



Pacific Northwest Ski Association

A Division of U.S. Ski & Snowboard

PNSA NCC Fall Meeting Minutes **Red Lion River Inn, Spokane, September 23, 2017**

Attendance:

Bend Endurance: Bernie Nelson
Leavenworth: Pete Spiegel
Methow: Leslie Hall
Mount Bachelor: Kelly & Dan Simoneau
PNSA: Alan Watson, and briefly Curt Hammond and Paul Mahre
Plain: Rob Whitten, Pierre Niess
Sandpoint: Vicki Longhini
Spokane: George Bryant
Athlete Rep: Dakota Blackhorse-von Jess

Agenda approved – George motion, Leslie seconded (NCC Motion #2017-12)

Minutes from spring meeting approved – George motion, Vicki seconded (#2017-13)

Coaching Certification and Symposium:

Alan reviewed certification status of coaches. Ten of our regular PNSA coaches have Level 100 completed, Leslie has Level 200 and Laura has an incomplete Level 200 status (which Leslie will try to help resolve). Alan encouraged participation in the Level 100 and 200 certification just before the USSA Symposium in Park City next month. The certification schedule is finally posted on the USSA web site, and will take place on Tuesday and Wednesday, October 25-26.

Immediately after the Certification USSA is holding a Cross Country Coaches Symposium, which a number of us will be attending. PNSEF has granted \$4,000 to PNSA for coach education, and of this PNSA will pay a per diem of \$400 to each PNSA coach who attends this conference, up to 10 coaches. If more than ten PNSA coaches attend, PNSA will pay \$400 to the first coach from each program. Any remaining funds will be shared by the second coach(es) attending. At the time of the meeting seven or eight first coaches planned to attend, and up to three second coaches, so we could have more than ten total. To participate in this grant program, Alan needs to know names of first and second coaches by September 30th. No housing is arranged as each attendee will secure their own lodging.

JNQ Race Schedule Confirmation:

JNQ #1	Dec 16, 17	Mt Bachelor	Indiv skate, mass skate	5/5/5, 5/5/10
JNQ #2	Jan 13, 14	Spokane	Indiv skate, mass classic	5/5/10, 5/10/10
JNQ #3	Jan 26, 27	SoHo, Utah	Sprint skate, mass classic	sprint, 5/10/10
JNQ #4	Feb 11, 12	Methow	Sprint classic, Indiv classic	sprint, 5/10/10

[In a post-meeting discussion between Mt Bachelor and Methow coaches it was agreed that it would be best for the athletes to have both a classic and skate race on each JNQ weekend. Also, if poor conditions require one of the meets to be cancelled, we would not have as good a balance between techniques. This would mean having a classic sprint and skate distance at the Methow race, and an individual skate and mass classic at Mt Bachelor.]

A relay will be added to the Spokane series on the afternoon of the Sunday, January 14th. Teams will be picked at random, mixed boys and girls and mixed club teams. This will be for fun and experience, but results will not be used for JN qualification. It would be good to have all the teams stay and participate. The next day, Monday, is MLK Day.

The Methow sprint will use a modified Kings Court format instead of elimination heats, at least for the U16s and older, in order to make the event more fun and to simplify results calculations. There will be three rounds of heats, with all skiers racing in each round and nobody eliminated. After the first round and again after the second round the first two finishers in each heat move up a heat for the next round and the fifth and sixth finishers in each heat move down a heat for the next round. Final finish order is determined by the results of the third round. Males and females will race in separate races, but within each gender all age groups will be mixed. The final scoring would still be done according to male/female and age category. It was decided that the NCC committee would confer via email on whether the scored times would be scored on qualifying time or final times. Alan will send a separate email on this topic.

Note: there are several race opportunities ahead of the Mt Bach JNQ this year. There is an NRL race on the Friday after Thanksgiving (24th Nov) in West Yellowstone. Early SuperTours include a sprint freestyle and classic race series in West Yellowstone on Dec 2/3 and a sprint classic and freestyle race at Sovereign Lakes on Dec 9/10.

JN Qualification Scores:

When we changed the JN qualification system from percent back to points two years ago, we also reduced the number of races considered from 5 out of 8 to 4 out of 8 in order to eliminate formal petitions. One concern at that time was that using fewer races would result in individuals or teams not participating in the full series. This was not a problem the first year, but was at Spokane last year when a number of good athletes raced elsewhere. Vicki asked the group to reconsider again going back to best 5 out of 8 finishes. While stipulating best 5 of 8 will not ensure that all racers support and participate in all our division qualifiers, it is one way to incentivize most of the athletes to attend as many JNQs as possible.

One argument in favor of staying with 4 of 8 is the financial barrier that attending the races in SoHo presents. Counting just 4 of 8 allows an athlete who cannot afford to travel to SoHo to also miss a weekend of races due to illness or other conflicts. However, avoiding a situation like we had in Spokane last year where a number of good athletes were absent, having a best 5 of 8 would likely have encouraged some of those absent athletes to race in Spokane. Additionally, the coaches believe that SoHo is an important race series to attend from an athlete competition standpoint.

Vicki made a motion to count 5 out of 8 race finishes for JN qualification, with no bonus points for the final races. Dakota seconded. The motion passed 6 to 2. (NCC Motion #2017-14)

JNQ Registrations:

Bernie would like to continue to register her team with a single check and group registration list. The primary reason behind this is to “hide” the cost of the racing within her “fee” for the race weekend. She wants to make sure it is not a burden for the race organizers to do this. Leslie pointed out that the most important thing to remember when sending in a group registration list is to get it in early, before the deadline. Also, to make sure that names match the US Ski and Snowboard (USSA) numbers.

Methow is using SkiReg as their registration software, other races use PayPal. Both charge a similar percentage of the registration fee. Before next year Dakota would like to create a software program that could simplify the process and payments for registration and avoid a processing fee. Paul Mahre said that alpine racers register directly with US Ski and Snowboard (USSA) and that US Ski does not charge a service fee. [On September 25, after the meeting, JJ Ehlers, who manages race registration at USSA, told Alan that for cross country races USSA athlete registration charges 4% of the registration amount, which includes credit card processing.]

JNQ Waxing Restrictions:

While there are arguments on both sides to allow HF/blocks and powders at our races, there was a general consensus to allow JNQ race organizers to establish wax restrictions for their races: U16s and older can use LF or HF base layers and solid fluoro top coats but no liquids or powders; U14s and younger can only use LF base layers with no top coats.

JNQ Timing:

Mt Bachelor plans to use Webscorer. Dan is testing Split Second, which the alpine races at Mt Bachelor use. Spokane and Methow plan to use Webscorer again.

Dan will coordinate communication between the timers of all three in-division meets so that they can share insights about successful timing.

JN Schedule and logistics:

Saturday, March 3 will be travel day, Tuesday, Wed, Fri and Sat are the official race days. See agenda for the specific race schedule. Alan has secured lodging and current estimates look like we need five vans. PNSA teams who provide vans will be reimbursed \$500 plus gas for each van used. Bend Endurance, Methow, Mount Bachelor, and Spokane each plan to bring a van, and either BEA or MB could bring two.

Alan is working on the trip budget, and although the amount is not final yet he estimated that the cost for the trip will be around \$860 for each athlete. As in the past coaches will have their expenses paid but will not receive any additional compensation from PNSA.

JN Coaches

As JN trip leader Alan would like to have a total of nine coaches supporting our athletes, including four to focus on waxing and four to be dedicated age group/gender coaches (U16

boys, U16 girls, U18/20 boys, U18/20 girls). Meeting attendees took a straw poll to give Alan some guidance on our preferences. Alan will make the final decision.

[After the meeting Alan named six coaches: Alan as Trip Leader (chosen at the spring meeting); Bernie, George, and Jeff to the Wax Crew; Dan and Leslie as age group coaches. Two additional age group coaches and one additional waxer will be named later.]

Update on the JN Task Force discussions (Alan):

Alan is part of a task force established by the USSA Cross Country Committee and chaired by Adam St Pierre that is thinking about ways that Junior Nationals might be improved. The task force has regular conference calls as well as email communications. Following is an update on the most recent discussion, which consisted of four main topics. None of the proposed changes was accepted, but it is worth being aware of the ideas that are out there.

There is discussion at the Olympic and World Cup level of adding cross country ski cross (XCX) to those events. Robert Lazzaroni proposed that we get ahead of the game and add it to the 2018 Junior Nationals at SoHo. This would most likely have required replacing an existing event, most likely the relay but possibly one of the distance events. The task force decided it would be prudent to wait for further developments before adding XCX to JNs. However, we may want to consider adding some elements (bumps, technical cornering, etc) of XCX to some of our races.

There was also discussion about eliminating U16s from JNs and encouraging those athletes to attend regional U16 festivals instead. New England has an established U16 festival each spring, and last year both Alaska and Midwest sent U16 teams there. A majority of the task force felt that JNs is a huge motivator for U16s, and that we should not eliminate them from JNs, at least until regional U16 championships are better established. It was also recognized that sending U16s to a separate meet would be a staffing and financial burden for smaller divisions like ours.

The task force discussed the use of US Ski and Snowboard (USSA) points as cutoffs for qualifying. This change could completely eliminate the divisions from the JN process, or it could be used to choose part of the team with residual divisional quotas. The JN field is around 400 athletes, so one idea was to choose 200 athletes by points and let each division name an additional quota of 20 athletes. Alan did a study of how well USSA points predicted results at the 2017 junior nationals, and found a significant discrepancy between the divisions. In general the larger divisions had lower list points compared to their JN race points than the smaller divisions, meaning that using a points system for qualification would likely bias selection in favor of athletes from the larger divisions. There was also sentiment that qualification by USSA points would incent skiers to travel more in order to “chase points”, and that this would be counterproductive, especially when we just eliminated a rest day from JNs in order to save a bit of expense.

The task force also continues to discuss ways of keeping athletes engaged in the sport. There were no firm proposals or decisions made, but we were reminded of Lester Keller’s “big three” reasons why kids choose to continue to participate in sports: a feeling of progress and accomplishment, a sense of fun and excitement, and being with friends.

Working with PNSEF:

Paul and Dan discussed the budgeting process for PNSEF this year; \$13,000 was directed this year to Nordic, with most applied to JN entry fees and to coaching education (per diem reimbursement for attending the USSA Coaches Symposium next month). There is \$1000 remaining from what was allocated to Nordic this year; we could make a proposal to the board about how we would like that money spent but it would need to be done prior to when PNSEF board meets in early October.

Paul and Dan discussed with the group the importance of our own club or team support of PNSEF. It should be a two-way street and Nordic has not been active in showing support in the past. Support goes beyond just attending the dinner, which is difficult for many of the coaches due to location and timing. The foundation is looking for both dollars and participation from Nordic. Rob suggested the idea of adding a “head tax or surcharge” on to ski registration or program fees to be able to give something back to PNSEF. He asked the teams/program represented if they could think of ways to support PNSEF.

Paul Mahre suggested putting together our thoughts on how we want to spend our allocation of funds next year and also suggested putting together a preliminary calendar for 2018/19 season. The NCC should be thinking of any projects we have as a division where we might need funding support, any financial assistance for camps, or races (WA cup and/or OR cup).

To help us make better decisions on how to direct PNSEF support, Rob believes that our mission/vision as well as key measurables (field size, club size, coach numbers, NRL races, etc) should be better defined. Vicki and Leslie are interested in working with Rob on this project.

General coaching:

Alan reminded the group of Seiler’s lecture, and on the importance of teaching kids to recognize their zones of training, especially top of L2 and bottom of L4. Also, the importance of keeping our teams focused on accomplishment, fun and friendships in both our training and in racing. Each team or club has a few highly motivated kids, a few poorly motivated kids and everyone else in the middle. It’s easy as a coach to be drawn to those highly motivated athletes but we need to discipline ourselves to focus on our entire team and especially the kids in the middle where we can generate enthusiasm and grow our programs.

Adjournment:

Shortly after 1:00 pm, the meeting was adjourned. (#2017-15)

The spring meeting of the NCC is tentatively scheduled for Friday, June 1, 2018 in Yakima. The PNSA convention will take place on June 2 and 3.