

PARA Board of Directors,

Resulting from the 2018 PARA Board of Directors meeting was a request to examine the U16 racing/qualifying procedures of the other associations in the Eastern region of USSS. Below is a summary of each of the other associations within the region, followed by some brief observations and potential changes in PARA's procedures to be made open for discussion among board members. The suggestions are made with the understanding that if a major change from the status quo was decided upon by the board, it may be best to implement such change for the 2020/21 season to provide proper time for change management and race venue identification.

U16 Racing Procedures Across USSS Eastern Region

VARA (Vermont)

- Season long scored races through VARA Open Series, VT Cup, George Tormey Series, and VARA U16 Championship
- VT Cup series (separate races for male/female) used to determine automatic places (2 male/2 female) at Eastern U16 Championship
- VT U16 State Championship (open to all U16s) used to determine remainder of places at U16 Eastern Championships and U16 Eastern Finals
- Those athletes not qualifying for Eastern competitions (Championships or Finals) are eligible to race in remaining Open Series or George Tormey Series races

NHARA (New Hampshire)

- State-wide series of 6 scored races (2 SG, 2 GS, 2 SL) for U16 athletes
- Separate races for male and female
- World Cup points applied to results of each race
- Best 2 results/athlete (max of 1 SG result) used to create final series standings
- All U16 Eastern Championship places selected from this series
- 75% of U16 Finals places selected from this series
- Remaining U16 Finals places selected from U16 State Finals Event (1 GS/ 1 SL) where World Cup points are used to combine best 2 results/athlete
- U16 State Finals Event is only open to athletes not already qualified for Eastern event (Championships/Finals)

NYSSRA (New York)

- Series of open scored races available to all NYSSRA U16 and U19 racers (Empire Cup)
- No series standings, races provide opportunities for athletes to choose races that best fit their schedule for development within a season
- U16 age group culminates with U16 State Championship weekend
- U16 state championship is open to all interested U16 athletes that have competed in a minimum of 2 Empire Cup races or meet certain USSS point thresholds (≤ 90 GS or SL for male; ≤ 105 GS or SL female)
- World Cup points applied to U16 Championship weekend races to determine entrants to U16 Eastern Championships/Finals

MARA (Maine)

- 6 race series (2 GS, 2 SL, 2 SG) for U16 athletes
- Place points applied to each race with best 2 of 6 results (max 1 SG result) counting for each athlete
- Selections for U16 Championships and Finals are made through the standings of this series

Tri-State (Massachusetts/Connecticut/Rhode Island)

- Season long 7 race series including a championship weekend
- All races to all genders and interested athletes
- All U16 athletes are expected to attend this series but are welcome to attend other scored races when there is no conflict
- Selection to U16 Championships/Finals are made from the standings of this series

NJSRA (New Jersey)

- Series of qualifying races for all interested U16 athletes where world cup points are attributed to racer's finishes.
- Each athlete's 3 best results (must include one from both SL and GS) is used to determine final standings and selection to U16 Championships and Finals

SARA (Southern States)

- Unclear based on website

PARA (Pennsylvania)

- Regional qualifying races scored at region's discretion to select athletes for quota-driven state championship weekend where World Cup points are awarded and aggregated to select athletes for Eastern Championship/Finals.
- Additional racing at coach/athlete discretion in PA Cup

In Summary:

To determine the best course of action in providing a properly weighted combination of an inclusive atmosphere where athletes remain involved in the sport, balance between competition and training time, and the changing needs of PARA as an organization, discussion regarding potential options to shift the way PARA U16 athletes are challenged and evaluated within the state may be warranted.

Four associations (VARA, NHARA, MARA, and Tri-State) race all U16s together throughout the entire season (VARA and NHARA run separate races for male and female). Each of these associations is undoubtedly a smaller geographic area than Pennsylvania and that may be a factor in those associations choosing to have a statewide series. Confirmation of this as a likely factor can be seen by viewing the process of NYSSRA. With the large geographical spread of the pockets of ski racing in New York, NYSSRA has chosen to utilize a series of scored races where the athlete selects the races best suited to their seasonal development, followed by an open invitation state championship event.

Submitted for discussion to the PARA Board of Directors, based on the diverse array of procedures in the above breakdown of eastern associations, is the following non-exhaustive list of potential ideas for procedural change at the U16 level in PARA (not in any order of suggestion):

1. Status Quo with regional based qualifying to the state championship weekend and selective racing in PA Cup.
2. Open PARA U16 Championship to all interested U16 athletes who meet decided upon pre-championship participation level (i.e. race in a minimum of 2 regional races).
3. U16 season-long Cup Series that operates in the same fashion as the current PA Cup.
4. Combine U16 and U19/21 athletes and operate 2 Cup series. A male U16/19/21 Cup series and a female U16/19/21 Cup Series with separate awards for the U16 and U19/21 athletes.
5. Eliminate current Cup series and have U16/19/21 athletes race together at regional level with separate championship events for U16 and U19/21 athletes.

To reiterate, this list is not exhaustive and is open to additional suggestion. It is also not to imply that a change is necessary, only that a request was placed to examine the racing/qualifying procedures of the other associations in the Eastern region to evaluate if the mechanisms within PARA are due for modification and to continue to provide our athletes with the best opportunities moving forward.

Respectfully submitted by Patrick Wende (EMSC) and Tom Yen (BMRA) on April 14, 2019