

PARA U18/21 Chair Report 2023-24 Season

Rudi Riet, U18/21 Age Chair

PA Cup Series

- As with the 2022-23 season, PA Cup managed to hold all events, though with the Seven Springs slaloms relocated to Tussey.
- 1xSG, 1xGS and 1x SL at Blue Mountain; 2xSL at Tussey; 2xGS and 1xSL at Elk Mountain
- Both Blue Mountain and Tussey opened their race to a small number of U16 athletes 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 kept the Cup standings tight until the end.
- Shayan Gupta (BMRA) won men
- Jamie Hodgkinson (WTSEF) won women

State Team (top 10 finishers in PA Cup standings):

Men:

Gupta	Shayan	2005	BMSC
Miller	Jackson	2007	SRRC
Kogelmann	Drew	2006	TMART
Kogelmann	Will	2006	TMART
Watson	Luke	2006	JFRT
Curren	Armstrong	2005	LMRT
Superczynski	Tyler	2006	LMRT
Deger	Grant	2005	SRRC
Barnes	Noah	2005	EMSC
Burns	Owen	2006	JFRT

Women:

Hodgkinson	Jamie	2007	WTSEF
Correia	Sienna	2007	BMSC
Winfield	Addison	2007	BMSC
Yadush	Kate	2006	BMSC
Contini	Giuliana	2007	WPRC
McEnroe	Kate	2006	WPRC
O'Driscoll	Maeve	2007	WPRC

Persing	Madalyn	2006	BMSC
Meneely	Lauren	2007	BMSC
Tama	Norah	2007	EMSC

U18/21 Eastern Finals at Gore Mountain (22-24 March 2024)

17 athletes attended (4 women, 13 men). As with 2022-23, 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.

- In spite of weather challenges, all events happened.
- PARA performed well throughout the event.
 - 3rd and 8th in women's SG
 - 2nd, 4th, 6th, and a tire for 8th in men's SG
 - 7th in women's GS
 - 3rd, 4th, 5th in men's GS
 - 10th in women's SL
 - 3rd, 4th, 6th, and 8th in men's SL
- Coaches: Rudi Riet and Dave Fonash, with help from Jason Sebelin and Brigid Baldwin (both of whom were officially Assistant Coaches for the event)

Okemo Speed Camp for U16+

- Speed camp held at Okemo, VT, from January 21-24, with coaching by American Downhiller project (Marco Sullivan, lead AD coach).
- 84 PARA athletes and 14 PARA coaches attended the event. Coaches assisted American Downhiller staff.
- OMS and OMARA staff also helped with venue prep and staging of scored SG race on January 23.
- Essentially unanimous praise for the event: athletes and coaches came away with new skills and better understanding of speed technique, tactics, and racing.
- Hopefully will be continued in 2024-25 with a wider representation of PARA teams, especially athletes with little speed experience. Also would like to extend an offer to SARA to have a limited number of athletes and coaches attend this workshop next season.
- Thanks again to Matt Superczynski for helping coordinate this event with American Downhiller, Okemo Mountain School, and Okemo Mountain Alpine Racing Association.

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 2024-25

- 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 Okemo 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.
- 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 (suggested in 2023 as well).
- 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 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 tend to do.
- Examine 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