

NASTAR Championships 2017

NASTAR LogoWell, this was my **first time** participating in the [NASTAR](#) Championships ([check out my stats](#)). It was fun. I've never even been to a ski race/meet before, so going to the championships was quite the experience.

I won a bronze medal (3rd place) in the Men's Bronze Division – ages 45-49!

Tuesday and Wednesday

I left on Tuesday morning and drove 13 hours to Kimball, NE. The next morning I arrived in Steamboat, CO via Wyoming (which was fun to drive through).

Steamboat Hotel

I took maybe a dozen runs on the mountain to see what the conditions were like and to get used to the altitude. I got to ski Lower Bashor, which is the run I would be on. I also learned that Bashor is the oldest NASTAR run.

Steamboat Springs, CO mountain with snow

That night, we ate at the [Rusted Porch in Steamboat Springs](#). There were about 30 of us... the people racing and a lot of the kids from the Cascade Mountain Race Team – and their parents.

grilled cheese cheeseburger
Aaron's grilled cheese cheeseburger!

The food came out fast and was great.

Thursday – Race Day #1

NASTAR banner - start gate

Thursday morning, Ben and I got out to the mountain early. I was one of the first 50 people in line, so I got a free Yeti mug, which was cool. They gave us a card for it and we picked it up later – because yeah, you don't want to carry that around all day.

NASTAR - day 1

I did my two race runs in the morning. It was at 10 am. We lined up in the order of our bibs. I was #661. I got to know racers #660 (Alan), #661 (Dan), #662 (Lenny) along with #700 (Dave). My first run was the better one and that was the one where the guy before me (Alan) crashed. I think when that happens, it makes you more cautious and you don't go as fast but the more I do this, the less that should affect me.

I was sitting at third place at the end of the day.

Gondola Square

They provided lunch for us and we hung out at Gondola Square a while that afternoon since it was a nice, spring afternoon.

compression leggings

There was a raffle that night and I won a pair of recovery leggings, so I wore them to bed to see if the compression would help my legs. They might have helped... my legs felt fine in the morning.

Friday – Race Day #2

I got to the mountain fairly a little later since my race wasn't until 1pm. The kids went first the second day. The weather was cooler, which was good for the snow. The sun peeked out right before our race, which was great.

NASTAR race day 2

On my first run, they told me to go and I started and I heard the guy in the start gate say, "oh." I soon found out what "oh" meant as I looked downhill and saw the photographer on the course as well as the racer from the next course over. I stopped halfway down and let them clear out. I got to the bottom and they told me I could re-run it, so I went back up to the start.

I didn't know when I would re-run, so I took my skis off at the top and went to find out. They were just getting ready to run the second round and they said I should get in now, so I got my skis and went to the start. I got there and went to the start and they said to go. I said, "oh, me?" and they said yes, so I went through the wand to start my time.

Yeah, that run was awkward. It was like everyone was waiting for me. People had to back up. I was the only one running. I felt like I was holding everything up even though it wasn't my fault. My score wasn't great.

The second run (third, actually) came up and I was easily able to shave 1.25 seconds off. Honestly, this course was easy – easier than what I was used to at Cascade. It has a constant pitch. The gates were spaced out well – very rhythmic. On my first run, I saw myself not getting close to the gates and as I was doing it, I was wondering why. So the second run, I got much closer and even hit one or two of them. This was the best of all 4 runs and it kept me in third place for my bronze.

awards ceremony

Awards started at 4:30 but I knew mine would be later, so I quickly headed up the gondola to the reception. It was a good thing I ate quickly and got back down because about 5-6 minutes after I got back to the bottom, they called me on stage! Whew!

Aaron, Ben and Monique also received medals.

Aaron on stage Monique on stage Ben on stage

Watching the Wisconsin basketball game

That night was the Badgers basketball game, so we ended up at a condo on the hill and a group of us Wisconsin people watched it there. Ben and I went back to our hotel at halftime since we were wiped out.

swag and gifts

By Friday night, the swag and gifts were starting to pile up. I got a bag of gifts when I got my medal and in the bag was a Swix iron, an Audi hat, a t-shirt and some hair products.

Saturday

The Race of Champions race and the Friends and Family race was on Saturday. I wasn't in that but I watched the Cascade team.

Head Kore 93 skis

Before that, I demoed the new Head Kore 93 skis. Wow, I love them! They're super light and easy to tip even though they're 93 mm under foot. Scott, the Head Rep, said this has been the best launch for Head in a long time. That's going to be a great ski and I plan on ordering some in the fall.

Saturday night, we all hung out at the [Ptarmigan Inn](#) where Glen and Todd were staying. Our bartender, Jordan, was the best and by the end of the night, we became friends with anyone that walked in. We just kept adding tables and chairs to our group. It was fun.

Sunday

race scoreboard

On Sunday, I volunteered to help run the scoreboard for the slalom races. I helped a little setting up the course and then wrote times on the board. I started at about 7:30 am and I was done around 1:30. They gave us lunch and we got to see the awards ceremony there where more people from Cascade won medals (Todd, Glen and Bernie).

Slalom awards ceremony
Todd on stage with slalom winners.

Sunday night, I went to the [hot springs](#). I took a shuttle van out there and stayed until 9:30 pm. Ben had left on Saturday, so I was at the hotel by myself that night.

Monday and Tuesday

I left Monday about 10:30 am. On my way out of town, I stopped at Wal-Mart for a new phone holder for my car since the one I had was a piece of junk. I noticed they had a small aisle of goggles, which I thought was hilarious. Only in a ski town... Ski Town, USA.

ski goggles at Wal-Mart

I then headed to York, NE. I stayed at the Palmer House and the heater and A/C unit had the best button ever... CONSTANT FAN! Yes! The worst thing is to have a heater that constantly turns on and off all night. This eliminated that and helped me sleep.

heater with constant fan button

I stayed there before and they have new owners now, who put some money into the rooms and the rooms are a bit nicer (for \$60/night, at least).

hotel room

Tuesday I left York and stopped at [Antique Archaeology](#) in Le Claire, IA on my way home.

Antique ArchaeologyAntique ArchaeologyAntique ArchaeologyAntique Archaeology

I got to see the shop they show on TV. None of the main people were there and there wasn't a whole lot in the shop to buy except t-shirts and mugs, which was a little disappointing actually.

Conclusion

Overall, it was a great trip. Everyone was safe and relatively free from injury. I liked the times where we'd be walking around and I'd run into people I knew or people I just met. The atmosphere there was great. There were tents and stuff set up in Gondola Square and there was a general party atmosphere with the mountain and snow all around. The snow wasn't the best this time but it was still good enough.

I hope to get some GS skis soon and do NASTAR at Cascade a bit more next year. I'll see what I can learn and hopefully get into ski racing a bit more.

For the season, I ended up at 54 days on snow, which is either a high or the most I've done for a season. It included working at Cascade Mountain (of course), a ski trip up to Mt. Bohemia and then this Colorado trip. It was a season that was slightly warmer than normal with less snow but Cascade kept making really good snow, so it was a very enjoyable season!