

Ski Leagues and the GrassRoots Series... A Perfect Match

The Aquatic Park in Berkeley, Calif., is about as grassroots as you can get. Located along Interstate 80, a major transportation corridor in the San Francisco Bay Area, thousands of water skiers since the 1960s have taken a break from sitting in traffic to take a ski ride.

Spectators used to fill the shores to watch numerous Western Regional Water Ski Championships, the 1977 Nationals, and the Cal Cup, the first cash-prize water ski tournament. But these days most Bay Area water skiers prefer the warmer climates of the man-made lakes in the Central Valley for their tournament water skiing.

To renew interest in the Aquatic Park, the Berkeley Water Ski Club decided to run a Wednesday Night Ski League throughout the summer of 2007. During these informal fun tournaments, each skier had a handicap that allowed them to compete against the other skiers no matter their level of ability. After scoring was completed, the skier could finish his or her set and ski back to the dock where dinner was waiting. At the end of the night cash was awarded to the top finishers, while some was saved for the end of season winners.

Now in its third season, the league averages 18 skiers a night from a group of 50 different people competing. There also have been some good stories over the last couple of years. There is a consultant who lives in Southern California that now brings his ski on his weekly trips and is learning the course; the ski league record holder who once thought he would never ski again after a major snowmobile accident is



Chris Renz of the Berkeley Water Ski Club, who helped start the weekly ski league, takes a run through the slalom course.

now skiing in class C tournaments; and then there was the night when a UC Davis collegiate skier took the Amtrak train, rode his skateboard to the park, and finished in third place on borrowed equipment. Professional slalom skier Marcus Brown has even stopped by while conducting his *Face-to-Face Tour*.

The USA Water Ski GrassRoots Series is perfect for ski leagues. The sanctioning cost is only \$25 per event, which NorCal MasterCraft has graciously covered for the Berkeley Water Ski Club for its league. By sanctioning these events, USA Water Ski provides insurance, advertising, goodie bags and credits that can be used toward trophies and



Professional slalom skier Marcus Brown stopped by the Aquatic Park in Berkeley, Calif., while conducting his Face-to-Face Tour.

T-shirts. All you need is a trained driver (coursework can be completed online) and a safety coordinator. The paperwork is very minimal. USA Water Ski also has also made it very easy for skiers to join by creating a GrassRoots Membership for only \$35 per year.

So if you want a fun way to bring new members into your club while involving your existing members, start a ski league. If you already have a ski league, sanction it as a GrassRoots tournament and reap the benefits.

– Matt Brandt



Upcoming GrassRoots Tournaments

9/5 Lyons Slalom #2, Wixom, MI	9/12 Dancing On The Water, Halsey, OR	9/19-20 Stillwater Lakes, Palm Bay, FL	9/27 September Slalom San Diego, CA
9/5-6 Daves Labor Day, Edinboro, PA	9/12 Still Waters Fall, Oconomowoc, WI	9/19-20 Faith Lake Open, Shorter, AL	10/3-4 PB Team Challenge, Canyon Lake, CA
9/5-6 Timberlake Tripod Team Tugoff, Sparta, VA	9/12 Last Chance, Thorntown, IN	9/26 Autumn Slalom, Newberry Springs, CA	10-25 Harvest Moon San Diego, CA
9/5-6 Cabo Cash 2009 Hackett, AR	9/12-13 John Meyer Memorial, Palm Bay, FL	9/26 Adobe Ranch Fall Festival, Arvin, CA	10/31 One Last Try, Canyon Lake, CA
9/5-6 48th Omaha Open, Ashland, NE	9/12-13 Bob Barton Memorial, Canyon Lake, CA	9/26 Hancock Team, Winter Garden, FL	10/31-11/1 Stillwater Lakes, Palm Bay, FL
9/5-7 NW Water Ski Champs, Yacolt, WA	9/12-13 CAWSC CASS Finals, Hutto, TX	9/26-27 Great Plains Champs, Wilmington, IL	11/15 Midday Slalom, San Diego, CA
9/6-7 Angola Labor Day, Angola, IN	9/13 Skyview Lake Fall Slalom, Harmony, NC	9/27 Ski West Grand Finale, Arvin, CA	12/12 Breakfast with Santa, Canyon Lake, CA
9/6 MWSA Series: Slalom #3, Clio, MI	9/18-20 HB Mayor of the Lake SkiFest, Coventry, CT	9/27 Sundown Fall Fun, Newberry Spgs, CA	12/13 Freezing Your Buoys Off, San Diego, CA