

### Executive Summary

#### Changes Implemented This Year

- PARA Directors approved \$2,500 for speed projects in the 2024-25 budget, but no specific speed project proposals were submitted to the Committee.
- The \$2,500 was a change from the prior two years when PARA funded speed projects at the \$5,000 level

#### Challenges & Issues

- USSS Eastern Regional Events include speed events at the U14, U16, and U18/21 levels
- PARA athletes continue to need opportunities to develop speed skills to prepare them for these events; they need speed camp opportunities outside what PARA clubs can provide;

#### Recommended Changes for Next Year

- PARA should adopt a grant process for speed projects similar to the B-Netting program where applications are requested by a fall deadline and the Executive Committee makes selections by a specific date
- Consistent with PARA's non-profit mission and status, PARA should only award funds to a PARA club

### Board Approvals

#### Proposed Rules & Procedure Changes

- See [Speed Projects Grant Program proposal](#) in the **Treasurer's budget**; (complete proposal attached)

#### Budget Requests

- \$5,000 annually to be awarded through a competitive process

## 2025 SPEED COMMITTEE REPORT

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### Detailed Report

The PARA Directors approved \$5,000 to support specific speed projects in the 2022-23 season and again in the 2023-24 season. The \$5,000 provided by PARA in 2023-24 supported 151 athletes, at a ratio of \$33 PARA dollars per athlete.

For the 2024-25 season, the Speed Committee did not submit a specific funding request in advance of the meeting because a venue could not be identified in time for the Spring Meeting. Therefore, the PARA Directors approved \$2,500 for speed project last year, with the expectation that a proposal for a specific project might be submitted to the Executive Committee after the meeting. Unfortunately, no funding requests were submitted to PARA.

Rather than making funding decisions for speed projects based on the details that can be expected to be available at the Spring Meeting, moving to a competitive grants process overseen by the Executive Committee would enable PARA both support speed skills development for our athletes, and provide effective oversight of how the funds are spent.

Although speed events are included in USSS Eastern Regional Events at the U14, U16, and U18 levels, there are limited opportunities for PARA athletes to develop the skills required to safely and effectively compete in these events. A few of the larger PARA clubs organize internal speed camps at venues in PARA or out of state. However, most PARA athletes have limited opportunities to develop speed skills. Blue Mountain is the only PARA club that regularly holds a speed camp that is open to athletes from all other clubs (and widely publicizes the event). While this camp provides a valuable training opportunity, registration is limited as the camp can generally accommodate no more than 50 athletes from other PARA clubs. Other PARA clubs sometimes organize speed training for their athletes at out of state venues (SRRC is one example).

SRRC has indicated they would be willing to open their speed camp to the broader PARA community if PARA provided funding to help support the event. Other PARA clubs may be interested in doing so as well.

Discontinuing the partnership with American Downhill would significantly reduce the coaching pay and travel expenses associated with any PARA funded speed camp. While it surely was exciting for the participants to be coached by former Olympic and World Cup athletes, eliminating those expenses could either reduce camp registration fees, enable the camp to support more athletes, add more training days, or a combination the above.

The Speed Committee's complete proposal for a speed camp competitive grant program is attached.

## PROPOSED SPEED PROJECTS GRANTS PROGRAM

**INTRODUCED BY:** Kurt Zwally, Speed Committee Chair & PARA VP  
Ben Shirk, Speed Committee Member (SRRC)  
Matt Dembinski, Speed Committee Member (JFBBRT)  
Derek Berger, Speed Committee Member (DCWST)

**MOTION:** To continue to support and foster innovative PARA Speed Projects, but with a greater focus on U14 skill development, and provide PARA funding through a competitive grants process overseen by the Executive Committee (similar to the PARA B-Net Grants Program). Funding would be set at \$5,000 each year, and the maximum possible grant would also be \$5,000.

- Funding would be allocated through a competitive application process
- Funding would only be awarded to PARA Clubs; Any PARA club in good standing interested in organizing speed training for PARA athletes would be eligible to apply
- Speed training activities should focus on U14s and U16s, but activities could also be open to U18/21 athletes as well
- Applications would be due to the Executive Committee by September 30<sup>th</sup> each year
- Decisions would be made by the Executive Committee by no later than October 21<sup>st</sup>.
- Camp registration shall include a 1-week advance registration period for PARA U14 and U16 athletes that qualified for a PARA State Team the prior year.
- Notice of the registration dates, times, and the athletes that qualify for advance registration will be published on the PARA website at least three weeks prior to the opening of camp registration
- Camp registration must open no later than one month before the start of the camp.
- Applications decisions would be made by the Executive Committee and the Speed Committee shall assist with implementation of any grant awards.
- Funds would be issued to the PARA Club at the completion of the camp unless otherwise approved by the Executive Committee

**Grant applications shall include:**

1. The PARA club organizing the event
2. The proposed venue and date(s), and a statement as to whether or not the host venue has committed to those dates
3. Age classes eligible to participate
4. Min and max number of athletes needed to make the camp happen
5. A general description of the skills and activities
6. Other funding sources, such as any matching grants requested/applied for
7. Expected athlete registration costs (a range is acceptable)
8. Whether or not it would be open to athletes from other states and if so which states

## MOTION FOR A PARA SPEED CAMP GRANT PROGRAM

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9. Expected athlete to coach ratio (a range is acceptable)
10. Expectations for coaching support from clubs with participating athletes
11. Any other information at the applicant's discretion.

Any variations from the notice requirements above need to be approved in advance by the Executive Committee.

In the event that any Speed Camp awarded PARA funds does not reach its minimum number of athlete registrations by two weeks before the event, the Camp Organizers are permitted to open the general registration to athletes from outside of PARA. In that case, Camp organizers shall notify the Speed Committee and the Executive Committee that registration opened to athletes outside of PARA.

**RATIONALE:** PARA has an interest in supporting the development of speed skills in our athletes for several reasons. The first reason is athlete safety. USSS Eastern Regional Championship events include speed at the U14, U16, and U18 levels. Given the short season in our state and limited club resources, and limited hill space, most PARA clubs include very little or no speed training as part of their normal athlete development activities. A PARA supported speed training event helps athletes develop the skills they need to compete in these events and reduces the potential risk of injury.

The second reason is speed skills transfer to giant slalom and slalom. Speed training helps athletes develop effective risk-reward management skills, and it tends to expand the athlete's comfort zone in terms of their maximum speed for a given situation. Speed training also helps athletes develop better line (e.g. turn-shape and turn-placement for the situation). All of those skills transfer to giant slalom and slalom. The growth in the athletes' free skiing and tech event racing is often visibly noticeable after they've participated in an effective speed camp.

Supporting speed skills development in our athletes would also better prepare our athletes to compete in Eastern Regional USSS speed events. While that is important goal, the safety and skill transfer to tech events are the two most important goals of this proposal. Finally, most junior ski racers find speed training and racing to be very fun. For some, these are often the most-memorable experiences of their time as junior ski racers.

**HISTORY:** The PARA Directors approved \$5,000 to support specific speed projects in the 2022-23 season and again in the 2023-24 season. The \$5,000 provided by PARA in 2023-24 **supported 151 athletes, at a ratio of \$33 PARA dollars per athlete.** For the 2024-25 season, the Speed Committee did submit a specific funding request in advance of the meeting. The PARA the Directors approved \$2,500 for speed for the 2024-25 season, but no proposals for specific speed projects were submitted for PARA funding.