Northern Vermont Council

2025-26 Rules

INTRODUCTION

The Northern Vermont Council is the governing body for children's-level ski racing in Northern Vermont. The Council is composed of Program Directors and ski coaches from all seven ski racing programs (Burke Mountain Academy, Cochrans, Green Mountain Valley School, Mad River Glen, Mt. Mansfield Academy, Jay Peak, Smugglers Notch).
The purpose of the Council is to:

- Establish new and innovative approaches to ski racing in Northern Vermont that will be both beneficial and fun for all racers,
- Develop proposals and formulate recommendations for presentation to the Vermont Alpine Racing Association (VARA) and VARA's Alpine Competition Committees,
- Discuss and resolve specific race or racer-related issues,
- Establish the race schedule for the season,
- To review Council, VARA, and US Ski & Snowboard rules and regulations governing ski racing and to formulate appropriate rules and regulations for the various age classes and all Council-sponsored races.

COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

Naga Kusumi-Chair
Burke Mountain Academy (BMA), Diann Roffe-CDC Chair
Cochran's (COCH), Andrew Wagner
Green Mountain Valley School (GMVS), Megan Mikell
Mad River (MRSC), Jim Komarmi
Mt. Mansfield Academy (MMA), Tayler Mikell
Jay Peak (JPSC), Tamsin Durand
Smuggler's Notch(SNSC), Ryan Sheredy

VARA BOD Representatives

Taylor Mikell-President, Ryan Sheredy-Secretary, Lori Furrer, Diann Roffe-CDC Chair, Jere Brophy, Tracy Keller,

VARA Children's Development Committee:

Diann Roffe (BMA-CDC Chair), Ryan Sheredy (SNSC), Naga Kusumi (GMVS)

VARA Development Committee:

Thomas Erhard (BMA), Tim Curran (GMVS), Lorant Gudasz (MMA)

Memberships

All racers must hold a current United States Ski Association (USS) Competitor Membership and VARA membership. Application forms for these memberships can be found on the following websites: USS (www.usskiandsnowboard.org) and VARA (www.vara.org). In order to be considered in any VARA qualifying or selection process, you must be a current member of VARA. Qualifying points will not be retroactive for late renewals.

Defining Age Class.

In keeping with US Ski & Snowboard rules, a racer's age is determined by how old the racer is on December 31st of the current racing season. In the 2025-26 season, age classes are as follows:

U18+: 2009 or earlier
U16: 20010, 2011
U14: 2012, 2013
U12: 2014, 2015
U10: 2016, 2017
U8: 2018, 2019*

*Athletes must be U8 YOB 2018 to race in NVC/VARA races

USS Alpine Equipment Guide

For current equipment rules, see the Alpine Equipment Guide on the USSS Alpine Rules webpage.

Parent/Spectator Clause

Any issues parents or spectators may have involving rules set by VARA, The Race Organizing Committee, Alpine Officials, the Jury, the race site or USS while at a sanctioned Council event and VARA State Championships must be handled by the appropriate coach before being brought to the Race Organizer, Alpine Officials/Jury, registration volunteers or VARA. The athlete's coach must represent the competitor regarding the issue, not his/her parents.

Coaching Tickets

Coaches must be VARA and USS members to obtain race site hill privileges. If races are happening simultaneously on the same day then host sites must account for the need for more coach's tickets. General recommendation but NOT less than the following: > 4 kids = 2 coaches, > 8 Kids = 3 coaches, >12 Kids = 4 coaches, >16 Kids = 5 coaches, >20 kids = 6 coaches. Coach's rosters must be sent to the race secretary prior to each race.

Petitioning Athletes

Ski Down: If an athlete is approved to ski down in an age group they will follow Council and VARA rules for that age group. The following conditions apply:

- Permission must first be approved by the Northern Vermont Council with a petition submitted by the representative program.
- For an athlete to be considered for skiing down an age class at the State level, they must first be approved by their Council. A request in writing must be submitted to the VARA executive Director by the Council Chair no later than December 15, 2023. The VARA

Children's Development Committee will review the request and respond to the Council Chair by December 22, 2023.
For more information on Petitioning Athletes see 2025 VARA U14 Rules.

Racing Up

By special approval of the Northern Vermont Council, permission may be granted for a second-year U12 with exceptional performances to ski up an age class. Petition requests need to be submitted by the fall NVC meeting by the representative program. Approval would be based on exceptional performance during the previous year and for an athlete deemed unlikely to have competition within their peer group in NVC races. The request will then be submitted to the VARA CDC, then the VARA Executive Director, then the Eastern Director, and finally USS, Park City.

U14 AGE CLASS

The U14 age level provides non-scored competition for racers aged 12-13 (born in 2012-2013). VARA is the governing body of U14 racing in Vermont. VARA will schedule Tri-Council races, State Super-G events, and the VARA U14 State Championships. U14 Council races and State Championships must be USS sanctioned events. Sanctioned races must be held on homologated trails.

RACES:

Races: NVC will run two timed runs each race day for SL and GS events. The series should include giant slalom, slalom, and super-g events.

Seeding for Runs-U14: The start order for the 1st run will be determined by a random draw conducted by the event organizer.

Second Run Start Order: Seeding for the second run will be the reverse order of the first run. All finishers, DNF's, and DSQ's will be included in the reversed start order. This includes dual events.

Number and Format: Recommended: **2** giant slaloms, 2 slaloms, and 1 Super-G. NVC will run 2 SG runs on the SG race day (weather permitting): 1 untimed training run, 1 timed race run. NVC will use 'age appropriate' U14 slalom gates (60" OTS height, 27mm thickness) for all NVC U14 slalom events.

Timing of Runs: Racers are individually timed on each run. All runs are electronically timed, with two back up timing systems always used in accordance with US Ski & Snowboard timing guidelines.

AWARDS: Based on the combined time of the two runs in slalom and giant slalom, and one run in SG. Awards will be presented to the top 10 boys and top 10 girls. Each individual run placing and the combined time placing will count toward council standings. Super-G will count as one score. Each duals race will have one council score (combined result). Awards are the responsibility of the individual clubs and must be presented within 30 min of completion of the event. Ribbons may not be presented as awards.

RACE ENTRY and FEES: Race Entries are completed by parents at their coach's direction on AdminSki. Programs must also provide NVC with a complete list of athletes and coaches for each age group as well. The host mountain may charge up to $ 45.00 per racer for SL/GS,

$65.00 for SG. Fees are payable to the host mountain or club. These fees do not include any necessary online surcharges required by the registration website.

SUBMITTING TO USS: NVC clubs hosting events must have all races 'coded' prior to the event, and results must be submitted to US Ski & Snowboard and VARA post-event.

Protocol for Parents: NVC has asked that parents be racer supporters on race days. In order to allow each racer some quiet time in the starting gate to mentally prepare for his or her run, to develop his/her own personal pre-race routine, and to receive any last minute instructions from the coaches, it is important that the start area be as least distracting to the racer as possible. For this reason, parents are not allowed in the start area.

Parents, racers, and coaches are not allowed to enter timing buildings for any reason during a race. Only those individuals authorized by the host mountain are allowed in the timing building.

COUNCIL Race

VARA will delegate to the three state councils (North, Mid, and South) the authority to administer their respective rules leading up to the seeding of VARA U14 State Championships with the exception of race starts, scoring and gate recommendations.

The maximum number of races within a Council will be five. Councils must follow all USS and VARA procedures for running a fair and legal race. Council Chairs need to have a tentative schedule to the VARA office by June 1 and a confirmed schedule by October 15th.

Athletes must compete in a minimum of two (2) Council series **races designated for state standings,** to be eligible for VARA U14 Championships. (This does not include open events or camps.) If less than four races are held, the participation requirement will be reduced to 1 race.. In the case of an injured athlete who cannot race in the requisite number of Council races, the athlete's coach can petition the Council to be rewarded to race in State Championships. A petitioning athlete must have a note from a doctor to explain their absence from the NVC races. Each club will have one vote. The letter should be directed to the Council Chair. If an athlete, due to injury, is not able to complete the required council races to compete in states. They can seek approval from the council chair to race in the VARA State events. Once the council chair receives a request, that request will be reviewed by the VARA CDC, if approved, the athlete will be inserted at the end of council seeding.

VARA U14 TRI-COUNCIL SERIES

This series is open to all eligible U14 Vara athletes. The series is meant to promote head-to-head racing between all 3 councils throughout the season. Entry fee is $65.

Registration process: Registration is on a first come first serve basis with 2nd year U14 athletes having an opportunity to register 24 hours prior to opening registration for all U14s. Field size max recommendation is 120. Running order: 1st run will be a random draw. Seeding for the second run will be the reverse order of the first run. All finishers, DNF's, and DSQ's will be included in the reversed start order.

S6: Jan 16 W SL
Pico: Jan 17 M SL
Burke Mountain: Feb 12 M GS and Feb 13 W GS
TBA: Feb 23 SG

VARA U14 STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

Speed Event:

Okemo Mountain: February 27 and March 2, 2026 SG M/W

Field size Max 120 each gender. Athletes MUST race/participate in their council SG event (can be controlled training, camp, or race) that will be completed before intents for states. Councils will submit intents for SG race prior to registration opening. Intents for the state SG will come from council chairs and will verify participation in council SG event and seeding*.
*Councils should also do intents for Council SG Event to verify training has occurred at a club level. This supports athlete development, safety and skill building.

Tech Events

Stratton Mountain: March 6 - 9, 2026

This is an OPEN state Championships for VARA council members . Boys and girls will race within genders.
*REG Criteria for VT states - Athletes must compete in a minimum of two (2) Council series **races designated for state standings,** to be eligible for VARA U14 Championships. (This does not include open events or camps.) If less than four races are held, the participation requirement will be reduced to 1 race.

Registration Process - Seed by council standings, open Registration with council submitting registration/standings order AND intents.
Seeding of NVC athletes to the VARA U14 State Championships will be based on the final NVC Council Standings after the last NVC Council event. The scoring will be based on 1 less than 1⁄2 (50%-1, round down) of the racers lowest place points. NVC will score 2 SLs, 2 GSs and 1 SG. If the season scoring total is an odd number of runs, the number of runs taken into consideration will be rounded down. Ties will be broken externally by taking the next best result.

USS EASTERN U14 CHAMPIONSHIPS

Sunday River, ME: March 19- March 22, 2026

Vermont's quota is 29 Girls, 28 Boys for 2026. The Vermont U14 Championship Team will be determined as follows (this quota includes council automatics): Selection to the Eastern U14 Championships is determined by scoring the best single result from the runs and combined places of the VARA U14 State Championship events.

- TIES: broken externally by taking the next best results for ranking and selection of the team.
- AUTOMATICS: Each council will have 2 automatic spots (1G/1B) to the Eastern U14 Championships.
- AUTOMATIC SEEDING:
- RACE REQUIREMENTS: To attend the Eastern U14 Championships, the athletes are required to compete in the majority (>than 1⁄2) of races at VARA U14 State Championships unless injured.

EASTERN U14 FINALS

Berkshire East, MA: MARCH 12 – MARCH 15, 2026
Any athletes not attending Eastern Regional Championships are eligible.

U14 CAN-AM

Sugarloaf, ME: March 30 – April 3, 2026
It is an Eastern quota of 60 athletes (30G/30B). Selection procedure can be found in the USS Eastern Handbook Eastern Region Handbook

U12 AGE CLASS

The U12 age level provides non-scored competition for racers aged 10-11 (born in 2014-2015).

Equipment: Per FIS and USS rules, it is the athlete's responsibility to ski, train and race on appropriate equipment. Helmets manufactured for ski racing are mandatory for all training and race events, per USSS rules, soft ear helmets are not permitted for SG or GS training and racing. GS suits are not allowed at the U12 level in Northern Vermont Council races. Racers must be in a jacket and full length warm up pants (ie no visible GS Suit).
In the U12/U10/U8 level race skis must be worn by the athlete to the start. No additional skis can be carried up the lift or left at the start for their use.

Equipment - Helmet: *(Per USS comp guide 2025)*
Helmets designed and manufactured for the particular event of ski racing being contested are required for all competitors and forerunners in all scored and non-scored events, and official training. Helmets must bear a CE mark and conform to recognized and appropriate standards such as CEH.Din 1077, ASTM F2040, SNELL S98 or RS 98.

Athletes U14 and older, including masters, must use helmets that meet the FIS standards for all sanctioned GS, SG, DH, P, and K competitions.

In Kombi competitions, athletes must use the helmets designed for GS, SG, or DH. Helmets must cover the head and ears. The helmets shall have no spoilers, nor protruding parts. Protective features integral to the event being contested, such as chin guards on SL helmets are permitted**. Soft ear protection is only permitted for helmets used in SL (they are not allowed in PSL).**

RACE ENTRY and FEES:

Race Entries are completed by parents at their coach's direction on AdminSki. Programs must also provide NVC with a complete list of athletes and coaches for each age group as well. The host mountain may charge up to $ 35.00 per racer for SL/GS. Fees are payable to the host mountain or club. These fees do not include any necessary online surcharges required by the registration website.

AWARDS: Awards will be given based on single run results, not combined time. Awards will be for Top 10 girls, and Top 10 boys each run.

U12 PROJECTS::
SKILLS: VARA recommends that all U12s have a working knowledge of technical skills identified by USSS as benchmark skills for their age group. A VARA skills day will be held to allow athletes from all three councils to come together and learn from different coaches.
Quechee Skills Day: January 30, 2026
TERRAIN: VARA recommends that all U12s be introduced to a U12 terrain element day. Athletes will use GS skis or longer and work on terrain, longer radius turn shape, gliding, and jumping. This is a terrain-focused development project introducing a variety of elements to enhance adaptability, skills, and tactics. Participants will work in groups and with different VARA

coaches. Participants will meet U12 VARA athletes from different councils. Registration will open for 24 hours for the second year U12s and then open for the rest of the U12s.
Okemo Terrain Camp: February 6, 2026

VARA U12 TRI-COUNCIL SERIES:The Tri-Council race will allow all councils to compete together for a U12 head-to-head competition within the state and provide a statewide year-end opportunity. The U12 Tri-Council will be one day of SL racing for U12 girls and one day of SL racing for U12 boys.
Tri Council Girls SL at Okemo, March 13-14, 2026
Tri Council Boys SL at Okemo, March 15-16, 2026

U10/8 AGE CLASS

The U10/8 age level provides non-scored competition for racers aged 7-10 (born in 2016-2018). VARA's minimum age for sanctioned races is 7.

Equipment**:** Per FIS and USS rules, it is the athlete's responsibility to ski, train and race on appropriate equipment.Helmets manufactured for ski racing are mandatory for all training and race events, per USSS rules, soft ear helmets are not permitted for GS training and racing.The NVC strongly recommends the use of only one pair of skis. No slalom skis are necessary. GS suits are not allowed at the U10 level. Racers must race in a jacket and full length warm-up pants on the bottom. No GS suit can be shown while racing. In the U12/U10/U8 level race skis must be worn by the athlete to the start. No additional skis can be carried up the lift or left at the start for their use
Gates: Stubbies, and 27mm 60 inch height (not including base) gates will be utilized.

RACE ENTRY and FEES: Race Entries are completed by parents at their coach's direction on AdminSki. Programs must also provide NVC with a complete list of athletes and coaches for each age group as well. The host mountain may charge up to $ 25.00 per racer for SL/GS. Fees are payable to the host mountain or club. These fees do not include any necessary online surcharges required by the registration website.

AWARDS: Awards will be given based on single run results, not combined time. Awards will be for Top 10 girls, and Top 10 boys each run.

More details on: https://www.vara.org/rules.php

GENERAL

- Coaches are to encourage all racers to read the mountain rules sheet and to follow all area rules.
- Coaches are to actively encourage all racers and parents to attend the awards presentations at each Council-sponsored race.
- Emphasis should be placed on free skiing time after the race. The method used to permit free skiing and access to the lifts after a race is to be determined by each host mountain.
- The Council recommends that all coaches working in programs be a certified referee and hold a current Basic First Aid and CPR card.

MEMBERSHIPS:

- All programs/clubs must be "current" members of VARA and the US Ski & Snowboard and have current year memberships.
- All coaches attending NVC events must be current members of VARA and US Ski & Snowboard.
- All programs/clubs must supply the Council Chair a list of active coaches prior to December 15th. This list will be used as the 'Coaches Ticket' list for all NVC events. Names not on this list may not receive a complementary race day ticket.
- Each mountain is responsible for assuring that all of its racers are members of VARA and US Ski & Snowboard and that all of its coaches are members of VARA and US Ski & Snowboard.

RACE REQUIREMENTS:

Start Cadence:

- The start cadence used for Super-G, giant slalom, and slalom must be consistent with those of US Ski & Snowboard & FIS.

Course Length/Set:

- The length of the course for all races must be consistent with US Ski & Snowboard age guidelines in effect at the time.
- Setting distances and gate counts must be consistent with US Ski & Snowboard age guidelines in effect at the time.

Flex Gates:

- Age appropriate gates (60" OTS FIS-B) are to be used for all U12 & U14 tall gate slalom events. Giant slalom gates will have US Ski & Snowboard approved panels with two flex gates. Single gate (no outside gate) giant slalom is permitted in accordance with current US Ski & Snowboard rules.
- Slalom - inside flex gate. Single pole slalom (no outside gate) is permitted in accordance with current US Ski & Snowboard rules.

Sanctioned Races:

- U10, U12, U14 races must be sanctioned by US Ski & Snowboard.

Jury:

- A jury is required to be certified (TD, Referee and Chief of Race) at all NVC events, and there should be at least one US Ski & Snowboard Level 3 official on the jury and or race committee.
- All course setters for all age class racing must be at least a US Ski & Snowboard Level-1 updated/current referee.
- Jury and Course setter selection must be made prior to the day of the race. All the jury should join the course set crew to approve the course and hill.
- NVC will abide by current US Ski & Snowboard rules.

Coaches' Meeting:

- Zoom captains meeting the night before the race.

RACE RESULTS:

- A copy of the Split Second Race or Vola results file must be sent to the standings scorer within a day of the race, which include race results (first run, second run, and combined times for both boys and girls), and must be sent to the Council Chair within a day of hosting a race so that a consolidated record of all Council races and results can be maintained.
- Maintenance of an up-to-date race results file is extremely important for the naming of Council Teams to the State Championships, for selection of racers for participation at VARA and US Ski & Snowboard camps, etc.

ADDING/RESCHEDULING RACES DURING THE SEASON:

- The addition or rescheduling of a race in the Council schedule requires the Program Director of the mountain seeking to add/change a race to notify the Council Chair and a poll of all of the Program Directors as to whether the race should be added/changed, would be taken. Majority vote rules.
- The Program Director of the mountain seeking to add/change a race will be informed by the Council Chair of the outcome of any vote taken.

INJURY CLAUSE:

- The NVC will make a decision on all Injury Petitions on an individual basis.
- NVC will decide the validity of the petition. If a petition has been determined to be valid, then the position in the SVC Series Standings will then be determined. The athlete will then be placed in the current standings.
- Any injury petition must be accompanied by a doctors' note at a minimum.
- The injury petition must be submitted to the NVC council chair at least 5 days prior to the last NVC Series event in the age class to let the NVC have time to review and decide on the outcome.
- Petitions may only be submitted by the Program Director of the club that the athlete is registered with.
- The Program Directors will have 48 hours from the time of the petition distribution to vote.
- The Majority vote will determine the petition outcome, regardless of number of votes cast.

NVC RACING OUT OF AGE CLASS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (Petitioning Athlete-PA):

- In order for an athlete to race out of age class, the PA procedure must be followed.
    - PA Procedure:
        - The Program Director interested in having one of their athletes race out of age class is to contact the Council Chair via email and provide a written rationale or justification for the PA request with supporting evidence by December 15th.
        - The PA request can also come from the Program's Head Coach, but only after consultation with and approval by the Program Director.
            1. Letters submitted directly via email to the Council Chair from the racer's parent(s) or coach will not be considered.
            2. The Council Chair will distribute the PA request with evidence to each NVC Program Director.
            3. The PA request should consider the following:
                1. Physical Maturity/Condition
                2. Mental Maturity
                3. Training Age.

- Each Program Director will then vote once for one of the following or ask for more information:
    1. **Yes**. Voting 'yes' is stating that the Program Director approves the PA Request for an athlete to ski out of age class.
    2. **No**. Voting 'no' is stating that the Program Director does not approve the PA Request for the athlete to ski out of age class and should remain in their respective age group.
    3. **More information.** A Program Director may ask for more information regarding the athlete
- The Program Directors will have 48 hours to respond with a vote.
- The majority rules.
    1. The decision on the PA will be made without consideration for the number of votes cast within the two day voting period.
    2. The petitioning Program will be considered a 'Yes' vote.
- The Council Chairman will vote only in the event of a tie.
- The outcome of the vote will be reported back to all Program Directors.
    1. The voting is public and all votes submitted by the Program Directors will be attached to the decision.
    2. U14 and U12 PA ski-down's are granted by the council without VARA CDC approval.
    3. Skiing-ups and U16 PA ski-down's must be approved by the VARA CDC after council approval.

o Considerations in PA Voting:

- Program Directors voting on an Out of Age Class request should consider the following when reviewing the request.
    1. Is the athlete in question an 'exceptional' athlete?
    2. Will racing out of age class help this athlete further their development?
    3. Does the request meet one of the 3 PA Considerations? 1. Physical Maturity/Condition 2. Mental Maturity 3. Training Age.
- If the PA request is approved by VARA, the PA may immediately compete in the next age class.
- The athlete is then considered to be a member of the new age class and may not race in both aged class series.
- U14's may not race 'up' into the U16 age class.

PA Guidelines: Out of age class racers (PA's) will be eligible to receive awards and have their names and times included on the race results and will be part of the series standings.

- U12 & U16 racers racing with U14's in the Northern Vermont Council League Race Series are eligible to race in U14 States.
- U16 PA's skiing with the U14's are not eligible for Eastern Championship Selection.
- U14's are not eligible to 'ski up' with the U16's.