



2019/2020 President’s Report

The Times They are A-Changin’

PRESEASON

U.S. Ski and Snowboard continues to put a heavy emphasis on SafeSport training and Background checks. Those individuals with a direct Club involvement and those with a direct interaction with minors are required to fulfill the training as part of the Membership requirements.

Four preseason PARA Alpine Official updates were provided across the state covering East/NorthEast, Central, and Western. These valuable sessions provide up-to-date information covering USSA 2019/2020 updates. Additionally, several clubs provided updates to their contingents and were primarily educating the racer’s parents on the basic rules of Alpine ski racing.

MEMBERSHIP

The overall PARA Membership level saw another increase in the 2018/19 season. The increase is primarily represented by the new USSA Category “Alpine General” and an increase in U10.

2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
1215	1183	1197	1218	1345	1378	1444	1514	1531

- Alpine General growth has dropped slightly.
- After continuous years of steady growth, the U10 and U12 levels have decreased.
- 70% of our competitors are in the U14 and younger categories. The U16+ Age Categories appear to have stabilized from a competitor field-size perspective. The actions PARA has taken over the past few years to provide additional competitive opportunities for U16s are taking hold allowing for better points. One of PARA’s primary focuses should continue to be on U16+ competitions, ***however it is time to align PARA’s focus on U14 and younger.***

ALPINE OFFICIALS

During the 2019-20 season, there were 368 Alpine Officials in PARA. This is an increase of twenty-on Alpine Officials in PARA from the previous year. At least 260 had attained at least one AO certification; which is an increase of fifty-six from the previous year. Ten alpine officials have all nine specialty certifications. This represents five less AO’s as last year. There are 15 active certified Technical Delegates in PARA. Of the 15 certified Technical Delegates, 12 TD’s (one less than last year) officiated the PARA’s race calendar as Technical Delegates. ***Based on the number of PARA events, it is imperative that PARA accelerate an increase in the TD population.***



SEASON

Killington World Cup

The Killington World Cup event invited other Eastern Athletes (not just VARA) to participate in the “Parade of Ski Clubs” before the start of Sunday’s competition. Representatives from NY, Tri-State, SARA, and PARA all participated. PARA had approximately 20 athletes/chaperones attend. PARA had a banner made which was carried by members. The organization for this has been primarily word-of-mouth and via website announcements.

Events

The weather was reluctant at the beginning of this season. The training was delayed by a week or so for the clubs. PARA hosted forty-four (44) U10 – U21, (Men & Women) Races, training days, and (1) Super G camp that was 2-days in length. This year, no race or training days were canceled. Six race days were rescheduled.

The weather in mid-late Feb/early March did not cause the amount of havoc as had occurred for the previous PARA Championship events. However, there were weather issues at the Championship events and the hosting sites did an outstanding job communicating any changes to the scheduled events.

PARA will be implementing a Championship Kick-off Call at 2 weeks and 1 week prior to the events so that the ROC, Age Chair, Derby Chair, and Executive Board have a consensus statement concerning the events. This allows for clear communication to the PARA population as to any last-minute updates or changes associated with the event.

PARA does have an issue with athletes attending Post Season Events. We were able to fill quota spots with alternate athletes but the scheduling, spring break, and time commitments to school and other sports’ training is causing PARA some issues. Recognizing our PARA athletes at post season events continues to be something that we should be supporting and have not addressed. Providing access to a “TEAM” garment would be a nice addition for the athletes at any post season event. It is the one thing that most post season athletes would like to have and have repeatedly asked for. Thanks to Dan Chayes and Curt Schramm for setting up a PARA Gear online ordering site for athletes to buy PARA gear. We should consider establishing this as an ongoing method for this cool swag.

The Effects of COVID-19

The pandemic did not disturb the actual PARA race season as the significant shutdowns surfaced during the start of the Post-Season events. Although a few events started at the early stages of the voluntary shutdowns, all events were subsequently changed from voluntary to mandated cancellations. These are unprecedented times as all the spring meetings have become virtualized. Virtualized meetings have seen an increase in attendance at the National level and at the Eastern Regional level.

Eastern Projects

- U12 Project at NWAC
 - PARA sent 18 competitors to this event. Sixty athletes from NYSSRA, Tri-State, PARA, and NJSRA were invited to this two-day (Wed/Thurs) project.
 - The environment provided the athletes an opportunity to focus on discipline specific goals (ex. Pole planting, transition, pressure in the fall line, edge angles, etc.)
 - The event was well supported and had an all-star staff running the event.



- U14 Eastern Projects
- U16 Eastern Projects
 - Three PARA athletes attended USSS Eastern projects during the 2020 season. Lucca Correia (BMRA) attended a men's SL event at Mittersill (males) and Marcella Altman (SRRC) and Tatum Treherne (SRRC) attended the women's SL event at Burke Mountain. Both were held on Feb 6-7.

Competitor Focuses

As previously indicated, ***PARA and its member clubs need to find innovative ways to make U14 and younger athlete population focus more on making the process important vs making the actual competition the focus.*** How does PARA encourage more continued participation at the younger levels? What can PARA provide which helps the clubs provide a fundamental change in the way the younger age groups are addressed? How do we make competitions fun and hold the attention? Coaches education; Divisional visit by the Eastern Youth Team; Team events/Dual-events; Events with other affiliated states?

Finally, the issue surrounding what constitutes athlete qualifications for consideration towards quotas for post-season events needs to be clarified. These qualifications should reflect the numbers of athletes committed in participating in most season events. ***Some percentage of athletes still do NOT compete in any PARA event prior to the quotas being finalized.***

COMMUNICATIONS/SOCIAL MEDIA

#1 – thank you to all the PARA correspondents for providing write-ups, pics, and pushing comradery amongst our athletes. The twitter account (@pa_alpineracing) and Instagram account (@pa_alpineracing) continue to be used to help with both inward and outward promotion of PARA athletes and events.

The www.paracing.org website continues to be the primary vehicle for general news, announcements, and updates associated with the organization. As an organization, we should be providing short event articles with pictures stating the key accomplishments and results from all the Cup and Regional events. Promotion of our accomplishments continues to be worked. We need ROCs or club to provide a few pictures and a summary write-up of the event/awards so that we can continue feeding the promotional machine. By using our website, we should be marketing our racers' results within state and post-season.

The website continues to be maintained via our webmaster Carrie Scheetz. Thanks Carrie for keeping all the information up-to-date. There will be continued efforts over the next months to clean-up older information (FAQ) and provide more relevant information and links.

A PARA Facebook page (pennsylvaniaalpineracing) and group continue to be used to push an additional communication path. There have been some good questions generated via this mechanism and PARA will continue to use it as a communication vehicle.



LOOKING FORWARD

PARA must continue to look at promoting and providing educational needs of its membership

US Ski and Snowboard – Eastern

- Voted upon and approved – U14 State Championship events are mandated to be open events.
 - Motion (ECC): "The ECC mandate that the divisions of the Eastern Region implement an all-inclusive divisional U14 championships during the 2020-2021 season. The purpose of this mandate is to enhance the development opportunities for our U14 athletes in the Eastern Region. The ECC believes that eliminating council or any other qualification for divisional championships will reduce the amount of stress on athletes during the main competition season, enable greater flexibility in race schedules, allow for productive training blocks, and provide opportunities to be more creative in elevating the level of competition available to our athletes." Mariel/Beatty- VOTE: PASSES Unanimously
- Encourage your club and club members to respond to the Youth Development online surveys.

Key US Ski and Snowboard Changes

- Health of the Sport Task Forces
 - U12 ski equipment restrictions are maintained
 - U12 speed suit limitation recommendation is not continuing.
- SafeSport Training Requirements
 - All members turning 18 years of age and older during the season are required to complete SafeSport training through the U.S. Center for SafeSport (substitutions are not permitted). *Some alpine masters excluded per member club authorization
 - Membership cards will only display those memberships for which all requirements have been met
 - Those with incomplete requirements will remain on pending status
 - Members on pending status are not eligible to participate in U.S. Ski & Snowboard events until requirements are met
- Background Screening Requirement
 - **All adult members, with the exception of some alpine masters and short-term members, are required to undergo background screening**
 - Membership cards will only display those memberships for which all requirements have been met
 - Those with incomplete requirements will remain on pending status
 - **Members on pending status are not eligible to participate in U.S. Ski & Snowboard events until requirements are met**
 - **Please allow several weeks for screening process to be completed. Individual screening times will vary. Foreign screenings may take a month or more**

PARA Items for Consideration

- Revisit the PARA Youth Development emphasis particularly with the U14 open championship mandate stated earlier, and the drop in U10/U12 PARA population.



- PARA sponsored coaches' education sessions.
- PARA sponsored family education sessions.
- Open PARA Teamwear site for earlier access to goods.
- Jury Advisors
 - The duties of the Start Referee are set forth in ACR U601.3.3. A Start Referee "must remain at the start from the beginning of the official inspection time until the end of an ... event." ACR U601.3.3 (emphasis added). Most member areas do not provide Jury Advisors which meet this time commitment and, as a result, there is no control over competitor course access (particularly the Start Area) at most races.
- Gate Keepers & Race Volunteering
 - The lack of quality of gate keepers and race volunteers continues to be a burden upon the Jury, Coaches and the athletes themselves. Efforts to bolster the education, certification and quality of gate keepers and race volunteers should continue to be a priority of PARA and each host mountain's ROC.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Bond'.

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