

2015/2016 President's Report

A SEASON OF PATIENCE, FLEXIBILITY, AND COMMITMENT

This preseason started in quite a bit of turmoil with a number of last minute changes. The first significant change was the Pennsylvania Clearances for Coaches/Volunteers. While all the coaches were required to have background checks based on employment, the law wasn't clear on volunteers particularly "on a routine basis" and how it relates to race day volunteers. PARA suggests that all individuals who have direct and routine interaction with children have the required background clearances. It is important to keep abreast of any changes to the PA law over the offseason.

The second significant last minute change was USSA's requirement to use Vola Racing as the exclusive provider of timing software for USSA alpine races. From a PARA perspective, the change caused trepidation amongst all the RoCs since it was last minute and significantly changed the way we've been timing for the past 10-15 years (SplitSecond). Additionally, with the small number of races which some of our areas host per season, the implementation of this change was particularly daunting. PARA took steps sending Joe Bender to a Vola run train-the-trainer session in the east. I want to personally acknowledge Joe for leading a statewide training sessions and in-house problem solver, and most importantly acting as a "race safety net" for software questions and issues. Joe also attended a number of races throughout the state to provide his guidance and answering any question which came his way. In a post-season message to all USSA, Tiger acknowledged the last minute change could have been handled better and thanked everyone for dealing with the situation. Tiger suggests sending USSA any required functional changes so that these changes can be evaluated for roadmapped releases over the offseason.

Coincidentally, during the timeframe of the Vola change also came the realization that AlpineReg was no longer in business and that the vast majority of PARA RoCs had to change online race registration systems. After some discussions amongst different clubs and with a new provider, PARA encouraged the use of AdminSkiRacing.com as the online race registration process.

USSA implemented new USSA Membership categories with lower price structure. This was particularly beneficial to the younger racers. The addition of a General Member and Club Volunteer raised both USSA and PARA membership levels. Please read the Membership Report for further details.

The USSA Alpine Sport Committee passed regulations updating the requirement for U14 and older athletes related to the use of helmets for GS, SG and DH meeting the new FIS standards (the FIS Sticker rule). PARA enforced this rule at GS and SG events by reminding race officials to check for the appropriate helmet designation. PARA and the clubs did a good job of educating our racers and families prior to the season of this regulation. This allowed racers the ability to obtain the necessary helmet in time.

And finally the most difficult issue of the season – the weather. This returns me to the overall theme of the season – Patience and Flexibility. This is the first season in over 30 years of my participation in PA skiing, where the weather had such a huge impact. The training season couldn't start as normal and the effects of the warmest December recorded pushed many competitions to be rescheduled. My thanks to

all the areas for working through these rearrangements, having honest assessments of the conditions, and working with the other areas in mitigating the impacts as best as possible. Thank you to the ski areas for working with the clubs and putting in all the work getting the best possible venue available. I know racers and families were anxious to get things going and I want to thank the clubs for keeping an open and ongoing communication flowing with the proposed changes. The continual communications were key in reducing some of the “not knowing” anxiousness.

The camps were continued this season. The speed camp had to be rescheduled due to the weather. The camp was well attended even with the rescheduling and the feedback is the event is beneficial. The derby/championship events were held on-schedule thanks primarily to the RoC and area working together moving snow to the race hills and prepping the venue. Again, my compliments to the crews and areas for committing the resources to host these crucial statewide events.

My appreciation and thanks to the entire PARA community for their patience, flexibility, and commitment to pulling off the 2015/2016 season.

Looking forward –

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

- We need to setup sessions next pre-season for Vola.
- We need encourage more officials to have the required certifications for course setting.
- We need to encourage more officials into the Technical Delegate realm to build up the available expertise.
- We need to look at the Club Volunteer members (our largest increase) and determine an educational path progressing these members into competition official classification.

In closing, please take a moment and reflect on the officials and coaches we’ve lost this past season. They will be dearly missed for their expertise, commitment, and dedication to the PARA family.

Respectfully Submitted,

David Bond
President - PARA