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# Pacific Northwest Ski Association

## A Division of USSA

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### PNSA Nordic Competition Committee

### Minutes of Spring Meeting 2017

June 3, 2017 – Hood River, OR

#### Attendance

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm. Present were:

PNSA Nordic Director	Alan Watson
NCC Secretary/Sandpoint	Vicki Longhini
Athlete Representative	Dakota Blackhorse-von Jess
Kongsbergers	Jeff Hashimoto
Leavenworth	Pete Spiegel
Methow	Leslie Hall
Momentum	Coert Voorhees
Mount Bachelor	Dan Simoneau, Kelly Simoneau
Spokane	George Bryant
Teacup	Karl Andersson

Absent: Bend Endurance Academy, Plain Nordic, Seattle Academy

A quorum was present.

#### Approval of agenda

Motion made – Leslie, Seconded – Pete, Motion passed (NCC #2017-01)

#### Approval of minutes from fall meeting

Motion made – Leslie, Seconded – George, Motion passed (NCC #2017-02)

#### Report from USSA Congress - Alan

USSA rebranding: USSA is no more – new branding is US Ski and Snowboard

Club excellence Conference – Highly recommended for coaches and program directors, held every fall.

Coach certification – US Ski and Snowboard totally re-doing the on-line portion of the training. Levels 100 and 200 will now be 10 learning modules. The on-snow, RS and test will remain the same. Jon Casson (jcasson@ussa.org) is head of the certification process and can be contacted by email with any questions about the new modules and the possibility of being grandfathered in for access to the modules for coaches already certified.

SafeSport – US Ski and Snowboard requires mandatory reporting of any abuse or endangerment, by anyone, even if you only suspect it occurred. Reporting even a suspicion is important to cover yourself as well as your club. The legal consequences for not saying anything are significant. There is a link for reporting and more information on the US Ski and Snowboard website.

General memberships - There will be no more one day memberships. The General Membership remains at \$15 per year. Anyone entering a USSA race, including all our JNQ meets, will need to have either a Competition Membership or a General Membership. Points for general members will be calculated but not published unless the general member athlete upgrades to a Competition Membership, in which case all points earned in past races become active and the racer's points profile will be the same as if the racer had been a Competition member all along.

Continental Cup points are in violation of FIS rules, which require Continental Cup races to be scored using World Cup points, and might be changed.

The USSA Cross Country Committee set up a working group to propose ways to reduce the cost and possibly time of Junior Nationals. Alan is a member of that working group. To date the JN working group has voted to reduce the length of the meet from 6 to 5 days, but to keep 4 races. It is still being discussed whether this will be a Tu/W/F/Sa or M/T/Th/F schedule. The 15k could be eliminated and the relay could become mixed gender, but this is still being discussed. Working group recommendations are subject to approval by the Cross Country Committee.

### **JN Qualification**

Team size - JN team size was discussed and Leslie made a motion for the team to remain at 32 plus out of division, George seconded. Failed (NCC #2017-03). More discussion on advantages of a larger JN team led to a motion to expand team to 34 plus out of division. Jeff made the motion, Karl seconded, motion passed. (NCC #2017-04)

Format - Possible changes to race format were proposed and discussed. Alan suggested one shorter race each weekend (5k or 3K unless sprint or relay) to emphasize and build up our athletes' racing speed. George suggested adding a couple relays to our JNQ weekends. Unlikely relay races would count toward USSA points but running relays would have other benefits for the athletes. One idea would be to add a second race to the Sunday format if race series occurs on a 3-day weekend. Alan also suggested holding mass start races on Sunday rather than Saturday to obtain quicker results and earlier departures for home. These ideas were discussed but not voted on.

JNQ participation – Several proposals to incentivize athletes and coaches to attend all JNQs were discussed including a return to best 5 out of 8 races, mandatory inclusion of one final JNQ race, using place points instead of Continental Cup points. Dan suggested using place points starting at 25 but start them at 30 for the final JNQ races as a motivator for athletes to gain an edge in their ranking. He also suggested offering a scholarship incentive as a prize for winners of the final race.

Dakota moved to change qualification to 5 of 8 races without restoring formal petitions. George seconded, motion failed. (NCC #2017-05)

Dan moved to change scoring to place points, with 25 points for first place, 24 points for second place, etc down to 1 point for 25th place. Vicki seconded, motion passed. (NCC #2017-06)

Dan moved to add bonus score (5 points) to each race of the final scheduled qualification meet. Karl seconded, motion passed. (NCC #2017-07).

Jeff moved to change the qualification requirement of out of division skiers so that they only need to have finished in top half of the field in a previous JN race. Leslie seconded, motion passed. (NCC #2017-08)

### **JNQ Race Entry Procedures**

In the past we have had individuals complete their own race entries. Some divisions allow clubs to submit spreadsheet lists of athletes to the race organizer. The sentiment was to continue with individual entries.

Alan requested coaches remind athletes and parents to be consistent with names on entry forms so that names match US Ski and Snowboard memberships.

### **JNQ Race Entry Fees**

Motion made to limit JN entry fees to \$35/race, including trail fees. Motion -Leslie, seconded - Jeff, motion passed. (NCC #2017-09)

### **JNQ Race Timing**

Webscorer using wand and photobeam should work well but in practice has not been reliable due to a combination of human and equipment error. USSA rules require more accuracy than we probably need. Would US Ski and Snowboard TD acknowledge our Webscorer results without using a wand and photobeam? Using a professional timer is an option but is an expensive one, \$3700 per race weekend and this cost would have to be absorbed in higher race fees. We will continue to think about timing options.

### **JNQ Schedule**

Considering the desirability of a two week gap between consecutive meets and before JN departure, as well as avoiding conflict with US Nationals (Jan 3-8), the proposed schedule is as follows (distances in the final column are all U16s / 18-20 boys / U18-20 girls):

Dec 16-17	JNQ #1 Mt Bachelor	ind classic, mass skate	5/5/5, 5/5/10
Jan 13-14	NQ #2 Spokane	ind skate, mass classic	5/5/5, 5/10/10
Jan 26-27	JNQ #3 SoHo SuperQ	sprint skate, ind classic	sprint, 5/10/10
Feb 10-11	JNQ #4 Methow	sprint classic, ind skate	sprint, 5/10/10

The December race is not ideal for most clubs as many will not yet be on snow in mid-December. Also, Dec 16-17 is a NorAm race in Rossland BC that Methow wants to attend instead of the JNQ at Mt Bachelor. Clubs missing JNQ races is something we are trying to avoid. Spokane prefers a January race as the snow is likely to be better for racing vs. mid-February and a January race avoids conflict with the Langlauf. Mt Bachelor is limited to non-Christmas week and no president/MLK weekends but they might be able to move their race to Feb 10-11. Methow could possibly hold a mid-week race at the end of December (prior to the Rodeo) but there may not be snow on the Liberty Bell trails at that time. Another option is that we could just have a 3-meet series with 2 JNQ weekends in PNSA plus the Soldier Hollow SuperQualifier, or we could designate the Rossland NorAm as another out of division qualifier.

Jeff made a motion for Rossland race to stand as first JNQ and Mt Bachelor to host final JNQ on Feb 11-12, Leslie seconded. Voted down. (NCC #2017-10) Dan moved to accept race schedule as originally proposed, George seconded. This was approved (NCC #2017-11). Specifics of this schedule will be re-visited at the fall meeting.

## **Wax Limitation**

Leslie proposed low fluoro glide wax for U16-20, no fluoro top coat. For U14 and younger, only HC, LF or NF glide wax. Dakota and Dan both expressed desire to continue using block fluoro top coats. This will not be a rule, but a coaches agreement. Proposal will be voted on at Fall meeting.

## **Other PNSA Races**

U14 Championship and Washington Cup series was successful, with athletes engaged. Plans for 2017-2018 season will be similar, with the championship held on the Ozbaldy weekend again. Dan suggested expanding the races to other venues in Washington and Oregon.

PNSA points were scored for U14s last season and will be again.

OISRA (Oregon Interscholastic Ski Racing Association) under the direction of JD Downing would welcome any Washington high school teams that want to participate in the high school series.

Dates and locations of other races:

Dec 27 – Rodeo (Washington Cup #1): Methow

Jan 6 – Ski Rennen (Washington Cup #2): Leavenworth

Jan 7 – Gunner Hagen: Kongsbergers

Jan 20-21 – Pursuit: Methow

Jan 28 – Nordeen: Mt Bachelor

Feb 3 – Ski Derby, 30km classic: Methow

Feb 3 - Oregon high school race at Mt Bachelor, good race for kids from PNSA

Feb 4 – Stampede (Washington Cup #3): Kongsbergers

Feb 12 – Langlauf: Mt Spokane

Feb 23-24 – OR state high school XC ski meet: Mt Bachelor

Feb 24 – Wash Cup #4: Plain Valley

Mar 3-4 – Ozbaldy (Washington Cup finals and PNSA U14 Championship): Kongsbergers

Mar 10 – Cascade Crest 50K: Mt Bachelor

Mar 10 (11?) – Nordic Challenge: Mt Spokane

All races to be listed in PNSA google calendar. Alan will send a calendar out and requests all coaches to complete with race list.

## **JN 2018 Arrangements**

Schedule – Mar 4-8, but dates are still being finalized due to reduction in length from 6 to 5 days.

Trip leader - NCC supports Alan as trip leader, Jeff made motion to approve, Dan seconded. Motion approved. (NCC #2017-12)

Housing – Alan secured one big house that sleeps 60, 20 min from SoHo race venue.

Transportation – Ideally use team vans. Commitments made from Mt Spokane (1), BEA (1-2), Mt Bach (1-2) and Methow (1). PNSA will pay each club supplying a van \$500 plus gas from home.

Food - Erin and Paul Biskup plan to cook again, contingent as always on Sam making the team. We should have a back-up in case they can't go.

Coaches - Selection will take place at the fall meeting.

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## **Summer 2017 camps**

Fire and Ice, MBSEF: June 10-14

REG, US Ski and Snowboard invite only: June 17-24 (Lydia, Novie)

Trout Lake, BEA: July 12-16

U16 Camp, US Ski and Snowboard invite: July 23-30 (Novie, Fiona, Gretta, Izzy, Annie, Walker, Hunter, Will, Travis), Dan and Laura coaches

California, BEA: August 16-20

Methow, MVN: August 9-13

## **USSA Coaches Seminar and Certification Workshop, Park City, Oct 2017**

Certification Conference Oct 24-26

Coaching Symposium Oct 27-29

If enough PNSA skiers go we can save costs by sharing lodging and perhaps transportation from the Salt Lake City airport. We have applied for financial support from PNSEF.

## **PNSEF support and applications**

PNSEF has ear-marked \$5200 for JN's support and \$4,000 for coaches education (the October Coaches Seminar) and \$1,000 for scholarships. Coaches need to encourage more athletes to request support. Applications for support are to be completed by New Years. Projects that qualify include JN's, REG, any invitational camp.

Nordic needs to figure out a way to contribute to this fund. One idea is to hold a parent social after one of our JNQs. Alan asked coaches to brainstorm on other ideas for fund raising. Thank you notes from the athletes who receive scholarships is greatly appreciated and encouraged.

## **Nordic Rocks**

This new program was awarded to 3 schools in PNSA (Sandpoint, Ellensburg and Leavenworth) in 2016-17. While program was highly appreciated, the equipment had some significant flaws and the binding system was difficult to use and was met with a lot of resistance by the PE teacher at one of the schools.

Program was brainchild of CXC who have made upgrades to both bindings and skis. If any other clubs are interested in this program for their schools, they should contact Bruce Manske, [bruce.manske@cxcskiing.org](mailto:bruce.manske@cxcskiing.org), 608-344-6814. Money for other programs is also available from the US Ski and Snowboard foundation and they are open to suggestions.

## **Strategy Session**

Leveraging JN success - Alan kicked off this discussion talking about our JN17 success and how we might leverage the success and passion of our U16 girls. The athletes this past season had better fitness than in years past, they did not appear to be over-trained as in past years. For the girls, Novie is not only a highly successful racer, she is a good role model. The athletes this year had higher confidence in their ability to compete. As coaches we need to think of ways to remove the perceived barriers of the past that diminished athlete confidence.

Attraction/Retention of Athletes – Alan reminded coaches of the importance of focusing on all skiers, especially middle abilities, not just the best skiers. He also reviewed the Lester Keller Big 3

for retention success: Fun, Sense of accomplishment, Friends. Similarly, Luke Bodensteiner said a successful program is one where “kids having fun learning to ski fast with their friends”. USST Head Coach Chris Grover’s priorities are: first cultivating a passion for skiing and racing; second, instilling the idea and habit of year-round training; and third structuring specific workouts.

Training - the right amount and the right way is critical for our young athletes. Alan referenced the video and writings of Stephen Seiler, which have previously been shared with the NCC by email. Seiler’s focus is not on using physiology theory to prescribe training, but rather to show how successful endurance athletes actually train. For some of his presentation Seiler uses a simplified 3-zone scheme similar to our 5 training levels, in which Seiler’s Easy corresponds to Levels 1 and 2, Medium corresponds to Level 3, and Hard corresponds to Levels 4 and 5. This distinction is important to keep in mind when reading the literature. The best cross country skiers, including juniors as well as older skiers, plus the best marathoners, 10 and 5k runners, cyclists, and rowers spend most of their workouts and most of their workout time in the Easy zone, and more of that in Level 1 than in Level 2, and relatively little time in the Medium zone. Seiler calls Medium intensity (Level 3) the “black hole” because it is hard enough to be tiring but not hard enough to be effective training. In addition Alan mentioned research suggesting that the acidity associated with lactate production in Level 3 (lactate above around 2 mmol/l) inhibits growth of mitochondria and capillaries. Seiler points out that without discipline, athletes tend to go too hard when they should be training at an easy intensity, and then are too tired to go hard enough to make their hard training as effective as it could be. It was suggested that many of our athletes do not have a good sense of what level they are actually training at, and that we coaches could do a better job training them to use nose breathing as a marker of the divide between easy and medium intensity.

Seiler Training Conclusions:

75-85% of workouts and 90% of training time easy, mostly Level 1.

The middle zone (L3, Seiler’s Zone 2) 2-4 mmol/l is a Black Hole, hard enough to be tiring but not hard enough for good training effect.

For hard training Seiler’s research suggests that 4x8 min intervals at 90% of HRmax is more effective than shorter and harder intervals.

Seiler did not find that top athletes are using significant periodization.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm.