

Executive Summary

Changes Implemented This Year

- Return to regional qualifier racing and a state championship

Challenges & Issues

- Derby format and regional qualifiers inhibit both athletic and social development by:
 - inducing “safe” skiing to ensure finishes. Having a series with more races/runs sets a better model for skier development at u16 by providing more opportunities to produce results
 - Reducing the field strength that athletes see except at the state championships
 - Removing the statewide cross-program interaction and relationship building across the entire cohort of u16 athletes
 - Providing uneven depth of field in terms of race ability across regions based on the mismatch between skier ability and quota sizes. Both NE and E had athletes who should have been participating at States based on their demonstrated performance at e.g. PA Cups racing up against u18s but there were not enough quota slots for them
- Developing effective communication with the new USSA Eastern director took some time, and that hindered our ability to fully leverage the u16 projects available to us for 2024-2025. By the end of the season, we had resolved those issues and we expect this not to recur.

Recommended Changes for Next Year

- Adopt the proposal to return to a statewide race series
- Continue to refine the EHSC intent selection process
- Refine the role of EHSC versus Eastern Championships and Finals participation at u16. It is critical that we have our best athletes attending Championships so we need to make sure we set the correct incentives and messaging around postseason race selection. We risk losing quota

2025 U16 AGE CHAIR REPORT

spots at Eastern Championships along with special seed slots if we do not send our best athletes there, so we need to continue to frame the selection and messaging for u16s around Championships participation versus EHSC. This year was largely not an issue, but was in 2023-24

- Increase emphasis on the u16 project opportunities presented to our athletes by USSA Eastern (and national when available). We do have to manage quota sizes versus our athletes' ability to fully leverage the project opportunities and PARA's and our programs' abilities to provide coaching where it is required, and I will work to establish more dialog with impacted athletes' families and programs well in advance of the project dates.

Board Approvals

Proposed Rules & Procedure Changes

- Please see Ben Shirk's proposal to return to a statewide series

Budget Requests

- Please continue to support the PARA speed projects that Matt Superczynski has been putting together the last few years. Our u16 athletes' continued access to high quality speed training is important. The quantity of days of high quality training and racing available to them, along with the high rates of participation and our improved performance not just in SG but in other events, demonstrate both the need and the value of providing these opportunities.
- Similarly, continuing to provide high quality coaching at postseason events is important to help our athletes succeed at regional events so please support those budget items as well.

Detailed Report

Coaches' Survey on Return to Statewide Series

In addition to a survey sent out to u16 and 2nd year u14 parents asking their preferences on how u16 state team is selected—series versus single weekend championships—a survey was also sent to the coaches who registered to be on-hill at the u16 state championships at Blue.

Here are the details of how the survey went:

- **Population:** there were 28 coaches to whom the survey was sent, and 16 responses for a 57% response rate
- **Results:** respondents **strongly** favored a return to a statewide series, with 12 voting in favor of a return to statewide, 3 preferring continued regional plus state championships, and 1 write-in for all regions except West to race together regionally and then have a state championship

Based on these results, I believe that the cohort of coaches responsible for u16s at PARA believe that a statewide series is the best choice for our u16 athletes.

For background, the reason I asked the PARA President to send out the survey was because numerous coaches at the State Championships came up to me either asking why we abandoned it, asking how to bring it back, or relating conversations about those 2 questions among coaches on the hill during the races. I wanted to quantify the anecdotal data, and I believe the survey indicates that the u16 coaching cohort supports the statewide series.

State Championships

The state championships at Blue went off well, with 3 days of good racing. The ROC was able to provide us with good conditions for all 3 disciplines in the face of challenges to deliver good snow surface.

At the end of the race weekend, we ended up with:

- **U16 State Champions:** Women: Madyln Carlozzi (WTSEF); Men: Luke Hodgkinson (WTSEF)
- **Event Champions:**

2025 U16 AGE CHAIR REPORT

- **Super G:** Women: Clara Drahnak (HVRC), Men: Luke Hodgkinson (WTSEF)
- **Giant Slalom:** Women: Mariella Contini (WPRC); Men: Luke Hodgkinson (WTSEF)
- **Slalom:** Women: Madylin Carlozzi (WTSEF); Men: Luke Hodgkinson (WTSEF)

State Teams

Rank	Postseason	State Team	Athlete Last Name	First Name	Club
1	Eastern Championships	State Team	Hodgkinson	Luke	WTSEF
2	Eastern Championships	State Team	Pianalto	Jacob	WTSEF
3	Eastern Championships	State Team	King	Quinn	PASEF
4	Eastern Championships	State Team	Treiber	Desmo	LMRT
5	Eastern Championships	State Team	Wagner	Landon	BMRA
6	Eastern Finals	State Team	Rai	Cameron	BMRA
7	Eastern Finals	State Team	Kruler	Benjamin	BMRA
8	Eastern Finals	State Team	Millett	Ty	EMSC
9	Eastern Finals	State Team	Shatt	Clay	BMRA
10	Eastern Finals	State Team	Bray	Trent	DCWST
11	Eastern Finals	State Team	Desjardins	Chase	DCWST
12	Eastern Finals	State Team	Loverich	Luca	TMRT
13	Eastern Finals	State Team	Wentz	Teddy	BMRA
Rank	Postseason	State Team	Athlete Last Name	First Name	Club
1	Eastern Championships	State Team	Carlozzi	Madylin	WTSEF
2	Eastern Championships	State Team	Contini	Mariella	WPRC

2025 U16 AGE CHAIR REPORT

3	Eastern Championships	State Team	Awanohara	Elle	LMRT
4	Eastern Championships	State Team	Ryan	Reese	SRRC
5	Eastern Championships	State Team	Drahnak	Clara	HVRC
6	Eastern Championships	State Team	Kim	Jooha	SRRC
7	Eastern Finals	State Team	Hipp	Brynn	SRRC
8	Eastern Finals	State Team	Loverich	Stella	TMRT
9	Eastern Finals	State Team	Stadler	Dylan	WPRC
10	Eastern Finals	State Team	Yurek	Olivia	WPRC
11	Eastern Finals	State Team	Bui	Elena	LMRT
12	Eastern Finals	State Team	Norrington	Isla	DCWST
13	Eastern Finals	State Team	Diel	Caitlin	LMRT
14	Eastern Finals	State Team	Yoon	Elsa	SRRC

Speed Camps/SG

While we did not actively send athletes to all of them (because some of them were announced fairly late in the season and close to the camp dates), we had 4 separate speed camp opportunities available to us this year. One point of emphasis I will make next year is to collect the information from the various camps earlier and make sure it is communicated out to programs. Those camps were:

- PARA speed camp at Gore
- Blue speed camp
- NYSSRA speed camp offered by Steve Mergenthaler that was opened to PARA but very close to the camp date
- USSA Eastern speed camp at Okemo. Again, it was presented very late in the season at the point where I believed most programs had already made their plans

I believe that our u16 athletes benefit immensely from the speed camp opportunities they get and the athlete feedback is always incredibly positive on their participation. We

2025 U16 AGE CHAIR REPORT

should continue to provide opportunities *for those athletes interested in partaking* when and where available.