

2014/2015 U16 AGE CHAIR REPORT

U16 PARA SPEED CAMP- Feb. 5- 6, 2015

Blue Mountain hosted a PARA Speed Camp for U16 racers that was very well attended and well organized. Attendees gained speed skills that would serve them well in the SG at the Championships later in the season. One note to prevent: U16s were inadvertently denied spots by U14s that somehow registered early.

U16 MID-WINTER CAN-AM RACES- Feb. 21-23, 2015

PARA was invited to send 5 to 7 top U16s to a new event in Collingwood, Ontario to foster higher level competition and camaraderie with Canadian U16 racers. Five PARA athletes signed up to go but cancelled due to conflicts with other race events. Note: Next year, lineup PARA racers early and watch the USSA- East website.

PARA U16 STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

2015 was back to a typical year for the U16s, since the year before PARA had decided to allow them to race in the PA Cup races during the season and not to have a separate championship event. The 2015 U16 championship event was a great event held at Blue Mountain. The quota of 79 racers was easily handled for the 3 day event at Blue, with the Friday SG being very exciting for the U16s. Filling the 5 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 cold winter, snow conditions were good and the weather was somewhat moderate for all three event days (except for the drives home in the bad snowstorm). Race course conditions were very firm requiring below-average maintenance, and all course sets were challenging for U16s. Most of the racers seemed to enjoy the camaraderie of their peers and the feeling of fairly competing in their own championships, 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 Blue Mtn's Mattie DePaulo, Rob Lipton, Tom Yen, Beth Yen, Carrie Sheetz, and their whole crew of coaches and volunteers, who did an excellent job all weekend. The banquet and awards party were excellent and well attended since held at the mountain, which was easy and appreciated by many of the racers and parents. As usual, announcing the awards was delayed and was the only weak mark on an otherwise great championship.

Only six of the U16 racers were returning winners so the State Team had a lot of new faces, including a new female state champion. Congratulations to this years' male and female State Champions, Luke Midock of SRRC and Kinjal Ruecker of LMRT. The 2015 U16 State Team is as follows:

U16 Mens State Team

Luke Midock	SRRC	1999
Jackson Mansfield	BMRA	1999
Matthew Sadler	WTSEF	1999
Conor Newman	EMSC	2000
Harrison Combs	BMRA	2000
Daniel Sandursky	BMRA	1999
Mitchell Pan	WTSEF	1999
Dalton Miles	SRRC	2000
Sean McCoy	WPRC	1999
Andrew Toader	WPRC	1999
Braeton Oliver	WTSEF	2000

U16 Womens State Team

Kinjal Ruecker	LMRT	1999
Caroline Smith	WPRC	1999
Alyssa Kotzmann	BMRA	1999
Erin Joyce	WPRC	1999
Piper Dematte	JFRT	1999
Michela Colavita	BMRA	1999
Claire Turner	EMSC	2000
Anna Clare Miller	WTSEF	2000
Lindsey Lucas	SRRC	2000
Ustyna Danylovysh	BMRA	2000
Elizabeth Gentner	BMRA	2000
Emily Yen	BMRA	1999
Elizabeth Kinnard	WISP MD	1999

POST SEASON EVENTS

PARA sent seven of the top eight racers to the U16 Eastern Junior Championships (JO's), with three men and four women traveling to Whiteface, NY. (USSA-East had awarded the PARA women two extra performance spots based on the strong results of the 2014 PARA women.) The 2015 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 occasional very good single runs. Notable results in SG were a 5th for Luke Midock and a 25th Caroline Smith and in SL a 38th for Caroline Smith. Other bright spots were Luke Midock's 10th place first run in GS and 6th place first run in SL. Without consistent finishes overall, none of our JO racers earned spots in the 2015 National Championships and Assessments. However, changes in USSA –East rules allow 1 male and 1 female from PARA to go to the CanAm event against the top U16 Canadians the following week.

All 16 quota positions (8 men, 8 women) were filled for the U16 Eastern Finals at Sunday River, ME. The PARA female racers attending the Finals had very good SL, GS, and SG results, with a total of ten top-40 finishes. The men had better than average SL runs with seven overall top-40 finishes, but weaker than average GS and SG runs. Alyssa Kotzmann, who opted out of JOs, and Lindsey Lucas had fantastic weekends and were the top PARA racers. Alyssa had finishes in SG 28th, in GS 14th, and a 16th in SL. Lindsey had finishes in SG 23rd and GS 17th, and a 19th in SL. Other notable results in SG were a 34th for Michela Colavita, while in SL a 32nd for Elizabeth Kinnard and 36th for Michela Colavita. In men's SG, best finishes were a 40th for Joey Cichon and 43th for Sean McCoy: in GS a good finish of 33rd for Mitchell Pan; while in SL were 28th for Daniel Sandursky, 32nd for Dalton Miles, a 36th for Braeton Oliver, a 37th for Mitchell Pan and 38th for Sean McCoy.

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 below the recent past trend. 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 Lake Placid venue seemed much tougher this year than in the past. Other states like SARA, Tri-State and NJ rarely fill their quotas to JOs, so it is tough for PARA racers to feel competitive and place well. 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, Bruce Bedell, Kyle Penny.

U16 Finals Coaches: Dan Chayes, Askold Sandursky, Tom Yen

LOOKING AHEAD TO NEXT SEASON

It seems important to this age level (and their parents) to have a separate U16 championship and awards ceremony. The U16 championships at Blue Mtn proved that and were much more enjoyable for all.

Ideally, a separate first-class championship event with a SG, banquet, and awards presentation should be held every year to give these athletes their due and to maintain their excitement and interest in PARA racing. Moving towards scoring by combined times also was a occasional suggestion, unless the event returns to 3 runs per day per discipline then world cup points likely make more sense. Reminder - Holding the separate U16 event in PA requires 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