



SIERRA LEAGUE RACING MANUAL

The following information is intended to acquaint you with the rules, procedures and etiquette for Sierra League ski racing. If at any time you have questions or comments, please check with your club race chairman or a Sierra League official.

Have Fun Racing!!



Welcome, First Time Racers!

You are considered a First Time Racer (**FTR**) in your first Sierra League race, regardless of your race experience. This is so we can establish a Sierra League Handicap for you and place you in an appropriate race class. Once you are assigned to a class, you will race in that class until you strike out. You will no longer be an FTR.

Beginning FTRs – Less experienced FTRs will want to race only on our “lower” course, to establish a handicap, which is designed with beginning to intermediate skiers in mind. It is less challenging than Sierra League’s advanced or “upper” course. FTRs who race only on the lower course pay no race fees for the first race!

Experienced FTRs – Aggressive skiers and those who have raced before will need to race on both the “upper” and “lower” course to establish a handicap. The upper course is designed with intermediate to expert skiers in mind. **FTRs** who race on the upper course will be charged a regular race fee.

Getting Started!

Race Bibs – Every Sierra League racer is assigned a race bib with a number on the front and back. This is your number as long as you have that bib. You will pay \$10 for your bib.

You must wear your bib with the number clearly visible front and back to compete in all races, during all course inspections, and any time you are skiing within the race arena.

The Start Area – The start area is divided into the staging area and the starting gate. When you reach the top of the race course a Sierra League member (the Starter) will line you up in race order in the staging area. Skiers are lined up by class and handicap. Juniors race first, followed by women, legends and the men. **FTRs** race at the end of the seeded racers and are lined up together as a class.

A mountain race staff member will direct you to enter the starting gate. He/she will announce your bib number to the finish shack then say to you (for example), “Course is clear. Racer...Ready...5...4...3...2...1...Go.” You may start your run any time after the countdown begins, but within 5 seconds after “Go”. Remember, your time starts when you go through the starting wand, not when the mountain race staff member says, “Go”.

If you miss your start (you are late to the staging area or are not ready to race when called) you will be lined up and allowed to start **at the end of your class**. If you miss your class entirely, you will be allowed to start at the end of the class in progress.

Getting Started—continued

The Finish Area – You must ski through the finish line to stop the timer. After you pass through the finish line you should make several turns to slow down and then exit the finish run-out area as quickly as possible. This will keep the finish run-out area clear and avoid problems if the racer behind you is or becomes out of control and is unable to stop after passing the finish line.

Course inspection – All racers should inspect the race course prior to every race. Here are some procedures:

- Racers are allowed to inspect the course by **SLOWLY** skiing or side slipping along side the course.
- Racers may side slip through a gate to view the course, but may not make practice turns parallel with those required by the course (this is called “shadowing”).
- Racers **may not** make race style turns through a single or multiple gates.
- Side slipping through the course is **NOT ALLOWED**, unless permission of a Sierra League Official or the mountain race department is given.
- You **MAY NOT** ski through the start wand or the finish line during course inspection.
- There is **NO** free skiing at anytime in the race arena. (This is defined as three or more linked turns).

A racer will be disqualified at the discretion of Sierra League race officials for:

- Shadowing or skiing the course.
- Side slipping through the course after being told not to.
- Unsportsmanlike-like conduct as determined by Sierra League race officials.
- Failure to properly wear your race bib during course inspection or a race.

Any racer observing one of these violations should report it to a Sierra League official to enact the disqualification.

Running the Course

In the Sierra League we race giant slalom (GS), slalom and super giant slalom super G) racecourses. A schedule of race days and race format is published at the beginning of the season. Be sure to check with your race chairman or league official prior to race day as weather and conditions may result in changes to the original plan and/or format. You can also go to www.sierraleague.com.

Racers get two runs on the course each race day. Times are combined for final results in slalom and giant slalom. You must complete both runs in order to have an official time. In super G your first run will be a practice run and your second run will be the race run.

Falling – If you fall in the race course you may get back up and continue skiing – **UNLESS**: 1) you miss a gate as a result of your fall. In this case you must hike up to the missed gate, complete it, and continue; 2) you lose a ski. If one or both skis come off, you are automatically disqualified (**DQ'd**)(**Exception: you are allowed to complete the course on one ski if you are within two gates of the finish line**); and 3) **you will interfere with the next racer. In the case of #2 and #3 you must clear the race course ASAP.**

Completing the Course – At each gate **BOTH SKI TIPS AND BOTH BOOTS** must cross the imaginary line between the inside and outside gates of the race course, except for the last two gates and the finish line, where the skier shall be allowed to complete the course on one ski.

As long as both ski tips and both boots cross the imaginary line of the gate the racer is OK, even if (1) he/she knocks down one or all poles of a gate; (2) he/she slides through the gate on some part of his/her body other than his/her feet; (3) he/she hikes back up to a gate; (4) he/she enters and exits from the same side; (5) he/she passes through the gates out of their numerical order; (6) he/she passes through a gate reverse to the expected direction of travel.

Interference – Interference occurs when a racer on course is obstructed by another skier, equipment or obstacles on the course. When this happens you must:

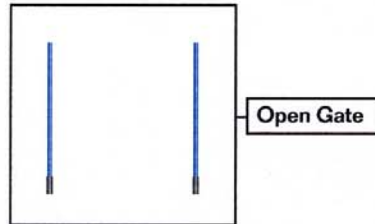
1. Ski off the course immediately and inform the nearest Gatekeeper of the interference. .
2. Do not continue to race the course if you have been interfered with; if you cross the finish line after being interfered with, your time will count even if you were interfered with and you will not be granted a re-run.
3. Ski to the finish shack and inform a mountain race official and the finish person that you need a provisional re-run. He/she will radio to the top of the course that you are on your way back for a re-run.
4. Report to the top of the course ASAP for your re-run.

All re-runs will be allowed as soon as the racer arrives back at the start area, regardless of class. No re-run will be granted if you do not stop immediately after the interference occurs.

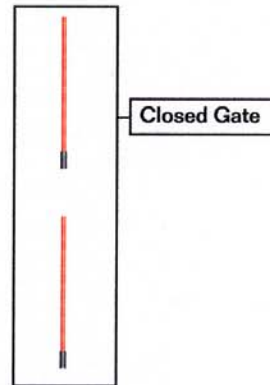
You waive your right to a re-run if you continue skiing and complete the course after you have been interfered with.

Types of Gates

An "Open Gate" Is Set Perpendicular To The Fall Line

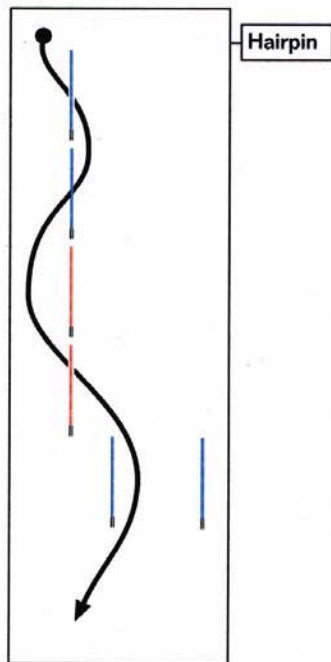


A "Closed" Gate Is Set Parallel To The Fall Line

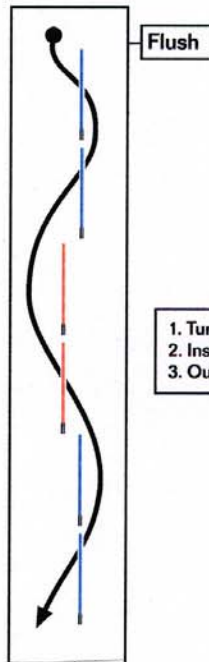


A Slalom Course May Contain The Following Types Of Gates:

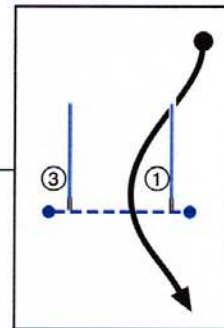
A Hairpin Is A Set Of Two Closed Gates



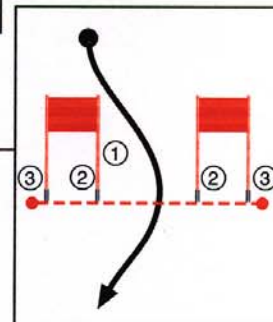
A Flush Is A Set Of Three Or Four Closed Gates



Slalom



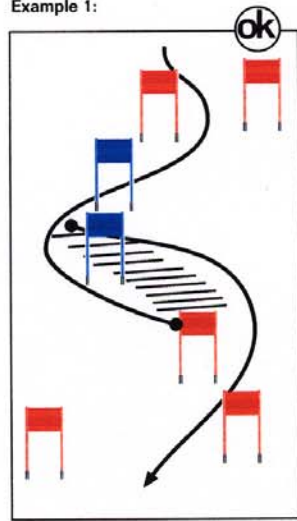
Giant Slalom



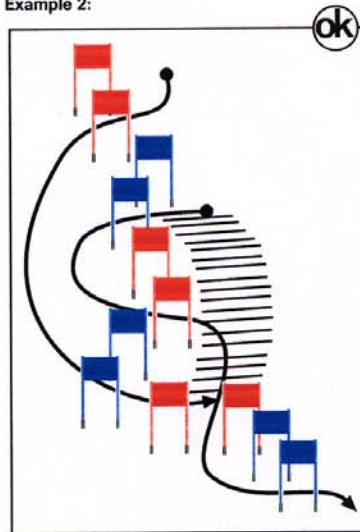
Types of Gates

Here are some examples of how to go back through missed gates:

Example 1:



Example 2:



Example 1:

Racer climbed back to go through gate.

Example 2:

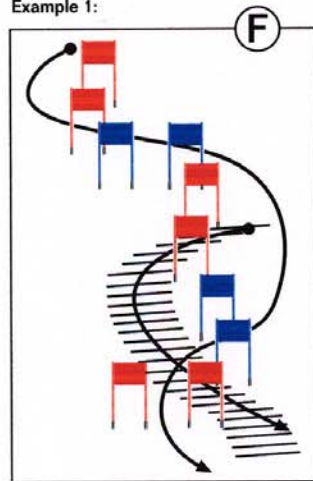
Any Sequence ok

Racer missed the 2nd & 3rd gates, climbed back and passed through them properly, then went on.

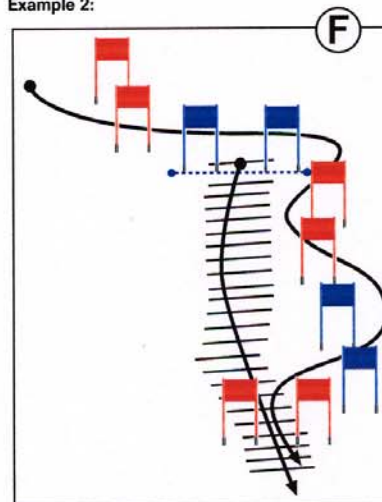
Note that the racer did not pass through the 4th gate another time, nor did he have to do so.

Here are some examples of good effort but not good enough:

Example 1:



Example 2:



Example 1:

Racer missed 2 gates and only returned far enough to pass through one gate - they get a 'B' for effort but this is a Fault.

Example 2:

Any Sequence ok

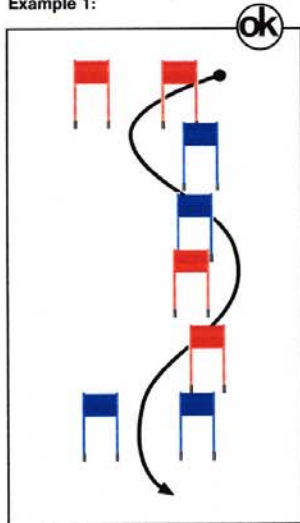
Racer climbed back but not far enough to have both feet and both ski tips cross the "gate line".

An 'A' for effort, but this is a Fault. (Quite Common)

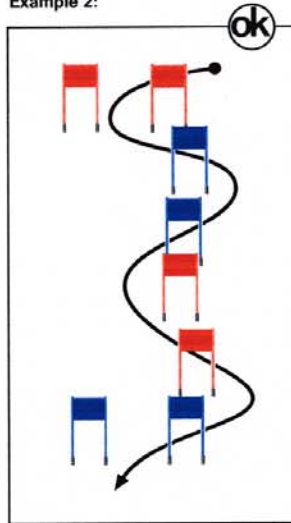
Types of Gates

Here are some examples of how to correctly go through gates:

Example 1:



Example 2:



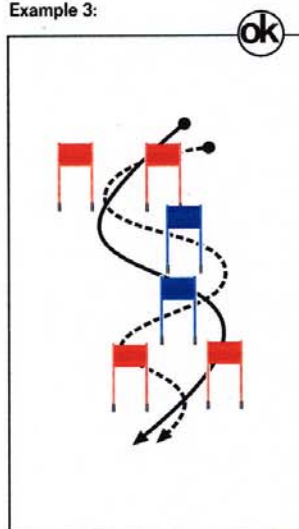
Example 1:

Fastest.

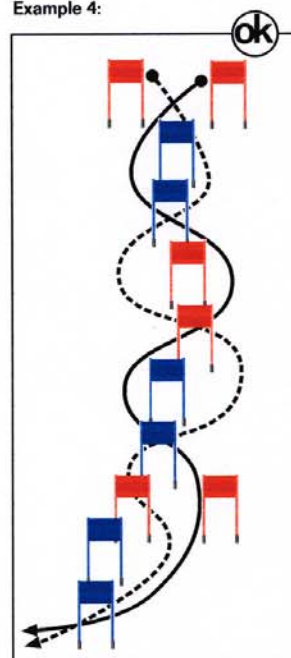
Example 2:

Very slow, but legal.

Example 3:



Example 4:



Example 3:

Again, slow, but legal

Example 4:

Both ok, but solid line is smooth and fast; broken line is "cranky".

Disqualification (DQ)

Here are some reasons why you may be disqualified in a race:

1. Failing to obey race officials
2. Missing one or more gates or the finish line
3. Losing a ski while on the course unless this happens at the last two gates prior to the finish line, in which case you may complete the course on one ski.
4. Passing/overtaking another racer on the course (see Interference).
5. Skiing through the start wand or finish line at any time other than when you are racing on the course.

Class Definitions and Handicap Ranges

There are four age categories of racers:

- Junior racers shall be 17 years of age or younger
- Open racers shall be 18 years of age or older
- **Veteran** racers shall be 50 years of age or older
- Legends racers shall be 65 years of age or older

For purposes of the foregoing, the age of a racer shall be his/her age as of November 1st preceding the Far West Racing Association (FWRA) Championships.

There are 11 classes of men and 11 classes of women in each of the above four age categories. The class names and lower handicap barriers are as follows.

Class Name	Lower Handicap Barrier
Skill 0	0.00
Skill 1	19.00
Skill 2	26.00
Skill 3	33.00
Skill 4	40.00
Skill 5	50.00
Skill 6	60.00
Skill 7	70.00
Skill 8	80.00
Skill 9	90.00
Skill 10	105.00+

Calculating Handicap and Strikes

Handicap – A racer’s handicap is a number, computed as show below, which expresses the percentage by which his/her time in a particular race exceeds Zero Par Time:

$$H = (T/Z - 1) \times 100$$

H = Racer’s Handicap

T = Racer’s Time

Z = Zero Par Time

Zero Par Time – Zero Par Time, computed as shown below, is the theoretical time that a racer with zero (0.00) FIS points in the giant slalom would ski any given course on any given day. Zero par for a course will be computed using the lowest cluster of the pacesetter’s zero pars, provided that each of their runs falls within their normal performance. In the case of an inordinate number of racers on a given course receiving strikes, zero par may be adjusted for that given course. Zero par adjustments must be made by course, not by class.

$$Z = P / (1 + R/100)$$

Z = Zero Par Time

P = Pacesetter’s Time

R = Pacesetter’s Rating

Strike System/Reclassification – Racers whose race day handicaps are faster than their class barrier shall receive a strike. A handicap exceeding multiple barriers shall result in multiple strikes. A racer accumulating two or more strikes within the rating period will be reclassified (“bumped”) to the next higher class.

A racer’s strike count is based on all races and is carried for two seasons.

A racer who fails to ski within his/her handicap for two complete seasons may request to be reclassified to the next lower class.

Safety

Helmets– It is strongly recommended that every racer wear a helmet in both the giant slalom and slalom race courses. Many resorts now require the use of helmets. Wearing a helmet in the Super G practice and race runs is mandatory. Please note new USSA rule this season that full helmets with coverage of head and ears are required for All disciplines, including slalom.

Race Course Specifications

Jim Sommer 12-01-03

General Considerations

Sierra League is an organization comprised of recreational racers of varying levels of ability and age. Course setting must take into account that the prime objective is for participants to have fun. All race courses should be set according to FIS and USSA course setting principles, with attention to safety, while providing a fair and challenging contest.

Current Sierra League rules do not allow for complete resets between runs. Race Officials must therefore determine the best and safest course of action for preparing the piste (snow surface) for the second run. Jury officials may require power slips, staggered slips, or offsetting gates by one ski length if the piste is not considered to be in racing condition at the beginning of the second run.

Races may be shortened to one run if weather or snow conditions dictate.

Slalom Races

Upper Course: This course should be set to Women's FIS specifications; 120-200 meters of vertical drop, 45-65 gates, a minimum of 1 vertical combination (flush), and 3 hairpin combinations. This course may include delay gates.

The host mountain Race Department shall provide 2 forerunners for this course.

Lower Course: This course should be set to the J3 level of difficulty. The maximum drop shall be 160 meters and consist of 38-60 gates. This course should be set with a maximum of 1 vertical combination and two hairpin combinations. This course should not include any delay gates.

Sierra League will provide forerunners/pacesetters for this course.

Giant Slalom Races

Upper Course: This course should be set to Women's FIS specifications; 250-400 meters of vertical drop, 11-15% of this drop to equal the number of direction changes, delay, under or through gates shall not count as direction changes.

The host mountain Race Department shall provide 2 forerunners for this course.

Lower Course: This course should be set to the J3 level of ability. Maximum vertical drop shall not exceed 350 meters. This course should not include any delay gates.

Sierra League will provide forerunners/pacesetters for this course.

Super G Races

Upper Course: This course should be set in accordance with the principles of course setting as described in the USSA Competition Guide. Vertical drop shall be 300-600 meters with 10% of this vertical drop equal to the maximum number of direction changes. Delay or corridor gates with no direction change shall not count. A Super G course should consist of a minimum of 25 gates. The distance between turning poles shall not be less than 25 meters and no gates shall be set less than 15 meters apart. Course width should be approximately 30 meters. Variations to these guidelines may be reviewed and/or altered by a Sierra League race jury due to conditions or terrain.

Host Mountain Race Department to provide a minimum of 3 forerunners, with the maximum number of forerunners to be 5.

Lower Course: This course should be set within the following recommendations; vertical drop should not exceed 350 meters, 8-14% of the vertical drop should equal the maximum number of direction changes, to depend upon hill topography. Distances between gates shall be as above. This course should be set with

the safety of a wide variety of skier abilities in mind. Sierra League shall provide forerunners/pacesetters for this event.

Notes:

Allowed Participants: All participants shall have an established Sierra League racing handicap. There will be no first time racers allowed in this event. Participants from other area leagues may enter the Sierra League Super G under the following conditions.

1. Have participated in a Sierra League Super G clinic.
2. Have an established handicap in Super G from another league or having participated in a prior Sierra League Super G.
3. Be approved for entry by the Sierra League Jury (ie: known Master's racers of adequate ability level).

Helmets shall be required of all participants, to race or train at a Sierra League Super G race or clinic.

A training run shall be required of all participants. If any competitor is determined, by either the host mountain Race Department or the Sierra League Referee or Jury, to be unsafe, they shall be removed from the Start List and their entry fees returned.

Special considerations for safety need to be considered for this race. All danger zones must be fenced, trail crossings monitored, and competitors instructed regarding being flagged off the course. Finish corrals must be appropriately sized for the speed of the event and free of soft snow, bumps and obstacles that might impede safe stopping. All competitors must exit the finish corral immediately upon coming to a safe stop. The finish area should be monitored by either a host mountain official or Sierra League member of the jury (in past events, the finish corral has been where most accidents have occurred).

Start interval should be 60 seconds but shall not be less than 40 seconds. This start interval is to be determined by the Sierra League jury in consultation with the Host Mountain Race Department.

It is strongly recommended that all competitors slip the course after the training run. This may be done as a "power slip" of all competitors or groups of racers accompanied by a Race Official in radio contact with Start Officials.

Notes regarding Nor-Cal and FWRA Championship Races

It is extremely important that the FWRA Referee or designee inspect all race courses prior to starting any competitor. Legality and quality of courses, in relation to the intended level of competitor, is paramount to putting on a quality event.

Host Mountain Race Departments must provide forerunners for those courses that will be handicapped by Pacesetters running within their respective classes (usually the courses for S-1 through S-4).

It is strongly recommended that all courses be treated with salt or other appropriate chemicals to ensure quality snow conditions for the entire racing day. Soft conditions (new snow or slush) off the racing piste can constitute a very dangerous condition.