

2016/2017 President's Report

PRESEASON

USSA announced new ski equipment specifications to bring conformity to the FIS equipment requirements. These changes effected the U16 & U19+ Age Categories. These changes led to some shortages of legal ski equipment; primarily the change to GS specifications.

USSA also changed position on race timing software. In addition to primarily recommending Vola once again, USSA renegotiated with SplitSecond as a viable alpine timing package.

Three preseason PARA Alpine Official updates were provided across the state covering East/NorthEast, Central, and Western. These valuable sessions provide up-to-date information covering USSA 2016/2017 updates. Additionally, a number of clubs provided updates to their contingents.

MEMBERSHIP

In 2015/2016, 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 in 2016/2017.

- Alpine General shows significant growth as well as Alpine Official. PARA and the clubs need to provide educational opportunities to the AG group as a progression towards AO.
 - Note – ACO levels decreased at roughly the same level that the AO increased.
- 70% of our competitors are in the U14 and younger categories. U10 continues to grow and PARA should investigate the best balance between training and competing for this group.

SEASON

Events

The weather was much more accommodating at the beginning of this season. The training started on-schedule for the clubs. There were some early season race changes but nothing close to the issues of 2015/2016. Three-quarters through the season saw exceptionally warm periods. This forced extraordinary efforts by several ROCs in getting the State Championships pulled off. A special note of appreciation goes to the Tussey ROC working with the Roundtop ROC and resort staff in making last minute venue change for the U12 event. The competitors and family members should also be acknowledged for the flexibility they showed during this already stressful lead-up. The racers had a few runs at 70-degrees. Seven Springs also pulled off some miracles and got the snow guns running in time for the U14 event. Blue Mountain had exceptional surface conditions for the U16s.

Too bad some of the big March storms which prolonged the ski areas operations didn't occur in February.

The speed camps were continued this season. The camp was well attended even with the rescheduling and the feedback is the event is beneficial.

Again, my compliments to the crews and areas for committing the resources to host these crucial statewide events.

Our racers enjoyed success at the Post Season event they attended and we had some outstanding results. Our programs are gaining respect from around the region and the efforts of our clubs to improve training and increase the skill of our racers seem to be paying off.

Competitor Focuses

There were several instances in which it was alleged that competitors competed on non-compliant equipment. Since there were no formal protests during the competitions against these competitors, no action was taken by the alpine officials (jury) at these races to disqualify those competitors' USSA results.

However, clubs/coaches did act, working with their athletes to acknowledge any non-compliance. There were multiple athlete acknowledgements regarding non-compliance (U19 GS, U16 Super G) whereas these athletes voluntarily forfeited any PARA State points. There was one instance where the Executive Board acted to penalize a competitor by removing his PARA points for events.

A separate issue raised was the definition of a competitor's primary state affiliation. There were a few cases where racers trained in other locations (states) for a period prior to PARA events occurring. The issue was raised by some coaches and parents as to the competitors' rights to compete in PARA State Championships as they had also competed outside of PARA. These competitors did race in the PARA qualifying events.

Finally, the issue surrounding what constitutes athlete qualifications for consideration towards quotas for post-season events needs to be clarified. These qualifications should reflect the numbers of athletes committed to participating in the majority of season events.

LOOKING FORWARD

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

- 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 - **CRITICAL**
- We need to look at the Club Volunteer members (our largest increase) and determine an educational path progressing these members into competition official classification.

Civility – All officials and coaches should continue to act with respect and civility towards each other. A gentle reminder that our focus should be on all our racers portraying a non-biased and fair representation and open, non-judgmental communication.

Promotion – As an organization, promotion of our accomplishments needs attention. By using our website, we should be marketing our racers' results within state and post-season. We should be providing short event articles with pictures stating the key accomplishments and results from all the Cup and Regional events. We can drive both PARA membership traffic and external PARA traffic towards who we are.

Respectfully Submitted,

David Bond
President - PARA