



VARA SKI RACING U14 and Under 101

(Everything in blue is a hyperlink)

USS - United States Ski and Snowboard ([USS](#)) is the governing body of ski racing in the United States. USS also oversees cross country, disabled alpine and cross country, freestyle, ski jumping, and Nordic combined free-ski, and snowboarding. USS develops rules and regulations for ski racing, sanctioned events, provides education for coaches, and supports coaches and athletes. **All competitors that plan to race in a USS sanctioned race MUST join USS and their Division (State) Association as a youth non-scored competitor in the Eastern Division.** Please go to <https://my.us skiandsnowboard.org/> "My USSA" box at the top of the page and follow the sign up instructions.

USS Eastern Region-The [USS Eastern Region](#) is one of three USS regions established under the authority of the USS Alpine Sport Committee (ASC) and responsible for the regulation of the sport of Alpine Ski Competition within the geographical area of the Eastern United States. It consists of 8 state associations: Maine ([MARA](#)), New Hampshire ([NHARA](#)), New Jersey ([NJSRA](#)), New York ([NYSSRA](#)), [PARA](#) (PA, MD, DE, D.C.), [Southern](#) (SARA: NC,VA,WV), [Tri-State](#) (TSARA: CT,MA,RI) and Vermont ([VARA](#)). USSA requires that ALL athletes (U8 up to U21/SR) join a Division/State association such as VARA. The Eastern Alpine Competition Committee establishes the regional policies, procedures, and operating rules for the Eastern Region. The region is charged with the design and conduct of all International Ski Federation (FIS) races and Junior Championship competitions in the East for each season. Eastern contact is the Eastern Regional Director: Martin Guyer Martin.Guyer@us skiandsnowboard.org

VARA-Vermont Alpine Racing Association (VARA) is the governing body of ski racing in the state of Vermont. VARA develops guidelines specific to competitions within Vermont. VARA also provides support to coaches and athletes by providing opportunities for coach education, athlete development projects, alpine officials education, provides grants, U12 and under assistance program, in-season travel assistance, and awards merit scholarships to athletes. VARA is the liaison with USS, providing informative communications promoting ski racing and Vermont athletes across the region and country. **All competitors must be members of VARA.** It is important to join VARA to obtain access to VARA-sanctioned events, council racing, Easterns, FIS racing, or states. Please go to <https://www.vara.org/join-vara.php> to register.

VARA U14 and UNDER COUNCILS

At the U14 level and younger VARA is comprised of three councils, [Northern Vermont Council](#) (NVC), [Mid Vermont Council](#) (MVC) and [Southern Vermont Council](#) (SVC). Councils structure their races and camps according to any specific VARA guidelines and otherwise may be creative with their council's events. Each council operates under the guidance of the VARA Children's Development Committee and maintains its own U14, U12, U10, and U8 racing. VARA's Children's Development Committee sets guidelines for state championship events, projects, and statewide qualifier events.

Competition: Council Racing in Vermont for the U14 and under will begin in mid-January. Councils will host 2 SL, 2 GS, and an SG event as part of their structured race series before state championships. Open and creative skills events may be offered.

VARA Development Projects: VARA will organize with host VT sites and organizing committees various U14 and U12 skills and development projects. Check with your athlete's coach or check the [VARA Guidelines](#) for event details.

NVC includes Sugarbush(GMVS), Burke(BMA), Cochran's, Mad River Glenn, Stowe (MMA), Jay Peak, and Smugglers' Notch(SNSC. **Council Chair**, Naga Kusumi (MMA) Email: Nkusumi@mmsca.org - Council Representatives: Diann Roffe/Terry Deliquadrie (BMA), Bobby Farrell -Cochran's, Jim Komarmi-Mad River, Igor Vanovac -Stowe, Krystyne Carpenter-Jay Peak, Ryan Sheredy-Smuggler's Notch. [NVC Rules](#) [VARA Rules](#)

MVC includes Okemo (OMS, Oke Comp Ctr), Killington(KMS), Pico (PSC), Woodstock Ski Runners (WSR), Quechee and Middlebury. **Council Chair:** Lori McClallen (Pico) Email: lori.mcclallen@gmail.com and Justin Lillie (S6/WSR) jdillie@hotmail.com and U12/U10 Mariel Meringolo (OMS) mmeringolo@okemomountainschool.org Council Representatives - Reese Brown (QUE), Shelby Smith (Midd), Craig Bennet (KMS) Wayne Conn (Oke Comp Ctr) [MVC Rules](#) [VARA Rules](#)

SVC includes Stratton Winter Sports Club(SWSC), Bromley Outing Club(BOC), Magic Race Team MRT, VA at Mt Snow(VAMS), Mt.Snow Training Center (MSTC), Stratton Mountain School (SMS), and Willard(WILL). **Council Chair:** Pete Stokloza (VAMS) Email: pstokloza@mountsnowacademy.org Council Representatives: Mike Healy (BOC), Chuck Ribinsky (Magic), Addie Weiss (Magic), Dave Skalr (SMS), Dan Spigner-Willard, Nancy Logan-(MSTC) Jason Weinberger SWSC, Jim Sullivan (SMS U12) [SVC Rules](#) [VARA Rules](#)

Age Classes-The age classes for junior ski racing in USS sanctioned events are determined by a competitor's age on December 31st of the current season and are as follows:

U21: 18/19/20 years old

U18: 16/17 years old

U16: 14/15 years old

U14: 12/13 years old

U12: 10/11 years old

U10: 8/9 years old

U8: 7 years old

USSA ALPINE TRAINING SYSTEM [\(ATS\) LINK](#)

The ATS was developed by the USSA and acts as an overall guide for what athletes should be accomplishing at certain ages and in certain categories.

[VARA TECHNICAL STATEMENT \(link\)](#)

Purpose of the VARA Technical Statement: VARA recognizes the importance of building strong technical foundations for the long-term success of VARA skiers. This document is a guide to assist VARA coaches and clubs in teaching the necessary skills that will help athletes reach their full potential. This technical statement is in alignment with US Ski & Snowboard athlete development principles. Objective

The objective of the VARA Technical Statement is to promote consistency in athlete development through a shared platform of technical skill acquisition by providing member clubs and coaches a framework for programming that aligns with the technical principles of US Ski & Snowboard athlete development. The technical statement will guide member clubs in teaching technical skills that are consistent with the mission and goals of VARA.

Brief age group explanations:

VARA U14 Racing is non-scored competition (not racing for USS Points) for ages 12-13. U14 competitors may race for VARA in the USS Championship qualifying ladder. U14 competition stays within council until States with the exception of Tri-Council* events, projects, and open events. Those who meet council requirements may participate in states which is all-inclusive with split genders (at different sites). From States, competitors may qualify to U14 USS Championships. From the U14 Championships, a competitor may qualify to compete in the USSA Eastern Can-Am series. A variety of racing formats, as well as skills assessment and development, is important at this age. Events contested at this age are; Giant Slalom, Slalom, dual events, stubbies, skills and SuperG.

VARA U12 Racing is non-scored competition for 10-11-year-olds. U12 competitors will race with in their council with the exception of VARA projects and Tri Council* events. There is no state-wide event at this age. Skill development rather than gate training is emphasized at this age and each council will be coordinating skills assessments for their competitors. Events contested at this age are; Giant Slalom, Slalom, dual events, stubbies, skills and terrain elements training.

**Tri Council events are open for registration to second year U12 and U14 athletes for 24 hours and then open to all VARA member U12/14 participants. The Tri Council event is split gender and provides a developmental opportunity for the councils to race together.*

VARA U10 Racing is non-scored for 8-9 years olds and competition stays within the council. There is no state-wide event at this age. There are however council series that will culminate in a council final event. The focus at this age is fun, skill development, skills introduction, and introduction to racing. Events learned at this age are; Giant Slalom, duals, skills, and minimal Slalom. Skiers that start the season as 7-year-olds are eligible to race in the VARA U10 age category.

VARA U8 Racing is non-scored and fun events for 7-year-olds and stays within the council. U8 racing requires little if any travel and mainly focuses on inter-club events. Events learned at this age are; Giant Slalom, stubbie, dual, and skills. Events for this age group are focused on skill development and fun.

Again, to compete in VARA races, there are two membership requirements that must be met: a. You must have a current **USS Competitors Membership or Student Membership**.

In order to compete in any VARA council or selection process, you must be a current member of VARA. Qualifying points will not be retroactive for late renewals.

NOTE: Competitors may race council races and states with a USSA Student Membership. But, Student memberships will not allow entry into scored competitions or qualification to USSA Championship events.

VARA's Minimum age for racing-sanctioned events is 7. 6 -7-year-olds may participate in council U8 programs however only 7-year-olds may participate within a U10 structure.

NOTE: Racing after the council system, as a U16 and older, the competition involves 'scored' racing where competitors race for USS points and can be nationally ranked based on the racer's USS point profile. Link [here](#) for more Info on USS Scored racing and Points. USS [Eastern Handbook](#) has information on eastern racing.

USS Competiton Guide - [Link](#) - This guide contains everything you should need to know and want to know about USS racing.

FIS- Once a competitor reaches the U18 age group they may be introduced to FIS racing where racers can compete for international (FIS) Points along with USS point racing. Racing Fis requires an additional membership which can be done through USS. Link here for more FIS information. [FIS Link](#)

VARA Children's Development Committee:(CDC)

The VARA Children's Development Committee- the CDC oversees the rules and policies of U14 and under racing in VT. This group works with the VARA Executive Director to create schedules, policies, qualifications, rules, and state guidelines for the U14 and under age groups. Committee members include; Diann Roffe (Chair) Naga Kusumi (NVC), Ryan Sheredy(NVC), Lori McClellan (MVC), Peter Stokloza (SVC), Justin Lillie (MVC), Dave Sklar (SVC).

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 USSA while at a sanctioned council event, VARA States or Shootout 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.

Petitioning Athletes Skiing DOWN

Except for approved petitioning athletes, all racers will follow established US Ski & Snowboard age classes. U14 and under athletes may be approved within the council to ski down. (see council rules)

For a U16 athlete to be considered for skiing **down** an age class at the council level, the Program Director must submit a request to the Council Chair. If approved by their council, the Council Chair will submit the request to the Chairperson of the VARA Children's Development Committee and VARA Executive Director on or before Jan. 1, for a VARA CDC vote.

There are three areas as guidelines in considering a ski down athlete: Physical Maturation, Mental Maturity, and Physical Condition. For U16 the VARA CDC will review the request and respond to the council chair no later than Jan 1.

If an athlete is approved by the council or Vara CDC, they will follow council and VARA rules for that age class. Petitioning Athlete (PA) may qualify for states in the age class in which they are competing. The following conditions apply:

1. PA will be considered and treated as any other participant in that age class.
2. PA may ski in the state championships but will not advance to a US Ski & Snowboard postseason event.
3. PA will be seeded at states according to their council placement.
4. PA will be presented with an award if so earned.

5. PA will be purged from results for selections to postseason US Ski & Snowboard Championship events.
6. PA will compete in only one VT state championship series. The field size for states will not exceed 5 athletes to accommodate council PA requests.
7. **PA will not displace a U14 for VARA States. (may not be applicable)**
8. PA "ski up" is NOT eligible for U14 Eastern Championships.

An athlete who is skiing down must register for VARA and USS **as their proper age class**. For example, a U14 skiing down as a U12 would still register for VARA and USS as a U14.

Alpine Official Interest?

If you are interested in becoming an Alpine Official, Check out the USS Officials education link [HERE](#):

Interested in Coaching

Join a Team Committed to Excellence in Alpine Ski Racing and Youth Development!

Become part of a unique group of dedicated professionals working to shape the future of alpine ski racing. Your contributions will not only help develop exceptional athletes and lifelong skiing enthusiasts but also nurture strong character, confidence, and resilience in young adults.

Please contact your program director and or visit <https://academy.us skiandsnowboard.org/>

VARA Club Directory

[Jay Peak Ski Club \(JPSC\)](#)

[Smugglers' Notch Ski & Snowboard Club \(SNSC\)](#)

[Sugarbush/GMVS Ski Club \(GMVS\)](#)

[Mad River Glenn \(MRG\)](#)

[Cochran's Ski Club \(CSC\)](#)

[Burke Mountain Academy \(BMA\)](#)

[Stowe/MMA](#)

[Okemo \(OKE COMP CTR\)](#)

[Okemo Mountain School \(OMS\)](#)

[Killington Mountain School \(KMS\)](#)

[Pico Ski Club](#)

[Quechee \(QUE\)](#)

[Middlebury Ski Club \(MSC\)](#)

[Woodstock Ski Runners/Suicide Six \(S6\)](#)

[Stratton Winter Sports Club \(SWSC\)](#)

[Stratton Mountain School \(SMS\)](#)

[Bromley Outing Club \(BOC\)](#)

[Magic Mountain \(MMRT\)](#)

[VA at Mount Snow Academy \(NOW VAMS\)](#)

[Mount Snow Training Center \(MSTC\)](#)

[Willard \(WILL\)](#)

USS EAST/AO/COACH INFO

[Link here for USS Course Setting, Equipment Rules, the Eastern Handbook and more.](#)

IMPORTANT SAFE SPORT LINKS :

SafeSport Code:

<https://uscenterforsafesport.org/response-and-resolution/safesport-code/>

SafeSport Training and Education

<https://uscenterforsafesport.org/training-and-education/safesport-courses-for-all/>

Preventing Bullying Need to Know

<https://uscenterforsafesport.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/US-Center-for-SafeSport-Preventing-Bullying-What-Great-Coaches-Need-to-Know.pdf>

MAAPP (*Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies*) Training and Education

<https://uscenterforsafesport.org/training-and-education/minor-athlete-abuse-prevention-policies/>

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<https://uscenterforsafesport.org/training-and-education/minor-athlete-abuse-prevention-policies/>

Child Welfare by State:

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/state/>

Consent Laws:

<https://apps.rainn.org/policy/compare/consent-laws.cfm>

For questions about youth racing, please contact your program coach or program director or

VARA contact: VARA Executive Director - Julie Woodworth at julie@vara.org. Phone or Text 802-236-4695