

PARA Jr I-II Chair Report

(2008-2009 Season)

The weather gods finally smiled on Pennsylvania and gave us a longer than normal season of consistently cold weather. Consequently, the ski areas were able to produce and maintain sufficient snow quantities and quality to enable all of the races on the PARA calendar to go off with little difficulty. Officiating at the races sometimes adds an interesting twist that serves to keep us all on our toes and provides a valuable educational opportunity to be used for future reference.

PA Cup Series:

The PA Cup Series returned to Seven Springs this year with two (2) days of Slalom races during the third weekend in January. Blue Mountain then hosted their usual Friday-Saturday GS races during the first weekend in February, followed up by a Sunday Slalom at Sno Mountain. The series concluded at Elk Mountain during the third weekend of February with the customary two (2) GS races and a Slalom race.

Race attendance was up 2.6% this season with a total of 922 race starts. This increase was primarily due to better attendance at the Sno Mountain race which was up 21 racers from last season. Attendance at the two (2) Friday races were 9 below the average attendance of 115 racers (32 female and 83 male) per event. The PA Cup Finals at Elk has turned into a homecoming of sorts with a number of alumni returning to test out the competition.

The PARA J2 State Team was selected after the results from the Sno Mountain race were compiled. This gave five (5) completed races with which to rank the athletes. The team selections were announced on the PARA website the following week.

The PARA J1-2 State Team and the Pennsylvania Cup Champions were announced at the conclusion of the Finals at Elk. Molly Curran (Elk) led throughout the series, finishing on the podium in all eight (8) races, notching three (3) wins. First year J2 racer Heather Derr (Tussey) finished second and kept Molly in her sights by posting six (6) podium finishes of her own, also with three (3) wins. Joe Sulpizio (Blue) and Tyler Smith (Elk) were neck and neck all season until Joe sealed the deal with a first and second place finish on the last two days at Elk. Last year's Champion, Ryan Symancek (Sno) missed three of the first five races and was out of contention early on but did serve notice that he hasn't lost his touch by winning two of the final three races at Elk.

The 2009 PA Cup Champions are Molly Curran and Joseph Sulpizio

Frank Sheibley Memorial Most Dedicated Athlete Award was presented to Joseph Sulpizio

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The 2009 PARA State Team is:

Men				Women			
Name	Class	Year	Club	Name	Class	Year	Club
Joseph Sulpizio	J-1	1989	BMRT	Molly Curran	J-2	1992	EMSC
Tyler Smith	J-1	1991	EMSC	Heather Derr	J-2	1993	TMART
Devin Dymeck	J-2	1992	SSRT	Ellen Legro	J-1	1991	SRRC
Ryan Symancek	J-1	1990	SNO	Kylee Turko	J-2	1993	BMRT
Jeff Puckette	J-2	1992	BMRT	Molly Broom	J-2	1993	WTSEF
M Kyle Shostek	J-2	1992	EMSC	Meghan Cawley	J-1	1991	EMSC
Maximilian Baas	J-2	1992	MAST	Rebecca Spitz	J-2	1992	WTSEF
Luke Wiles	J-2	1992	SRRC				
W Tyler Filling	J-1	1991	SRRC				
Russell Voigt	J-1	1990	EMSC				

Post-Season Eastern Regional Championship Events:

Eastern J-2 Regional Championships @ Stowe, VT

The Eastern J-2 Championships were held at Stowe on February 25th through the 27th, three days after the PA Cup Finals at Elk. Due to FIS homologation issues, the event organizers dropped the traditional SG, GS, SL format and opted instead for two (2) GS and a SL. For one reason or another, this event doesn't command the interest it deserves from our athletes and coaches. This year we used only two (2) of our six (6) quota spots and sent a team of first year J2 girls, Heather Derr and Molly Broom. Both girls finished near the back of the pack but took advantage of the excellent points opportunity and came away with at least one good race result. This is a FIS event and the competitors earn FIS race points as well as equivalent USSA points. This event offered our athletes the lowest race penalty of the post-season with USSA GS and SL points below 60.

Eastern Alpine Championships @ Sugarloaf, ME

The Eastern Alpine Championships were held at Sugarloaf on March 2nd through the 8th. PARA has three (3) quota spots available for this event. However, over the past several years we have been unable to use them due to a scheduling conflict with the PA Cup Finals. The stars aligned favorably this season so I approached Ryan Symancek to see if he was interested in attending some or all of the races at this event. Based on his past performance in PARA and his vast amount of FIS experience I felt Ryan was the only PARA athlete qualified to be considered for this high level event. Ryan accepted the invitation and was scheduled to participate in the SG, GS and SL races. Unfortunately a training injury kept Ryan out of the competition.

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Eastern J 1-2 Finals @ Okemo, VT

The Eastern J 1-2 Finals were held at Okemo on March 10th through the 16th. We had plenty of time to put a team together and filled fourteen (14) of our fifteen (15) quote spots. Again some of our top athletes decided to pass up this event. One excuse that came up more than once was the perception that the Eastern High School Championship offered a lower penalty and therefore the opportunity to score better points could be had at that event. In reality, the GS penalty at both events was similar and the SL penalty at Finals was only 10 points higher. However, the performance of our athletes at Finals was pretty good with six top 20 finishes and most of the kids came away with some improvement to their USSA points profile. Only two (2) girls competed in the Downhill training and race and two (2) boys and one (1) girl competed in the SG race. The PARA Team consisted of Molly Curran, Ellen Legro, Meghan Cawley, Joe Sulpizio, Tyler Smith, Kyle Shostek, Luke Wiles, Russell Voigt, Ryan Krout, Andrei Klein, Matthew Riggi and Michael Hacker. Susan Longley and Alexander Christie were also scheduled to attend but withdrew just prior to the race.

Eastern High School Alpine Championships @ Cannon Mt., NH

The Eastern High School Championships was held at Cannon on March 13th through the 15th. The team was organized this year by Preston Rutledge. PARA sent a team of six (6) girls and twelve (12) boys. The girl's team finished in 8th place and the boy's team finished in 7th place. Ryan Symancek repeated last year's performance by winning the Slalom race. In addition to Ryan, the team consisted of the following members: Molly Broom, Kaylee Turko, Kristen Hardy, Rebecca Rist, Kelly Rowland, Monica Chamberlin, Maximilian Baas, A.J. Kania, Ryan Baker, Trevor Leeds, Chance Snyder, Matthew Ream, Tyler Harold, Nicolas Martell, Phillip LeNeveu, Matthew Martell and Gabriel Dalessandro.

Eastern FIS Races:

The USSA Eastern Office changed the procedures this year for entry into the men's Eastern Cup FIS Races. States are no longer provided with a quota for these races. Entry to the women's races is still open to the state quota system. Automatic and development entries are now determined by a ranking system established and maintained by the Eastern Office. To facilitate opportunities for male athletes to gain FIS race experience, a new category of Eastern FIS races, National Junior Race (NJR), was added to the calendar to complement the Development FIS races. The state quota system was used for entry to the men's NJR and Dev. FIS races. PARA had a quota of two (2) for each race on the calendar.

Due to his prior FIS race experience and points profile, Ryan Symancek was able to gain entry to several Eastern Cup races this season by means of a development spot.

The interest from PARA athletes to attend other FIS races was not as strong this season as had been in the recent past. I did enter Joseph Sulpizio, Devin Dymeck and Rebecca Spitz in a few of these FIS races using our state quota. At no time did the interest exceed our quota allotment.

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Summary:

This was my last season serving as the J1-2 Age Chair. Over the past five seasons, I have enjoyed serving PARA in this capacity, watching the racers develop over the years and working with many interesting, qualified and knowledgeable people. Thanks to all clubs, parents, athletes, coaches, PARA officers, PARA committee members and USSA Officials for their efforts and cooperative spirit throughout the season. Most importantly, congratulations to our all of our racers who continue to make us proud of their development and accomplishments.

Respectfully submitted,
Fred Craft
April 21, 2009