New York State Ski Racing Association - Nordic, Inc.

Post Season Draft Meeting Minutes

April 26, 2026

Call to Order on Zoom at 7:01 PM by President Mark Chmielewicz (and representing Glenville Hills Nordic/Adirondack Vauhti). Also attending were Curt Schreiner, Saratoga Biathlon; Darwin Roosa, Past President; Ed Luban, CNY Nordic; Eric Hamilton, Secretary and Shenendehowa Nordic; Todd Rayne, Vice President and Wolverine; Roy Cooley, Wolverine; Jack Rueckheim, Treasurer and Cayuga Nordic; Sean Halligan, Saratoga Biathlon; Chris Yarsevich; Vice President and HURT; Steve Halasz, Saratoga Biathlon; Eric Seyse, GHN-Adk Vauhti; Gordon Curtis, Osceola; Christoper Legard, Osceola and NYSEF; Emily Hart, Osceola and NYSEF; Jason Hettenbaugh, Rochester Nordic Racing; Amanda Zullo; Paul Smith, NYSEF; Peter Minde, Peru Nordic; Bob Underwood, Executive Director.

Regrets from Holly Folsom, Osceola and Cayuga; Janet Findley, Ski Orienteering Chair; and Janine Phaneuf, BKYSL with each of their reports attached.

Minutes of the September 28, 2025 meeting were accepted on a motion by Roy Cooley, seconded by Darwin Roosa, carried.

Treasurer's Report Treasurer's Report by Jack Rueckheim is attached. The total treasury balance as of March 31 is $14,732 without the Mid-Atlantic Fund. Jack Rueckheim noted that the executive committee authorized four racer grants:

- October 12 - Two grants
- February 18 - Sawyer Dago and Anna Yarsevich

Jack could not report the overall membership numbers and revenue from memberships for the 2025-26 racing season. Darwin quickly checked the Membership 2025-26 page on SkiReg and reported there were 428 total members registered. This number may not accurately represent all categories of memberships (individual, family, BKYSL, life, and volunteers/coaches). So, overall total members are likely to be close to 500.

There was discussion by Jack and Mid-Atlantic Junior Committee Chair Jason Hettenbaugh about setting up a donation box on the NYSSRA-Nordic SkiReg membership page to receive optional donations that support Junior Development program activities. Jason will send Jack a statement for the box to describe the training, qualifier races, Junior Nationals trip, and other activities.

Committee Reports

Insurance – Sean Halligan reported that 71 background checks were conducted. Many of the checks were newly completed, or were done last year, or were done elsewhere and accepted. Race event waivers are needed from Tour de Ski and Gore JN Qualifier races.

Sean requested participant numbers for Cross Country, Biathlon, Ski O, and BKYSL (number of individuals that participate in the discipline rather than season total discipline numbers) for the past racing season. This data is provided to our liability insurance carrier for setting up next year's policy.

There was discussion about the NYSSRA Ski Orienteering Championship where the participants do not pay head tax. Concern for consistency was raised, drawing similarities to the NY Biathlon discipline where the liability insurance is provided under USBA, yet participants still pay a $2 head tax for each event. This inconsistency issue for Ski O should be resolved for next season.

Biathlon - Steve Halasz's Biathlon Committee report is attached. He summarized the challenges event organizers faced due to the extreme weather from rain outs to severe cold. Six of the ten races on the season calendar had to be cancelled. Four races were held with the need to shift the ESWG Biathlon Individual Relay from Sunday to Friday as a single race. He also commented that the new chamber flag safety rule had season wide perfect compliance. There was excellent turnout at the March 14-15 NY Biathlon Championships at Saratoga Biathlon. Nick Gretizinger has offered to update the NY Biathlon website.

Cross Country – Eddie Luban reported that we have 20 clubs across NY and PA. This season included 15 official cross country races, with two cancelled: Potato Hil and Shenendehowa Classic. He noted that there were no races west of Syracuse. He suggested that there be more coordination and communication among clubs to minimize conflicts. He recommended that we have a schedule of races put together by late summer built around the Tour de Ski events schedule. He also recommended that we feature the points list regularly in the e-newsletter. Eric Seyse praised Eddie for helping to schedule and reduce conflicts. It is great to have the ADK Tour de Ski events throughout the season. Chris Yaarsevich remarked that schedule conflicts are a given. We should support all races and do our best to get them on the schedule where they fit best.

Mid-Atlantic - Jason Hettenbaugh reported on the successful participation of Mid-Atlantic Juniors at the March 7-15 USSS Junior National Championships in Cable, WI. See attached "Junior National Round Up" article published April 14, 2026 in the "Season Ending Recap" e-newsletter.

Ski Orienteering - Janet Findlay's report attached.

Bill Koch Youth Ski League – Janine Phaneuf provided her report for the season and follows in the attachments. The report combining and summarizing activities from the three reporting clubs: Polar Bear, Osceola, and Shenendehowa. Rochester club hosted the Mid-Atlantic Bill Koch Festival in January.

Executive Director's Report - Bob Underwood noted that High Peaks was not a NYSSRA-Nordic sponsor this season and, out of respect for the owner and the family matters they are facing, he did not pursue their participation. Toko wax supported programs with product donations. Nine e-newsletters were distributed. Bob emphasized moving the Cross Country Ski Championship race back to late February so NYSSRA-Nordic board members can be present to present the Championship and Season Points List awards. He added that, while the final Tour de Ski event is a strong race, there was no visible NYSSRA-Nordic presence in 2025 or 2026. Bob strongly recommended drafting the season schedule before the fall meeting.

Bob remarked that two especially busy weekends dealt with conflicts caused by volunteer and organizer commitments at the Mt. Van Hoevenberg IBU Cup Biathlon events.

Bob Underwood reported that a Queensbury High School junior is working on the NYSSRA - Nordic website but has no schedule or timeline.

Racer Grants

Jason reported that families typically ask what funds of support are available to racers. For the award of racer support grants, he suggested that we more adequately describe the grant structure: what is eligible, requirements of the athletes, how to apply, and deadlines. How do we determine a total allocation for grants, and do we publicize the amount that is available? This information needs to be on the website. He noted that the Google application form is a good approach, but athletes cannot find the application. Jason volunteered to draft a racer grant outline based on his experience and understanding.

Bob Underwood indicated that securing additional funding for grants through corporate donations would be beneficial. We would need a dedicated person for a fundraising effort. Mark suggested that each individual club should identify a corporation to be contacted.

New Business

Proposal for Junior Cross Country Ski Racing Committee

Paul Smith proposed that NYSSRA-Nordic add a Junior Cross Country Ski Committee to coordinate and promote racing opportunities for juniors (14-19 years). See the proposal details in the second attachment. The committee would operate independently from Mid-Atlantic and wouldn't be subject to USSS rules. It would consist of representatives from each of the junior clubs, a coordinator from each of the high school sections, and would have a representative/chair that reports to NYSSRA - Nordic.

In discussion, Chris Yarsevich said that working with NYS High Schools would enable racing together instead of just with Mid-A juniors. Parents would be more willing to get involved without the requirements of USSS. Eddie commented that that committee's work would have the potential to improve communication with high school coaches. Coaches need to be L500 licensed. Emily Hart said there would be the benefit of more involvement with the sections. It would help all sections. Mark asked: how do you populate the committee of workers to do the tasks as described?

Eric Hamilton moved to accept the proposal; Darwin Roosa seconded. Discussion continued, including concerns about forming the committee and implementing the proposal given the organization's all-volunteer capacity. An in-person meeting of involved and interested people should be held to flesh out the details before the fall NYSSRA-Nordic meeting. The motion carried. No date was set for a committee meeting.

Next steps

- Paul will revise the written description of the committee's membership, duties, and chair role.
- Paul will send the revised description to NYSSRA-Nordic board members.
- A meeting will be scheduled to begin the committee's work.

Representation on USSS Officials Subcommittee

Bob Underwood reported that Knut Sauer is interested in representing NYSSRA-Nordic (Mid-Atlantic Region) on the USSS Officials Subcommittee. Eric Seyse moved to approve the appointment and called for a vote; Darwin Roosa seconded, noting that the Mid-Atlantic Region includes NY, NJ, MD, PA, DE, and WV. Motion carried.

Next Meeting will be Sunday, September 27 by Zoom at 6 PM.

Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 PM on a motion by Eric Hamilton, second by Curt Schreiner, carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Eric Hamilton
Secretary with a lot of help from Darwin Roosa

Attachments:

TREASURER'S REPORT

Fund	3/31/2026	3/31/2025
Biathlon	$2,480	$3,243
Youth Development	$1,056	$2,291
Mid-A*	$17,248	$18,164
BKSL	$808	$208
Schreiner Biath Sch.	$161	$633
General	$10,227	$8,931
Total	**$31,980**	**$33,469**
Total less Mid-A*	**$14,732**	**$15,305**

*The Mid-A fund belongs to Mid-A and is only managed by NYSSRA-Nordic

Key Business Reward Checking	
NYSSRA-Nordic Acct	3/31/2026
Beginning Balance	$30,901.84
20 Additions	$23,561.00
8 Subtractions*	($21,420.70)
Ending Balance	**$33,042.14**

*Does not include a $4519.89 in outstanding checks

Proposal to add a Junior Cross Country Ski Racing Committee

In addition this would take away positions and condense the current organizational structure in NYSSRA Nordic. Such as High School Liaison and Junior Trip Secretary.

Cross Country Ski Racing at the junior level (14-19 year olds) is at a crossroads in the state of New York. Long term trending snow forecasts have put much of the population centers below or further away from consistent winter conditions. Costs to participate; including trail pass fees, equipment, transportation to name a few have made recruitment in the sport an even greater challenge. Despite these challenges there remains a similar number of high school programs while at the same time US Ski and Snowboard club skiing opportunities in Lake Placid and Rochester, and many grassroots youth programs in other regions of the state still exist. There is increased engagement in the sport in the community with significant venue improvements by the state at Gore Mtn, and Mt Van Hoevenberg. The momentum of the FIS World Cup to the state in March 2026 cannot be understated as a big deal in terms of gaining more interest in our sport.

The main purpose of this proposal is to create some missing organizational structure that would help connect all of the different parties involved with junior ski racing in the state of New York, and take advantage of some positive momentum. It would also help NYSSRA down the road by increasing membership base, establishing sport leadership, help with future compliance with US Ski and Snowboard, and most importantly create more ski racing and training opportunities for athletes and education opportunities for coaches.

NYSSRA Nordic Junior XC Committee Tasks

- Coordinate all Junior skiing racing opportunities related but not limited to:
    - Training
    - Competitions
    - Education
    - Coaching
    - Marketing
- Recruit and form a committee membership that is open to all individuals affiliated with junior cross country ski racing in New York state and NYSSRA nordic members. Committee members must agree to meet in person bi-annually with a spring and fall meeting. Meetings scheduled and organized by committee chair. Members can and should include:
    - Collegiate, Club, and High School Coaches
    - Race Officials
    - Venue Managers
    - Industry Suppliers
- Operate outside of the USSS governance for now with the intention that it eventually becomes the organizational hub for all Mid-Atlantic XC activities with active USSS coaching, volunteer, or officials license as a prerequisite for committee participation.
- Vote on a **chairperson** annually to lead the committee.
    - This is a possible stipend position raised from NYSSRA membership dues
    - NYSRRA Junior XC Committee chair reports to USSS Mid-A XC chair
    - Committee chair also coordinates with NENSA governance when needed
    - Lead trips or organizes staffing for “Team New York” for ‘Eastern High School Championships’ and Eastern U16 Championships' or other ‘Team New York’ projects. Work with Mid-A chair on Junior National Trips
    - Help coordinate Mid-A JNQ comp schedule with Mid-A XC Chair
    - Help coordinate Mid-A JNQ schedule with State High School Comp schedule

- With this proposal I am also putting my name in to be considered Chair for the Junior XC Committee. My resume includes coaching for the New York Ski Education Foundation for 3 years now in Lake Placid but also 15 years of total ski coaching experience across the country at many different levels. I have level 200 coaches certification with US Ski and Snowboard and remain active in attending and leading national level ski racing and training projects. My most important experience however is growing up in New York State ski racing since I was 6 years old.

Paul Smith

NYSEF Head Cross Country Ski Coach

NYSSRA Year End Ski Orienteering Report

We organized four ski orienteering events this winter, starting on January 17 in Genesee County State Forest. Unfortunately the snow cover in the Rochester area was very sparse at the time, and the ski-o turned into a foot-o event. The second event was our annual Lapland Lake race; it had been postponed from its regular pre-Christmas time slot because of a sudden thaw, but perfect conditions prevailed on its rescheduled date of Feb. 1.

The Empire State Games Ski-O events took place in the Lake Placid area on the following weekend, and although snow conditions were perfect, it turned out to be one of the coldest weekends of the winter. But ski-o competitors bundled up and enjoyed 3 days of racing, with a Friday evening score-o at Scott's Cobble, and regular races at Mt. Van Hoevenberg and Dewey Mountain on Saturday and Sunday. Although 12-15 of our regular Canadian participants did not attend we still had a healthy turnout of 53, including several newcomers.

And for the first time in several years, late season conditions were favorable enough to hold a NYSSRA Championship Ski-O event on March 7 at Garnet Hill. Temperatures were much warmer that day, but there was so much snow that the short cuts that the race organizer had assumed would be used were impassable and racers ended up skiing the long way around to nearly every control. This added significantly to the total distance skied and with the warm temperatures resulting in very slow conditions it was quite an effort but all participants agreed it was a great ending to a great season.

Thanks to Phil Hawkes-Teeter and the staff at Brookhaven Winter Park in Greenfield, we now have an up-to-date ski-o map available and plan to hold an event there next winter. This is our first new map in many years and no doubt it will attract a good crowd eager to test their skills in new terrain.

I'd like to extend thanks to our mappers, course setters, event organizers and volunteers for their efforts over the past season. The management and groomers at every venue we used went out of their way to accommodate us and, as always, the support of NYSSRA in promoting ski-o in New York State is greatly appreciated.

Janet Findlay

2026 Spring NY Biathlon Commitee Report

Weather Challenges - Though a great snow winter overall, the timing of bad weather was a challenge. Out of 10 scheduled days of racing, 6 were cancelled. A January race in Old Forge was cancelled due to rain. Most other races were cancelled due to extreme cold. One ESG race was moved up at the last moment to take advantage of warmer expected temps. A huge thank

you to all the event organizers for monitoring the weather, making timely calls or adjustments, and communicating changes quickly and clearly. Also, a lot of work goes into prepping trails under adverse conditions, and that may or may not ultimately translate into the ability to host an event. We really appreciate these efforts.

Events and Participation

1/18 Syracuse Biathlon Sprint @ Osceola

We had a beautiful day in Osceola for the first club race of the winter season. Thanks for everyone who showed up to compete and to those who volunteered their time to setup, keep records and clean-up at the end. We kept things on the easy side with a 1.4km loop for everyone since it was most folks first race of the season. Results: https://syracusebiathlon.com/resources/01182026sprint.pdf

2/6 Empire State Games Individual Relay

Due to extreme cold in the forecast, the Sunday race was moved up to Friday. According to Pete Indick, this ended up being "a beautiful day for biathlon." We're grateful to him, Tom Moffet, and everybody else involved, for salvaging a great day of racing out of a difficult situation. Results: https://empirestatewintergames.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/02_05-Biathlon-Individual-Relay-Results.pdf

3/14-15 New York Biathlon Championships @ Saratoga Biathlon

"We were able to hold two great Championship races at the club despite the warm weather earlier in the week. Thanks to everyone who came out, we had a great time hosting."

Curt Schreiner reports that he has never had so many novice participants (12 Saturday, 9 Sunday). It was enough that it was challenging to accommodate them all, but he was able to make it work. It's great to see that the new participant pipeline is healthy.

Getting outfitted with a personal biathlon rifle is an expensive proposition, and a barrier for entry into the sport. I was impressed with the custom milling and tapping work, done by one participant's father, to outfit a standard rifle with a biathlon harness and sights.Results:

https://www.saratogabiathlon.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/260314result.pdf

https://www.saratogabiathlon.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/260315result.pdf

New Chamber Flag Safety Rule - The International Biathlon Union instituted a new requirement in the 2025/2026 season, that a visible chamber flag must be inserted in the rifle when not zeroing or competing. US Biathlon did a good job of communicating this change in advance. https://www.usbiathlon.org/biathlon-safety. It was also well communicated by event organizers. Saratoga Biathlon gave out chamber flags as prizes, which made them more visible and available. I didn't hear of anyone arriving to a competition without a flag, or being disqualified due to this rule, so the advance communication appears to have been very successful.

Steve Halasz

Bill Koch Youth Ski League/Club Report

Polar Bear Ski Club

Our season started back on November 4th with dryland, our first day on skis was November 18th. Our first race was on December 2nd, last race March 14th. This was 4months of togetherness.....44 practices and 23 racing opportunities this season! 17 skiers this season, 9 new skiers to the program. Our two 8th graders are moving up to U16 next season.
We did a variety of things this season: Laser Biathlon, BB biathlon, ski orienteering, mini trails,skied up lots of hills, relay races,ice skating,down hill skiing, and cross skiing on Mitey Might.
We raced at 8 different venues this year: Mt. Van Hoevenberg, Scotts Cobble, Dewey Mt.,Bristol Nordic center,Woodcraft, Osceola ski and sport, Jackson NH Touring center and the VIC at Paul Smith's College.
This season we began a weekly race series, called the Woodcraft twilight classic series. This was a great experience for our new team members. Each week our skiers could see their improvement and see that they were getting faster and better on their skis. Practice makes progress.

Janine Phanuef

Osceola Ski Club continued to have a great season based out of the Osceola Ski & Sport Resort on the Tug Hill plateau. Dustin & Christina Hite have a great facility at Osceola and are a fantastic partner for the club.
Our registered skiers continue to increase, with over 30 skiers attending club practices, and about half of parents assisting with coaching. Skiers that have aged out of the BKL league have also pitched in with coaching the younger skiers and actively helping drive games on skis. The winter weather worked out well, with the club able to hold practicesall but one week from New Years to mid-March.
OSC skiers participated in several major festivals, including the Rochester Mid-Atlantic festival in January, and the Osceola Festival in February. Osceola's Festival hosted 55 skiers from the region for two days of racing and fun events. Individual start races were held on Saturday Feb. 21, followed by games and a walking taco/baked potato buffet dinner. Mass start races on Sunday were exciting with several close finishes. Following the races the ever popular Secretary's cup was awarded. Finally, many club members attended the World Cup event in Lake Placid and the kids were excited to cheer, meet, and ski with the many gracious athletes competing there.
Finally, OSC went through a leadership change this season as Joan Newell and Sarah Ashby opted to step back from being the organizing team for the club as their kids enter high school. A team organizing meeting was held in the fall to elect a new organizing board, including Gordon Curtis (President), Tim Kohanski (Vice-President), Nathan Anderson (Treasurer), Steve Folsom (Secretary). Many thanks to Joan and Sarah for their help over the past seasons, and continuing to be involved with the club.

Over the off-season, OSC is planning to have several meet ups including an Earth Day cleanup party and periodic off-season training in Syracuse area parks.

Gordon Curtis

Shenendehowa Nordic Club - We had a very successful season starting on November 4, 2025 and wrapped up on Tuesday, March 31. We had 26 youth from age 4 through 13 in the Bill Koch Youth Ski League. We had14 weekly Tuesday afternoon practices at Garnsey Park, Rexford. The park is centrally located within a short drive of four suburban school districts. A season record of twelve practices were on snow. One practice was cancelled, because of snow.

The club was fortunate to obtain a Holiday Match grant of $500 from the Stewart's Foundation. Funding supported weekly grooming of ski trails in the park.

We hosted a Thursday night Family Moonlight Ski in December in Garnsey Park.

We had good participation from youth and their families, keeping a log of their time on skis: eight gold medals; three bronze; and two youth who were recognized with purple ribbons. The snow disappeared with one session of spring skiing and the next Tuesday afternoon we re-claimed bluebird boxes from winter field mice inhabitants.

Carrie Buetow's excellent photos on https://www.facebook.com/groups/1538576196464587 round out the story!

Janine Phaneuf

Junior National Round Up April 14, 2026 e-newsletter

The 2026 Mid-Atlantic Junior National Team was made up of 20 athletes, representing a wide range of experience—from first-time qualifiers to seasoned veterans. Athletes traveled from across New York State, departing from multiple airports before coming together in Minneapolis, MN.

From there, the team journeyed north to Cable, Wisconsin, home of the iconic American Birkebeiner. Races throughout the week were held on the renowned Telemark Trails, located at the race's historic start line.

The team stayed nearby at the Garmisch Lodge, which proved to be an ideal location. As the only division housed at the lodge, the group benefited from a dedicated team environment, allowing for both focused preparation and valuable rest during downtime.

The coaching staff—Jason Hettenbaugh, Paul Smith, Kellin Bellizzi, and Matt Bellizzi—managed all waxing, transportation, and logistics throughout the week. A special thank you goes to Erik Grimm for transporting all team supplies to the venue.
Athletes competed in four events over the course of the week: individual start freestyle, classic sprint, classic mass start, and freestyle relay. Full results can be found at **www.results.pttiming.com**.

One of the week's highlights came during Wednesday's classic sprint. Cora Hinsdill, Max Fey, and Braden Bellizzi all qualified for the heats. Building on that success, Cora and Braden advanced to the A Finals, finishing 5th and 6th respectively and earning All-American honors. Max had an outstanding performance as well, winning the B Final to place 7th overall and also securing All-American honors. Earlier in the week, Max added a 4th-place finish in the individual freestyle race. The rest of the team delivered strong performances across all events.

As the week concluded, a significant snowstorm impacted travel across the region. Many athletes, along with others attending Junior Nationals, experienced delays of several days. We extend our appreciation to the coaching staff for managing the unexpected logistics and ensuring all athletes returned home safely.

We are already looking forward to Junior Nationals next March in Truckee, California.