks like all classes that existed in 2001 had reasonable attendance. D2M has gotten bigger than D1M. Some D1M racers moved up to C, and others decided D2 looked pretty good. DW remained strong throughout the year, with 3 moving to C and 7 racing on Saturday of the Marks. AW grew as 8 women bumped up from B (and only one moved into E2W.)

Table 1. Turnout per race.

Year	Ave	Byne	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	%
1992	286	312	360	353	316	320	203	204	299	297	246	286	267			79
1993	256	284	333	339	275	278	208	195	209	205	247	236	237	288	272	86
1994	262	287	304	293	298	292	282	269	191	214	212	232	286	268		94
1996	209	236	280	275	226	221	206	207	129	153	142	200	240	234		86
1997	212	250	254		253	261	255	259	129	127	122	204	244	229		96
1998	191	212	230	221	221	220	198	208	138	142	136	178	213	190		93
1999	203	226	245	230	225	210	214	226	153	158	152	194	229	?		93
2000	181	222*	238	221	227	226	217	203	143	134	133	143	179	108		75
2001	185	203	231	218	220	220	187	198	140	147	128	158	193	144		84

*Average of first 6 2000 races (normal weather). Cantor Cup totals not included in averages.

Table 2. Course attendance.

COURSE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	44	43	46	43	43	43	96	57	57	28	40	
2	47	44	45	43	38	40	44	49	33	39	43	38
3	54	48	53	55	46	48		41	38	40	52	58
4	49	48	42	42	31	36				27	31	48
5	37	36	34	37	30	32				24	27	

Table 3. Class attendance in 2001.

Class	Ave	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
A Men	6	13	11	5	6	6	6	5	6	6	3	6	4
A Women	14	14	14	15	15	12	15	13	12	11	15	16	14
B Men	9	13	11	12	12	10	10	6	6	6	7	11	9
B Women	8	10	7	12	12	8	8	4	4	2	7	10	7
C Men	9	13	12	15	14	5	11	6	7	6	6	6	4
C Women	7	12	12	6	7	7	7	3	4	4	5	7	4
D1 Men	5	9	9	7	6	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	3
D2 Men	6	4	4	6	9	7	8	5	5	5	7	6	5
D Women	8	10	10	11	12	10	11	5	7	5	6	7	5
Elite-1 Men	14	17	17	17	15	16	16	11	12	8	8	16	11
Elite-1 Women	4	5	5	6	6	5	6	2	3	3	3	5	3
Elite-2 Men	9	10	8	11	9	8	9	9	9	9	9	8	5
Elite-2 Women	6	8	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	5	6	1
Supervet-B Men	10	14	13	13	12	11	11	7	7	5	8	9	9
Supervet-C Men	8	10	11	8	9	8	7	5	5	5	8	9	8
Supervet-D Men	10	14	13	10	10	8	8	9	9	9	8	10	10
Vet-A Men	9	8	9	14	14	9	9	4	4	4	12	12	6
Vet-B Men	13	17	16	14	16	16	15	8	10	9	11	15	12
Vet Elite-1 Men	13	14	13	16	15	15	14	15	13	10	12	13	10
Vet Elite-2 Men	14	16	16	15	14	15	16	12	13	10	15	17	14

As the season progressed, we can see how racers deserted course 4—classes SVBM, CM, and CW. Also, AM dropped after the first weekend.

Table 4 shows how the numbers have changed since 1992 by class. All of the “young”

classes have shrunk drastically except E1M and women in A and elite, where there has been growth. (Compare 16 elite and A women in 1992 with 32 in 2001.) The Supervet classes and VAM have stayed the same, and vet-elite has doubled (there is now both VE1M and VE2M). So, overall, we are keeping old racers, expanding the number of elite racers, and losing the intermediate young racers.

Table 4. Class attendance since 1992.

Class	1992	1993	1994	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
A Men	17	11	10	7	9	11	13	10	6
A Women	9	8	11	9	11	8	11	13	14
B Men	24	19	16	6	9	7	11	9	9
B Women	16*	16*	14*	14*	13*	11	10	8	8
C Men	34*	29*	29*	19*	20*	23*	19*	13*	9
C Women	22*	17*	18*	13*	14*	8	11	12	7
D1 Men	27*	17*	20*	15*	16*	13	4	6	5
D2 Men							2	3	6
D Women	19*	21*	18*	12	8	6	10	6	8
Elite-1 Men	16	18	20	17	18	16	18	12	14
Elite-1 Women	7	5	6	6	4	7	5	5	4
Elite-2 Men	16	11	12	11	9	11	10	11	9
Elite-2 Women							6	4	6
Supervet-B Men	6	4	6	9	13	12	12	8	10
Supervet-C Men	8	8	9	7	6		9	11	8
Supervet-D Men	9	11	13	15	13	13	10	9	10
Vet-A Men	11	17	14	12	12	9	8	8	9
Vet-B Men	28	29*	31*	22*	19*	12	10	10	13
Vet Elite-1 Men	14	14	16	16	19	11	11	11	13
Vet Elite-2 Men						12	15	12	14

*Number includes vet classes that no longer exist.

Given that MACC has focused lately on having good FIS courses on good terrain, it is encouraging that we have more advanced racers than before. However, our aging membership combined with less emphasis on social functions could be partly why we are not attracting young mid-range racers. Also, there is competition in the form of club races such as Club NASTAR and beer leagues that appeal to the more casual would-be racer.

Table 5 shows the attendance histories of the clubs since 1992. Snow Drifters, Skiwis, and Toledo have done great, bringing new racers to the program. GM has gone from the largest club to barely having enough racers to maintain a vote on the MACC, and Lansing disbanded, leaving about half of their skiers to join other clubs (mainly Ann Arbor, Snow Drifters, and Team Rust). Team Rust and Powderhounds have about half of their former numbers. Ann Arbor, T-Birds, and Skiniks have also shrunk.

Table 5. Average attendance by club.

Club	1992	1993	1994	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Ave
Ann Arbor Ski Club	16	10	10	12	17	14	13	16	12
Ford Thunderbirds	31	31	35	33	35	29	31	25	25
GM Ski Club	43	42	44	24	20	17	14	9	6
Jim Dandy Ski Club	11	11	15	11	9	11	14	11	12
Lansing Ski Club	34	31	31	26	20	15	14		
Powderhounds	25	17	16	19	21	17	14	12	12
Schussmeisters	33	30	40	35	41	40	41	33	35
Skiniks	24	20	18	18	17	13	12	14	14
Skiwis	8	9	11	6	10	9	15	26	23
Snow Drifters	7	5	7	10	7	8	8	13	16
Team Rust	27	26	25	15	15	19	17	15	13
Toledo Ski Club	7	2					11	13	13

My experience with Ann Arbor leads me to think that it will remain difficult to attract new racers from the traditionally large ski clubs, because their membership is aging more than we are. Young skiers who would be open to the idea of racing are not recruited by the clubs and are not attracted by what they see as “old people” social clubs.

Table 6 shows the club votes for next year, based on the turnout for the 12 races held in 2001. (The Cantor Cup tournament is in the computer, so it gets counted.) It takes a total of 60 racer starts to get a vote, 144 to get two votes, and 360 to get three votes.

Table 6. Votes for 2002.

Ski Club	Votes	Ave	Total	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Ann Arbor Ski Club	1	11.5	138	15	14	13	13	12	12	7	7	7	11	14	13
Ford Thunderbirds	2	24.7	296	35	31	30	33	29	28	15	16	14	19	27	19
GM Ski Club	1	6.1	73	11	10	12	11	7	7	0	1	0	5	6	3
Jim Dandy Ski Club	1	11.5	138	13	13	12	14	11	13	12	10	9	9	12	10
Powderhounds	1	11.8	141	17	15	11	12	13	11	14	12	8	8	12	8
Schussmeisters	3	34.6	415	40	39	42	41	38	40	31	31	27	28	32	26
Skiniks	2	14.1	169	21	21	15	15	15	14	8	11	10	12	15	12
Skiwis	2	23.3	279	30	30	26	27	20	21	19	20	19	22	24	21
Snow Drifters	2	15.7	188	16	14	23	18	17	16	15	15	11	14	15	14
Team Rust	2	12.5	150	16	14	16	15	14	14	4	8	8	15	16	10
Toledo	2	12.6	151	17	16	15	16	10	13	11	12	11	11	11	8