

Executive Summary

Changes Implemented This Year

- Intents list format for Eastern High School Championships team selection

Challenges & Issues

- Weather forced schedule changes at Blue Mountain and Elk Mountain (SG at Blue scrapped, 2xGS at blue, 2xSL and 1xGS at Elk)
- Scheduling of U18/21 Eastern Finals reduces PARA athlete participation

Recommended Changes for Next Year

- Continue refinement of EHSC intents selection process
- Consider whether EHSC is focus postseason for PARA U18/21 athletes
- Bringing the NY/New England speed project back under PARA auspices for some funding to help defray venue and coaching costs (see notes below)

Board Approvals

Proposed Rules & Procedure Changes

- Consider whether EHSC is focus postseason for PARA U18/21 athletes given scheduling challenges of U18/21 Eastern Finals
- Renew support for PARA speed project in NY/New England

Budget Requests

- Renew support for PARA speed project in NY/New England with training days and scored races (see budget requests for specific event)

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Detailed Report

PA Cup Series

- The weather affected some PA Cup but venues were able to host as scheduled.
- 2xGS at Blue Mountain (originally SG/GS/SL); 2xSL at Seven Springs; 2xSL and 1xGS at Elk Mountain (originally GS/GS/SL)
- Both Blue Mountain and Seven Springs opened their events to a small number of U16 athletes using standardized criteria as agreed upon at the PARA Spring 2023 meeting; Per the discretion of their race organization, Elk was strictly U18/21 only.

PA Cup Champions

- One unified cup open to all current High School students simplified the award process.
- Close competition all season (especially with the women) kept the Cup standings tight until the end.
- Curt Friedrich (BMSC) won men
- Sienna Correia (BMSC) won women

State Team (14 men, 12 men per PARA population demographics):

Women:

Correia	Sienna	2007	BMSC
Contini	Giuliana	2007	WPRC
Winfield	Addison	2007	BMSC
Pallman	Harper	2008	EMSC
Kennedy	Blair	2008	WTSEF
Starner	Cameron	2008	SRRC
Johnson	Maraid	2007	DCWST
Dower	Isabel	2007	SRRC
Tama	Norah	2007	EMSC
Britt	Efemia	2008	PASEF
Pak	Tara	2008	SRRC
Gill	Mollie	2008	HVRC
Krugh	Julia	2008	WTSEF
Lincoln	Drue	2008	TMART

Men:

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Friedrich	Curt	2008	BMSC
Eiswert	Robert	2007	SRRC
Sanders	Reed	2008	SRRC
Miller	Jackson	2007	SRRC
Bochnak	Stanley	2007	BMSC
Nazlymov	Andrei	2006	LMRT
Awanohara	Max	2007	LMRT
Pottinger	Becket	2008	HVRC
Renquist	Ian	2007	BMSC
Meehan	Connor	2007	TMART
Kasofsky	Benjamin	2008	SRRC
Coyne	Joseph	2007	SRRC

U18/21 Eastern Finals at Attitash (28-30 March 2025)

13 athletes attended (7 women, 6 men) out of a quota of 26. As with previous seasons, spring sports and family travel scheduling conflicts interfered with many qualifiers' ability to attend due to late dates of the Eastern U18/21 Finals event. The U18/21 Age Chair had to go fairly deep into the PA Cup standings to field *any* team, which is a troubling trend.

- Weather affected all events, with only the super-G happening. There was a lot of work put into an attempt to hold the GS on March 29th, though that event was canceled. Conditions were not conducive to hold the slalom on March 30th and that event was preemptively scratched.
- In the one event that occurred PARA athletes performed well:
 - 3rd, 7th, 12th, 14th, and 15th in women's SG
 - 8th and 14th in men's SG
- Overall the field for this event was small, due in part to the late season scheduling and to New England divisions sending few (or no) athletes to the event.
- Coaches: Jim Pottinger (HVRC) and Brad Hess (WTSEF), with help from Nathan LeBauer (LMRT) who attended as an official Assistant Coach.

Eastern High School Championships at Cannon-Mittersill (6-9 March 2025)

PARA sent a team of 27 athletes from U16-21 ages to this event. All events took place on schedule.

- PARA athletes took 13th and 14th in the women's GS

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- PARA athletes took 1st and 15th in the men's GS
- PARA athletes took 23rd in the women's SL
- PARA athletes took 11th and 31st in the men's SL
- Coaches: Kevin Malkin (PASEF) and Agla Bjornsdottir (PASEF) were the two assigned PARA coaches for this event. Dave Fonash (TMART) assisted.

FIS Racing

- PARA has 2 male, 2 female quota spots
- These slots were used sparingly, if at all. This is due to myriad factors, including an ever-shifting FIS schedule in the east (weather cancellations, etc.) and scheduling conflicts with school and scheduled PARA events.

Looking toward 2025-26

- Continue having one Blue Mountain PA Cup event be a Super G. The U18/21 athletes should have the opportunity to continue development of speed skills as it is part of all postseason events. Furthermore, with the Gore Speed Camp having scored races it allows there to be a legitimate points opportunity in SG within PARA, and our athletes benefitted from this at postseason events with better starting positions.
- Notes on the Speed Project that took place at Gore Mountain from February 3-5:
 - Speed camp held at Gore Mountain, NY, with coaching by American Downhiller project (Marco Sullivan, lead AD coach) as well as 10 PARA coaches.
 - This project was not funded by PARA for the 2024-25 season – and thus not an official PARA event – but participation from 10 PARA clubs from all four PARA regions was encouraging and an improvement over the 2023-24 iteration.
 - 68 PARA athletes attended the event. PARA coaches assisted American Downhiller staff.
 - NYSEF staff also helped with venue prep and staging of two scored SG races on February 5 (U16 and older) and two non-scored races (U14). These went off very smoothly and produced points profiles for all U16/18/21 athletes who completed at least one race. 62 athletes participated in these races.
 - Essentially unanimous praise for the event: athletes and coaches came away with new skills and better understanding of speed technique, tactics, and racing.
 - Thanks again to Matt Superczynski for helping coordinate this event with American Downhiller and NYSEF.
 - The speed project was beneficial to all PARA athletes and coaches who participated, and having participation from a majority of PARA clubs made for a great training and racing opportunity.

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- Hopefully this project will be continued in 2025-26 with a wider representation of PARA teams, especially athletes with little speed experience. It would also be beneficial to have PARA's blessing and a budget to help defray costs for the venue and coaching.
- Of note is that PARA now has sufficient coaching depth to conduct this camp on its own at Gore, Okemo, or another venue with a homologated full-length trail for speed competition
- A lesson learned over the past two years of hosting this event: get on the venue's schedule early! This year's dates and venue were largely dictated by a later scheduling situation and taking what slots were left.
- Look into PARA coaching budget used to send PARA coach (or coaches) to out-of-PARA events (e.g. FIS races, scored Eastern Region races with open quotas to non-region athletes, *et al*) to prevent the scramble to find coaching support out of area (previously suggested in 2023 and 2024).
- Given its late scheduling it's time for PARA to discuss the rationale of sending the top U18/21 athletes in the state standings to Eastern High School Championships instead of the U18/21 Eastern Finals. If an athlete can attend both this is great, but the timing of EHSC is often more compatible with spring sports and travel than the exceedingly late schedule of U18/21 Eastern Finals. This season none of the top 3 finishers in the PA Cup standings attended U18/21 Finals, which is disappointing but expected.
- For Eastern High School Championships: field the PARA squad via an intents list (like used with FIS racing) and sunset the "first come, first served" signup system. This was attempted in 2024-25 with some success, though it still needs refinement. This intents list will be governed by the U18/21 Age Chair, using a points ranking system. If an athlete opts to go to another event the selection will open for the next ranked athlete on the list. This will allow PARA to send the strongest possible squad to EHSC – as other states/regions (especially those from the Midwest) tend to do.
- Follow through with the idea of creating a single PARA squad for EHSC rather than a PA squad and a composite squad. This will make it easier to fill all slots in a timely manner and field a stronger squad, overall.
- I encourage all PARA members attending USSS Spring Congress to encourage scheduling of Eastern U18/21 Finals at an earlier date that doesn't overlap with spring sports and Spring Break schedules in the Mid-Atlantic and Southern regions.

Respectfully submitted,

Rudi Riet
PARA U18/21 Age Chair