

2010 USSA Congress

The annual USSA cross country meetings took place in Park City, May 13- 15th, at the Center for Excellence. There was a good turnout other than the fact that there were only 5 women present. Eileen Carey's (MWSC) meeting on Friday morning geared towards getting more women involved in all aspects of the sport, generated some good ideas which she will be recapping soon.

A roundtable was held on Thursday evening which had Yurey Gusev (CXC) presenting a proposal for a NDS (National Development System) to the group. Much discussion ensued with pros and cons, but the bottom line is something needs to be changed within the country's structure to reach the highest levels. A new proposal was generated from this discussion which was presented at the final committee meeting and was approved in concept. This new NDS essentially follows the exact model that has been in place for the Alpine division for 12 years and has seen much success. Details will be formulated and presented to the board this summer. More information is outlined below.

USSA committee chair will be putting out the full meeting minutes so please check USSA and NENSA websites for those in the coming weeks. My report will serve to just recount the items I felt were deadline oriented or highlights of the meetings.

Important Reminders to athletes: Coaches please encourage your athletes to sign up!

1. Renew USSA and FIS licenses by June 15th to accrue points. USSA membership is now open online at ussa.org
2. Note that foreign coaches or officials need extra leadtime for clearing the NCSI (criminal background checks). All coaches/officials are subject to the background check every 3 (?) years. A prompt on the online screen will alert you when you are due for this.
3. Be consistent with entering athletes names across USSA, FIS an race entries. This will improve the accuracy of the results and points lists.
4. Two events will be scored as double NRL points on the US calendar: US Cross Country Nationals and USSA SuperTour finals.

The OPA cup opportunities (for athletes and club coaches) will be expanded form 2 weeks to 7 weeks in 2011. USST will be putting out suggested criteria for attending these trips. Non USST spots will not be funded by USST but can provide opportunities for gaining race experience in Europe.

NCCSEF resurrected. The National Cross Country Skier Education Foundation now under the direction of David Knoop is expanding. Funding will become available to help athletes and coaches with Euro trips, events (Nat J2 camp, etc) and other requests. They are working on formulating an application process. Grants are not based on financial need- to difficult to discern accurate reporting of prospects...

Some of the events that are likely partnerships:

- a. REG/NEG camps
- b. Individual skier grants for PG's
- c. Chartered air travel for euro trips?

- d. J1 scando trip
- e. Calendars- win/win for clubs to raise money as well as NCCSEF

Dave reiterated that it is key to the success of any fundraising program for donors to hear about programs on a continual basis. Athletes can send update, organizations too.

Important Note about Homologation:

FIS is thinking about making it mandatory to have a homologated site to be considered for scoring. Any site that have been thinking about homologating in order to host events, may want to move forward. The homologation manual can be found on the FIS website and the NENSA website- www.nensa.net

USSA Coaches Education

- a. L100 has over 100 certified coaches
- b. USSA will roll out L200 in September 2010
 - a. L200 will include video format, dartfish TV, field testing, applied training (workouts), nutrition, and psychology. “Winning runs” videos and COE (center for Excellence) TV is also being utilized. www.Dartfish.tv

1. Rules changes:

- a. U23 World Selections at US Nationals; Best of 2 of 4 races. Will be scored off of sprint qualifier ranking not heats. (For U23 only- Junior remain scored off of the heats).
- b. Junior National rely format change: OJ/J1 relay distance changes to 3 x 3 km from 3 x 5km. Intension is to have skiers stay closer together in pack to have more head to head opportunity.
- c. Technique schedule change for junior Nationals: Now alternates disciplines instead of having back to back classic or skate races. 2011: skate sprint/CL mass start/skate individ start/ CL relay. This will be rotated each year.
- d. Points criteria for World Championship Selection lowered: These are single race points profiles.
 - i. World Junior women- 75 pts
 - ii. World Junior men – 65 points
 - iii. World U23 women – 60
 - iv. World junior men – 50
- e. To calculate USSA points penalty at all NRL races except for Junior Nationals, it will now be based on the discipline points profile lists (sprint and distance), not the overall lists. Junior Nationals will remain off of the overall to allow junior to continue building their profiles.
- f. **No relays (4 x relays and no team sprints) to be scored to the NRL. Can still be scheduled but will not be scored.**

2. New Proposals

- a. Voted on to **Test** format for a SuperTour; 2 scored events in one day.
 - i. Sprint Qual in am; distance race or mini prologue in afternoon
 - ii. Sprint qual in am; another sprint qual of other technique in afternoon.

- b. Proposed lowering the minimum USSA points base because some skiers are scoring lower FIS points than USSA points. Current USSA minimum was 60 men/ 85 women. Changed to 50 men/70 women
- c. NDS proposal

Proposed USSA Cross Country National Development System (NDS)

By Yuriy Gusev

The National Development System is a project-based system that provides an interface between the U.S. Ski Team and the Regions, Clubs, Academies and Programs throughout the country. The System provides projects that are nationally/regionally driven and nationally/regionally implemented through regional USSA staff, U.S. Ski Team staff, regional Athlete Development Directors and club coaches, in order to provide leadership and direction for a clear path for achievement in the sport of cross country ski racing at the levels below the U.S. Ski Team. It would essentially be a Junior National Team.

Implementation of the National Development System is based on the following principles:

- The NDS (National Development System) cannot and should not attempt to provide full training for the athletes.
- The NDS will provide talented young athletes in J2/J1 age group periodic and systematic opportunities to train and compete with top athletes in their peer group.
- A project-based (camp/event) system will be a vehicle to integrate the Regions, Clubs, Academies and Programs throughout the country.
- A common partnership between the full-time USSA staff, U.S. Ski Team staff, regional Athlete Development Directors and the top coaches in the Clubs, Academies and Programs will produce a systematic broader based program, for athletes attempting to emerge to the U.S. Ski Team to achieve international athletic excellence and will more effectively utilize resources in the community.

NDS will provide a clear performance/talent driven path to achievement in the sport of cross country ski racing and the NDS is critical in this mission.

It was determined that CXC and NENSA are the most likely regions to implement this first. NENSA has most of the steps already in place with the existing pipeline of BKL festival, J2/EHS camp, Elite and Development teams, REG camps and line to the NEG camps. A budget with outside funding would be put into place. Most importantly, each region will have flexibility to make this model work within the nuances of their regions.

Proposed Timeline identified at the meeting:

1. Proposal will go for a vote to the USSA sports committee to move forward on getting system in place in the regions that are ready to accomplish it this year (Central and East)
2. July 15 – establish budget draft, NDS projects for 2010-2011 and athlete selection criteria (can be different by region with assistance of USST)
3. By July finalize business and funding model

4. Present to Luke and upper USSA management group
5. Identify regional Athlete Development Director/Coach by August 1
6. Announce National Development system by August 15th
7. Put funding in place by September 1 (outside funding sources)
8. Announce athletes on September 1
9. Get uniforms by October 1 (through USSA and Bjorn D)- uniforms would be club oriented and possibly have a USSA logo on them?

This concept has many details to be worked out but was met with enthusiasm and as a step in a positive direction to not only expand the pipeline, but give recognition to the athletes and clubs that are producing the next generation of WC and Olympic level athletes.

General discussion

Discussed the need for more women's only camps, clinics and to get more women involved in not only the athlete side but coaching and officiating as well.