



EASTERN REGION RECOMMENDATIONS ON YOUTH AGE CHANGE

The purpose of this paper is to clarify and ease some of the concern about the upcoming age change and how this will impact our Eastern racers. The Eastern Children's Committee has spent many hours over the past year on this topic and have prepared a plan that we believe follows the direction and philosophy of the Eastern Region on the importance of skill development – not points profiles.

In our current J3 structure our Eastern thirteen and fourteen year olds race primarily in their own age class*. With the change from J3 to U16 this structure should remain essentially the same. The U16 age group (fourteen and fifteen year olds) should continue to compete against their own age class*. A suggested season long pipeline should be:

- U-16 State Series
- U-16 State Championships or other state qualifying series for post season races.
- U-16 Marriott J3 Eastern Region Championships (top group from state's)
- U-16 Eastern Region Finals (next tier down from state's)
- U-16 Talent ID Project (selected from top tier of J3 Eastern Championships)
- U-16 Am-Can (Joint project with Alpine Canada, next tier from J3 Champs)

Proper athlete management – as always – is critical as the maximum number of recommended race starts for the U-16 age group is 18 – including all Championships and post season races.

USSA Points: In 2012-13, U-16 racers will be allowed to develop a USSA points profile. However, it is the recommendation of the Children's committee that the value of points be de-emphasized as much as possible in favor of Skill Development. Points will not be used for seeding in any USSA Post Season events, nor will any selections be made based on points. It is highly recommended that each state adopt a similar policy for all U-16 races. Post Season and Championship races will be seeded randomly within groups as has been the policy for many years for J3 events. 2nd runs will be Flip 30.

The new U14 age group (twelve and thirteen year olds) formerly J4's will continue to compete against their own age classes* The curriculum for the U14's should include a large part skill development through skills assessment activities and events. Please note, the maximum number of starts for this age group is 14, including all Championships and post season races.

- U-14 State Council Series
- U-14 State Championships or other qualifying series for post season races.
- U-14 Marriott J4 Eastern Region Championships (top group from state's)
- U-14 Can Am (Joint Project with Alpine Canada, selected from J4 Champs)

The U12 (ten and eleven year olds) will continue to compete against their own age class in their own individual states, with a heavy emphases on skills and skill development. Please note, the maximum number of starts for this age group is about 10-12 starts per season.

The basis for all youth age groups should be focused on skill development through fundamentals and age appropriate training. We strongly encourage programs to take into consideration appropriate train to race ratios and utilize the eastern skills assessment tools. Detailed information is available on our website www.ussaeast.com

* with the exception of some states allowing them a few opportunities to race with older or younger athletes in order to manage their individual race needs and calendaring issues.



U. S. Ski and Snowboard Association - Eastern Region
The National Governing Body for Olympic Skiing and Snowboarding