

## 2 - PNSA / U.S. Ski & Snowboard ALPINE PROGRAM

### How To Become A Competitor

Anyone who is interested in ski racing can join U.S. Ski & Snowboard. Once you have made this decision, you can join online at <https://usskiandsnowboard.org/membership> You can print a copy of the Alpine Competition Guide at <http://alpine.usskiteam.com/alpine-programs/officials/rules> and a copy of your license through the [myUSSA](#) link found on the U.S. Ski & Snowboard website. This license allows you to compete in sanctioned PNSA / U.S. Ski & Snowboard competitions. A schedule of events is available on the PNSA website at <http://www.pnsa.org/calendar>.

It is also advisable that you join a local ski club or training program that prepares racers for U.S. Ski & Snowboard competition. Such programs exist at most ski areas around the Pacific Northwest, and offer assistance in scheduling, on-snow training, physical conditioning, travel arrangements and many other benefits. The PNSA office will have information on programs in your area, and they are available on the PNSA website at <http://www.pnsa.org/clubs>.

If you are 11 years of age or younger, you will be joining a Youth Ski League (YSL) program (also known as Buddy Werner / Mitey Mite programs). These are "learn-to-ski-race" programs that teach the basics in ski competition and technique. Racers 12 -20 years old join the Junior level of racing. This is the "classification" level that ranks racers in the United States. Also, any racer 21 years and older may join the PNSA Masters racing program.

If your aspirations are to become the best racer you can be, even compete at international and Olympic races, then you should join U.S. Ski & Snowboard / PNSA. U.S. Ski & Snowboard / PNSA racers are the only racers recognized by the United States Ski Team, the International Ski Federation and the US Olympic Committee.

### Competitor Classification

There are three types of *competition classifications* in PNSA / U.S. Ski & Snowboard racing: Age, Ability and Masters. Age classification (U8 - Senior) races are based on age classes / groups of athletes, whereas Ability classification races are based on rankings in the National Points System (U14 – Senior). Masters classification races are for the 21 and older athlete who seeks recreational competition without scoring to the National Points System. The three types of competitions are further defined below.

#### Age Classification (Age-Class) Racing

Age Classification is based on your age as of December 31st of each season. Competitions of this type are open to all athletes who meet the age-class criteria for the event.

Category	Age (as of 12/31)				
		2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Seniors	21 and older	1999	2000	2001	2002
U21 (Jr.)	20	2000	2001	2002	2003
	19	2001	2002	2003	2004
U19 (Jr.)	18	2002	2003	2004	2005
	17	2003	2004	2005	2006
	16	2004	2005	2006	2007
U16 (Jr.)	15	2005	2006	2007	2008
	14	2006	2007	2008	2009
U14 (Buddy Werner -YSL)	13	2007	2008	2009	2010
	12	2008	2009	2010	2011
U12 (YSL)	11	2009	2010	2011	2012
	10	2010	2011	2012	2013
U10 (YSL)	9	2011	2012	2013	2014
	8	2012	2013	2014	2015
U8 (YSL)	7 and younger	2013	2014	2015	2016

## Youth Ski League – Buddy Werner

These competitions are for the youngest athletes – ages 5 to 11 (U8-U12). They offer a fun introduction to ski competition for the beginning racer.

### Evergreen Cup

This is the development level of PNSA racing and is open to all U14-Senior competitors. Athletes are introduced to the National Points System to handicap and rank them among other racers in the United States

### U14 Series

PNSA's Series for athletes entering Junior Competition at the U14 age who are interested in qualifying for the Western Region U14 Championships (**Covid-19 Cancelled for 20/21 Season**). The U14 Series is a season long series consisting of 3 SL / 3 GS / and 3 SG races. The series will crown divisional U14 champions as well as serving as a pipeline to the final NW Cup race of the year for the top 15 men and women in the season long series.

### Northwest Cup/U16 Series

This is PNSA's premier level of U.S. Ski & Snowboard divisional racing and is open to U16 and older. The Northwest Cup series serves as the divisional trophy series, crowning the division's overall champions as well as team champions in the U16 and U19/21 age classes. The Northwest Cup is the elite level in the PNSA, from which racers qualify to regional, national, and foreign FIS competitions by improving their ranking in the National Points system.

## **U.S. Ski & Snowboard / PNSA Competition Ladder**

Below is a brief outline of the various FIS / U.S. Ski & Snowboard / PNSA competition levels:

### **FIS/U.S. Ski & Snowboard / Ability Class**

FIS International: Olympic Games, World Championships, World Cup, Continental Cup  
U.S. Ski & Snowboard National: NorAm Series, U.S. Senior & U16 & U19 Nationals, Collegiate (NCAA & USCSA)  
U.S. Ski & Snowboard Regional: Regional FIS & Regional Championships (U21, U19, U16 & U14)

### **Age Class**

PNSA: Youth Ski League/Mitey Mite (U12 & younger) Buddy Werner Championships (U12 only), Evergreen Cup (U14 & older), U14 Series (U14 Only), NW Cup/ U16 Series (U16 and older)

## **PNSA / Masters Racing - Recreational**

There are 12 Classes of Master Racers with each Class based on age as of December 31st of each year:

Class 1 →	21-29	Class 5 →	45-49	Class 9 →	65-69
Class 2 →	30-34	Class 6 →	50-54	Class 10 →	70-74
Class 3 →	35-39	Class 7 →	55-59	Class 11 →	75-79
Class 4 →	40-44	Class 8 →	60-64	Class 12 →	80 and over

# PNSA / U.S. Ski & Snowboard Nordic PROGRAM

## Competitors

Most races in PNSA are open to skiers of all abilities. If you have never raced and want to give it a try, choose a race, sign up, and go for it! That's how most of us got started. It's a great way to challenge yourself, have fun, and meet new friends. You can find information about races and how to enter them on the PNSA race calendar (<http://www.pnsa.org/calendar/nordic>), from the host club, or perhaps from your own ski club.

A U.S. Ski & Snowboard membership is required to enter any U.S. Ski & Snowboard race. See the next chapter of this manual for information about memberships. During the 2019- 20 season there are three U.S. Ski & Snowboard meets in the PNSA division:

the Sunnyside Challenge at Mount Bachelor, OR, January 11 – 12, 2021;

the Race of the Methow in Winthrop, WA, January 30-31, 2021;

and the Mount Spokane Nordic Cup at Mount Spokane, WA, February 12-14, 2021.

Other than the three meets listed above, you do not need to be a member of PNSA or U.S. Ski & Snowboard to enter most cross-country races in the PNSA division. These races are the responsibility of the host club, which determines entry requirements and fees.

Even if you do not need a PNSA and U.S. Ski & Snowboard membership to enter the races in which you plan to compete, please consider joining these organizations: your membership and your dues will support racing in PNSA (especially junior development) and in the entire USA.

If your aspirations are to become the best racer you can be, and even to compete at international and Olympic races, then you should join U.S. Ski & Snowboard / PNSA. U.S. Ski & Snowboard / PNSA racers are the only racers recognized by the United States Ski Team, the International Ski Federation and the US Olympic Committee.

## Competitor Classification

In U.S. Ski & Snowboard races junior competitors are grouped by their age on December 31 of the current season. Non-U.S. Ski & Snowboard races are free to use any categories that they prefer, but they often use the U.S. Ski & Snowboard brackets as well. U.S. Ski & Snowboard uses the "U"- system with 2-year brackets. For example, U16 in the 2020-21 season means that the racer was born in 2006 or 2005 and is 14 or 15 years old on December 31, 2020.

The following table summarizes the brackets for each birth year for the next four seasons:

Category	Age (as of 12/31)				
		20221	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Seniors	20 and older	2000	2001	2002	2003
U20	19	2001	2002	2003	2004
	18	2002	2003	2004	2005
U18	17	2003	2004	2005	2006
	16	2004	2005	2006	2007
U16	15	2005	2006	2007	2008
	14	2006	2007	2008	2009
U14	13	2007	2008	2009	2010
	12	2008	2009	2010	2011
U12	11	2009	2010	2011	2012
	10	2010	2011	2012	2013
U10	9	2011	2012	2013	2014
	8	2012	2013	2014	2015
U8	7 and younger	2013	2014	2015	2016

## Coaches, Officials, and Volunteers

In addition to racing memberships, U.S. Ski & Snowboard offers special memberships and resources for alpine and cross-country coaches, race officials, and volunteers. U.S. Ski & Snowboard offers training and certification for coaches and officials, as well as insurance and other benefits for all three categories. For details see the U.S. Ski & Snowboard alpine officials page <https://usskiandsnowboard.org/sport-development/officials-development/alpine-officials>: the cross-country officials page at <https://usskiandsnowboard.org/sport-development/officials-development/nordic-officials-judges> as well as the membership page at <https://usskiandsnowboard.org/membership>.

If you enjoy alpine or cross-country skiing and racing, please consider getting involved as a coach, an official, or a volunteer at a PNSA race. Coaches will benefit from getting a U.S. Ski & Snowboard Level 100 Coach Certification. Race organizers will benefit from you becoming a Level 1 Technical Delegate. (The Technical Delegate is U.S. Ski & Snowboard's representative to a U.S. Ski & Snowboard race, but Technical Delegate training also provides lots of information for race organizers on how to put on a successful event). All will benefit from helping put on events that bring out the best in all of us.