

History of the Kandahar Race in NYS

I'd like to express my thanks to David Wenn, NSA Headmaster, Head Coach in the early '70s at Greek Peak, creator of this event and Paul VanSlyke, owner of Twitchell Sportswear for their good memories and some clever research on Paul's part. This piece was originally created as part of a Ski Racing article.

Kandahar began in 1974. Dave estimated there were about 80 racers the first year. Now we have over 300 total each year who participate. It was created as an opportunity for kids who did not make state teams to continue ski racing through the season. The Kandahar name comes from the original sponsor of the race, Chip Armstrong. The name of the shop was Chip's Kandahar in Cortland, NY.

Since the first year of this Jr III,IV,V race NYSSRA has sent a State Team to Gunstock, NH for the Buddy Werner Championships – now called the Piche Invitational. Development level ski racers gather from all over the East to clinic together on Friday and race on Saturday in March. Fun is abundant at both our Kandahar Series and in Gunstock.

For years Kandahar was run at Greek Peak. These wonderful events were prior to sophisticated snow making equipment. No matter what, the Greek peak Ski Club got this event off. The race has always been a two day event. Families from around the State became acquainted and all present pulled together to make it happen. This event has always embodied some of the best aspects of ski racing.

The Foundation of the original event was based on the idea of athlete development and outdoor fun. Kandahar continues to this day to promote the same purpose.

Kandahar was held at Greek Peak until about 1991 and then began to move around the State. It has been held at Brantling, Holimont, West Mtn and Gore Mtn. 2007 hosts are West Mtn, Holimont and Song Mtn. Kandahar Championships are at Labrador.

Note: The name Kandahar came from the following – Sir Henry Lunn organized what can be called the first formal Alpine Downhill in Switzerland in 1911. At stake was the Kandahar Trophy (donated by Lord Roberts of Kandahar, India). Henry's son, Arnold is credited with inventing the modern slalom in 1922 in a competition at Murren, Switzerland and with championing the push to include alpine skiing in the Winter Olympics. After only a combined event at Winter Olympics in 1936, Alpine Skiing emerged in it's own right in the next Winter Games in 1948 with Downhill and Slalom Events.