

2013/2014 U16 AGE CHAIR REPORT

U16 Fundamentals Camp

PARA did not send any racers to the U16 Fundamentals Camp and did not request any discretionary spots for the camp. USSA–Eastern made it known that there would be 20 automatic spots pre-selected and only 15 available spots. After it was learned that they had received 55 discretionary requests so far for those 15 spots, I decided not to try to locate and request any PARA racers this year.

PARA U16 STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

2014 was an unusual year for the U16s since PARA had decided to allow them to also race in the PA Cup races during the season and not to have a separate championship event for the U16 racers. They were included in the U18/21 championship event held at Elk Mountain, but were scored separately by World Cup points for the 4 runs with ties broken by combining all 4 times. The quota of 60 racers was therefore added into the 3-day PA Cup Finals at Elk, with the Friday GS being optional for the U16s. Filling the discretionary spots was not a problem as the racers just missing the regional qualifying spots showed a lot of interest in racing at the U16 Championships. As was typical this winter, natural snow conditions were good and the weather was somewhat moderate for all three event days. The high number of racers required heavy use of urea and course preparation volunteers were required. Race course conditions were good with above-average maintenance, but all course sets were appropriate for U16s and challenging. It appeared that combining the U16 racers by seed into the field of U18 and U21 racers in the PA Cup format had pros and cons. Most of the U16s seemed to enjoy the camaraderie and general importance of the bigger event. The U16s with decent USSA seed points seemed to have a good experience and decent racing, while those with high seed points seemed bothered by the late starts and rougher course conditions (unlike with the rotating seed groups used at prior J3 derbies).

Many thanks to all the race workers (race officials, coaches and parents) who helped make this event successful and memorable for our racers. An especially huge thanks to Elk's Bruce Newman, Tonia Mayes, Roma Wickersham, David Pope, and their whole crew of coaches and volunteers, who did an excellent job all weekend. A banquet was not held for the U16s and was missed and mentioned by many of the racers and parents in attendance.

Unlike in 2013 with a lot of returning "3rd year J3s", only a few of the U16 racers were returning winners so the State Team had a lot of new faces, including two new state champions. Congratulations to this year's male and female State Champions, Luke Midock of SRRC and Sarah Johnston of JFBB. The 2014 U16 State Team is as follows:

U16 Mens State Team

MIDOCK, Luke	SRRC	1999
RILEY, William	BMRA	1998
LEBAUER, Nathan	LMRT	1998
NEWMAN, Ty	EMSC	1998
ALINA, Brandon	EMSC	1998
SCHAEFFER, Devon	WTSEF	1998
ROGALLI, Ryan	SRRC	1998
DAILEY, Matthew	SRRC	1998
SADLER, Matthew	WTSEF	1999
PAN, Wesley	WTSEF	1998
WILLIAMSON, Jack	SRRC	1998

U16 Womens State Team

JOHNSTON, Sarah	JFBB	1998
SMITH, Caroline	WPRC	1999
LIEBLEIN, Cassie	SRRC	1999
DeMATTE, Piper	JFBB	1999
JOYCE, Erin	WPRC	1999
CLARK, Tally	WPRC	1998
LONG, Kyra	SRRC	1998
FLACK, Megan	BMRT	1998
KOTZMANN, Alyssa	BMRT	1999
SCHIERWAGEN, Haley	BMRT	1998
LUCAS, Angelin	WPRC	1998
FREIN, Kathleen	EMSC	1998
WANNER, Julianne	BMRT	1998

POST SEASON EVENTS

PARA sent seven of the top nine racers to the U16 Eastern Junior Championships (JO's), with two men and five women traveling to Whiteface, NY. (USSA-East had awarded the PARA women two extra performance spots based on the strong results of the 2013 PARA women.) The 2014 PARA female racers attending JO's did not have as strong overall results, with only fair results in SG, weak results in GS, and decent results in SL. The men attending JOs also did not have good overall results, with fair results in SL, but trouble competing in GS and SG. Notable results in SG were a 39th for Caroline Smith and in SL a 22th for Sarah Johnston, 28th for Nathan LeBauer, 33rd for Tally Clark, and a 37th for Caroline Smith. Without consistent finishes overall, none of our JO racers earned spots at the AmCan event against the top U16 Canadians the following week.

All 16 quota positions (9 men, 7 women) were filled for the U16 Eastern Finals at Sunday River, ME. The PARA female racers attending the Finals had decent SL and SG runs but only fair GS results, with a total of only four top-40 finishes. The men had better than average GS and SG runs with eight overall top-40 finishes, but weaker than average SL runs. William Riley, who opted out of JOs, had a fantastic weekend and was the top PARA racer, with podium finishes in SG 8th and GS 2nd, and an 11th in SL. Other notable results in SG were a 28th for Megan Flack and 38th for Kathleen Frein, and in SL a 37th for Kathleen Frein and 39th for Erin Joyce. In men's SG, most impressive finishes were 21st place from Ty Newman, 22nd from Wesley Pan, and 34th from Matthew Dailey: in GS were good finishes of 28th for Wesley Pan, 36th for Justin Bergen, and 37th for Matthew Sadler; while in SL were 26th for Matthew Dailey and 38th for Jack Williamson.

The Piche Invitational in Gunstock NH was not attended, since it was decided beforehand that that would only be offered to the U14 and U12 racers.

It appears that the PARA racers at JOs finished similar to or below to the recent past trend, especially the female racers. There had been a gradual improvement in results of the PARA athletes at post season events over the past few years, with more top 30 and top 20 finishes. The competition and venues seemed tougher this year than in the past. Athletes should be encouraged to take advantage of occasional opportunities to attend developmental camps and gaining experience racing in New England and New York. The allowance of U16 racers in the PARA Pa Cups should help the U16 racers develop even more and should only improve future post-season results.

Reports from the athletes and coaches were that the PARA athletes and families bonded together as a team and really enjoyed the events and each other.

Thank you to the post season coaches:

U16 JO Coaches: Tyler Crowe, with help from John DeMatte.

U16 Finals Coaches: Bruce Newman, Steve Antal, and Albert Torres.

LOOKING AHEAD TO NEXT SEASON

In spite of how well the 2014 U16 Championships went at Elk with the U16s mixed in with the PA Cup Finals, it seems important to this age level (and their parents) to have a separate championship and award ceremony. If PARA decides to repeat the 2014 format, at least a

separate U16 awards banquet on Saturday night would be a big improvement, with awards presentation for the first day racing (SL or GS), prizes and a racing based speaker or program. Ideally, a separate first-class championship event with a SG, banquet, and awards presentation should be held to give these athletes their due and to maintain their excitement and interest in PARA racing. Moving towards scoring by combined times also would be an improvement unless the event returns to 3 runs per day per discipline, then world cup points likely make more sense. Note -Holding a separate event in PA will require adequate time after the regional qualifiers to select discretionary spots, notify racers and parents, and prepare start lists for the championships. All attempts should be made to complete the regional qualifiers early, leaving as much time as possible between the last qualifying race and the U16 Championships.

It has been my pleasure to serve as the U16 Age Chair for the past year. Thank you for all the support and assistance that I received.

Jamie Joyce
PARA U16 Age Chair