

Cross Country Sport Committee Meeting Minutes

Fall Meeting, September 13-15, 2002

Sept. 13, 9:15 am – 5:00 pm

1. Call to Order

Lee Todd, Chairman of the Cross Country Committee, welcomed all of the Committee members, and guests of the Committee. He stated that, according to his recollection, the last time the Cross Country Committee held its regular meetings in Maine was around twenty-five years ago, in Poland Springs. He stated that the work at this meeting would be less formal than is typical during the spring meetings, and that the tone would likely be more like a working group, evaluating the program as it exists now, and looking out into the future to see where they can adjust and build.

He stated that, coming off a great Olympics, and a very tough lead into a demanding Olympic period, the staff hasn't let down, and has charged right through with strategic planning leading to even better success in 2006. He stated that The Executive Board of USSA, and the Board's new Chairman, Chuck Ferries, has publicly stated his excitement about the progress of the cross country program, and has identified cross country as a growth area, expressing both an opportunity, as well as a sport that now has high expectations attached to it. Mr. Todd stated that he is happy to see cross country come a long way from the days when the sport nearly had to fight for its existence within the association.

Mr. Todd then appointed Luke Bodensteiner to keep the minutes of the Cross Country Committee meeting.

2. Roll Call

The following Cross Country Committee members were recognized as being present:

John Aalberg (Officials)	Term limit: Spring '05
Luke Bodensteiner (Nordic Director)	Term limit: by employment
Joey Caterinichio (Alaska)	Term limit: Spring '04
Pat Cote (Eastern Alternate)	Term limit: Spring '05
Jon Engen (Athlete)	Term limit: Spring '04
Chris Grover (Development)	Term limit: by employment
Reid Lutter (Coaches Chairman)	Term limit: Spring '03
Lee Todd (Chairman)	Term limit: Spring '03

Mr. Bodensteiner recognized the following Committee members as absent:

Andrew Gerlach (At-large)	Term limit: Spring '04
Chris Klein (Athlete)	Term limit: Spring '04
Bill Sterling (Pacific)	Term limit: Spring '04
Kevin Sweeney (At-large)	Term limit: Spring '04
Dennis Kruse (Central)	Term limit: Spring '05

3. Seating of New Members

Mr. Bodensteiner informed the Committee that Mr. Eli Brown was named as a substitute for Mr. Sweeney, but would have no vote. Additionally, he informed the Committee that Mr. Bob Hughes had resigned his post as Mountain Region representative, and that the Mountain Region had appointed Mr. Rick Kapala to fill that post, which will be filled at the end of the fall meeting. He stated that, since this is a regional appointment, no committee action was necessary.

Mr. Engen reported that the athlete representatives had recruited and appointed Ms. Nina Kempfel to fill the open athletes' representative position, and the Committee **decided** to accept Ms. Kempfel as a

Committee member after the close of the fall meeting, and expressed their enthusiasm for having an athlete of Ms. Kemppe's stature joining the Committee.

Mr. Bodensteiner also recognized the following guests; Lori Horn, Sally Jones, Eli Brown and Phil White.

After calling roll, Mr. Todd declared a quorum present.

4. Approval of Minutes, Spring Congress '02

Mr. Todd asked the members present to review the minutes, and make any comments. He stated that the minutes have been distributed prior to the meeting in the meeting materials.

Mr. Engen requested a small clarification to the JO Rules section of the minutes. Mr. Lutter requested a second clarification in the same section. After some discussion, it was determined that the proper rule changes were reflected in the Competition Guide, and that the minutes would be updated to reflect that. Subsequently, Ms. Caterinichio made a motion to accept the minutes with those clarifications, and was seconded by Mr. Engen.

Motion carries.

5. Additions to the Agenda

Mr. Todd stated that the agenda had been distributed prior to the meeting, and called for additions to the agenda.

Mr. Engen requested that he be able to give a short account of the last USSA Board of Directors meeting, and Mr. Todd gave him the floor.

Mr. Engen stated that the athlete representatives to the Board support the vision of becoming the best in the world in skiing and snowboarding, and there is an effort within that group to define exactly what that means. He also stated that, as Mr. Todd noted, cross country got a lot of positive comments both from Alan Ashley, USSA Vice-President, and Chuck Ferries, Chairman of the Board. He stated that, as expected, the organization is feeling the impacts of hard economic times now, but that the core athletic programs have been prioritized and, for the most part, preserved. He stated that Mr. Ashley, who comes from the cross country community, really commended the cross country sport for its organization of a fabulous Olympics, and for the excellent performances of the athletes, and stated that it's now time to be directing more resources to that sport.

Mr. Todd asked for any additional items.

Mr. Bodensteiner stated that one item that does not appear on the agenda that has in the past fall meetings, are some of the team selection criteria. He stated that, since several of these criteria have not changed over the course of several years, that they will not be presented again unless substantial changes to the selection methods are to be proposed. He stated that this will save the committee the burden of reviewing criteria that do not change from year to year.

6. Staff Report

Mr. Todd turned the floor over to Luke Bodensteiner for his staff report.

Mr. Bodensteiner stated that he's happy to be back in the East again, this time in a new community, and at a location that's very conducive to the sort of thinking the Committee needs to do here. He thanked John Upton, the President of NENSA, and Owen Wells, who, as the President of the Libra Foundation in Portland, has helped to provide the fuel behind not only the facility at Pineland, but also to the Maine

Winter Sports Center up in Aroostook County in the northern end of this state, which, he stated, is contributing greatly to the development of our sport. He stated that John and Owen were kind enough to loan the Committee this facility at Pineland for our retreat, and to help organize this meeting here in Portland.

He also thanked the members of the Committee. He stated that, over the past five or six years, the Committee's really pulled together as a team, and their leadership has helped to build an effective framework for this sport to work within. He stated that, when he first started working with this Committee, more than six years ago now, these meetings were slowed down by questions of priority, and by the huge scope of programs that USSA had to deal with. The Committee haggled about membership fees, divisional equalities, the priorities of recreation and participation versus performance. And steadily, they've worked out of that groove. They've lead well, sharpened the focus of this Committee, and pushed forward after a single vision and a single goal, and in doing so, created an atmosphere now of collaboration, and of teamwork, and an atmosphere that's really allowed innovation, and growth in the program.

He stated that we still have hard discussions, and that's because we still have hard issues to face. Occasionally, we've had to make decisions when there were no perfect answers, or no clear rights and wrongs. But as we've worked together through those issues, and really stayed focused on the vision of USSA, which is to become the best in the world in skiing and snowboarding, and set a direction, and defended that direction and stuck to it, even when the criticism's been intense. And even though not everyone at this table agrees on every issue, when we've made decisions, you've gotten behind those decisions and helped to make them work. And you've also known the right times and the right ways to re-evaluate those decisions. And because of that fortitude, and because of your willingness to face risk, and because of the tough-minded leadership you've shown, we've got a program now that's enabled U.S. athletes as a whole to perform at levels we haven't seen in 20 years, if not longer. And it's a program that, because it's been consistent, and because it's been implemented over a number of years now, can be evaluated effectively.

He stated that, because of the Committee's commitment to teamwork, the individuals who want to attack the framework we've provided for the athletes are generally on the fringe. The Committee's been open to new ideas, and changes and additions, and you also recognize that we're not out to run a conservative program. We're out to win. And nobody ever said that the program we've put together won't be controversial. But we're going to win by setting a strong framework, and then sticking to that plan.

He stated that at our last meeting, we took some time to celebrate the successes of 2002, and that the celebration was well deserved, because the athletes achieved a lot last winter. But while we reflected on those successes, we also recognized that we had to celebrate and then move on, because we've still got a lot of work to do before the athletes can achieve the long-term goal we set forth all the way back in the spring of '98, which is to win an Olympic medal in Torino in 2006. And in fact, already this winter, we have some high goals to achieve, including our first-ever podium finish at the World Junior Championships, a podium finish at the new U-23 Worlds, a top-10 individual finish in Val di Fiemme at the World Championships, and a top-4 result in the World Championship relay.

He stated that we plan to cover a lot of ground in this meeting, and that's because we still have a lot of ground to cover before we're the best in the world. And like we did last fall, the members will walk step by step through our development pipeline, and discuss each step that an athlete takes to become the best in the world. He stated that in some areas, we may have nothing to add, which is all right. But in each area, we need to be thinking about what resources are out there, not only USSA resources, but ski community resources, because there are a lot of individuals and organizations who are approaching this thing from a lot of different angles. We need to inventory the individuals and the organizations that are out there, and we need to identify who's doing what to support skiing at each level, and then we need to think about how we can structure ourselves to deliver a program that'll advance more and more kids up the pipeline, in the most efficient manner.

He stated that we need to think about efficiencies, because we've got a big program to deliver, and even though USSA's probably in better financial health now than it ever has been, and even though we've seen

the cross country budget more than double over the course of the past several years, Mr. Ashley and Mr. Marolt are going to need to continue to grow the organization just in order to maintain the core team program we have now. And that's because there are more athletes skiing at a higher level now than there have been in probably twenty years, if not longer. He stated that he doesn't know if the cross country budget's bigger than it's even been before, but that doesn't really matter. What matters is that it's grown significantly since 1996. And what matters is that we've also been lucky to have individuals and organizations outside of the USSA structure, in a strict sense, step up and create new resources to support the athletes. And these individuals and organizations are a big part of the reasons why U.S. athletes achieved best-ever Olympic success last season.

He reiterated the men's team had the best-ever Olympic relay result we've had. Nina Kemppel had the best-ever women's result in the Olympics. John Bauer became the second-best Olympian we've ever had with his 12th place finish in the 15km C, being bettered only by Bill Koch. Kris Freeman, 15th place in the pursuit and 22nd in the 15km. Patrick Weaver, 16th in the 15km. Andrew Johnson, 22nd in the 30km. With the exception of Bill Koch, these athletes recorded the best 7 finishes we've had in Olympic history in this sport. And we need to ask ourselves why this happened. He stated the answer is far from being black and white.

He stated that, these results are probably a compilation of athletic talent and desire, combined with the actions over a number of years, and not just last year, or the year before, or even since the last Olympics, of a lot of people in a number of different roles. He stated that, to his knowledge, none one's really addressed in-depth the question of why U.S. athletes now are performing better than they have in a long, long time. And this is one of the questions that he'd like to pose to the Committee this weekend, and a question that, along with the vision of this organization, which is to be the best in the world, should frame the discussions we'll have here about the steps in our development pipeline, and the structure and framework we've laid out for the athletes to develop in.

To get the wheels turning, he suggested some possibilities that other people have suggested.

He stated that maybe the team's recent successes are a product of the home-field advantage, which the team was focused on intently during the years leading up to the Olympics. He stated that it certainly was a factor. Travel, adjustment, food, comfort, familiarity with the area, the hometown crowd, these were all positive factors. The team made great efforts to give the athletes ample training and racing opportunities at the venue in the years leading up to the Games. The U.S. athletes had the most comfortable lodging available. They organized a parents program, which aided the athletes' parents with logistics and gave them VIP hospitality, and took what's traditionally a big distraction out of the way of the athletes. Every detail of every day was planned for in an effort that may have been far more encompassing than any of the previous Olympic planning efforts this team has done. Alan Ashley, who'd been a cross country Olympic team leader in the past made sure of that. He thanked the help of John Aalberg and SLOC, through which all of the necessary personnel had unprecedented access to the venues. The service team had done extensive snow, wax, base material, structure, and ski testing on the venue for several years prior to the Games. They even had a Lear Jet take the team from its training camp in Utah to the Grand Prix in Sun Valley before the Olympics. So the home-field advantage was considerable. He stated that no one should have any illusions that it wasn't, and that success this winter in Val di Fiemme, and in Torino in 2006 will not be as easy to accomplish because of this fact. But was it the key factor? He stated that he doesn't think so. It helped, for sure, but it wasn't the real reason the athletes achieved such levels of success because the recent success hasn't only come at the Olympics. It's also come in Europe, at the World Cup, both before and after the Olympics. There have been several World Cup results out of the athletes that are better than they've been almost twenty years. We've seen five years in a row of best-ever results at the Junior World Championships. And the home-field advantage wasn't a factor in those results.

So if it wasn't the home-field advantage, what was it. Maybe we can thank the improvements in doping control. Doping controls have improved. Mr. Todd, Mr. Ashley, Melinda Roalstad, who is the representative to the FIS medical committee, and Mr. Marolt, who was recently elected to the position of FIS vice-president and stated that one of his two main platforms was to continue to push forward with the improvements of doping controls in skiing, Jim Stray-Gundersen and Mr. Bodensteiner have pushed hard at

the FIS level for advances in doping control. Their strategy's been political, for sure. It hasn't been waged in the media, which has been a tactic employed by other teams, which has also has its benefits. But they've pushed hard on this topic with FIS, even before discussions about doping control became popular in the ski website media, and even before the scandal in Salt Lake City, and even before the scandal in Lahti. Has our lobbying effort done any good? He doesn't know. He stated that he doping controls have been improved dramatically, and that's the bottom line. And by eliminating cheaters, it's been easier for our athletes to climb closer to the top. But even with the new, more effective controls, there are still many of the same athletes on top as there were four, or six, or eight years ago. Norway and Italy once again battled for the top position in the men's relay. Only this time, there were not only fewer teams between us and them, but there was also a whole lot less time on the clock.

He stated that improvements in doping control have contributed, but they probably aren't the common thread that's really helped to tip this sport in a positive direction.

What about coaching, then, he asked? It's certainly a big factor. There's no doubt there. Great coaches help athletes move to levels of achievement they could never reach alone, that's for certain. And there's no question that we have great coaches in this country. He stated that he doesn't have exact figures, but his hunch is that we have more great coaches now in the U.S. than we probably ever have before. And that's probably a product of three things. There are generally more coaches in the country. There are probably more programs, and there are also almost certainly more professional coaches in the country. And that means that there are more high-quality individuals who can dedicate themselves to coaching. Coaching in this sport is steadily becoming a more and more of a profession. And the competition to get top-level professional coaching jobs is high, and that means that coaches who want to advance in their careers have to constantly improve their skills. They need to educate themselves, and they need to understand what the other professional coaches in this country are doing. And they need to understand what coaches are doing abroad.

He stated that, just as a small example, in 1996, when we hired an assistant coach into the U.S. Ski Team, there were no applicants for the job. They had to go out and recruit. Then in 1998, when they hired another assistant coach, they had three applicants. And this year, when they hired the new coaches, and of course they did hire for two positions, which changes the math a little, but this year, they had fourteen applicants. So, he stated, it looks like there are more and more people making a profession out of coaching.

Second; because coaching's becoming a real profession, the top coaches seem to have longer careers. There are now have a lot of veteran coaches in our system, guys who've coached for 15 years or longer. And of course, the more experience those coaches gain, the better they are. He stated that he doesn't know for a fact that we have more veteran coaches now than we had ten, or twenty years ago, but his hunch is that we do.

Third, he stated that coaches' education is going on, and quite possibly, coaches' education is a bigger component of quality coaching nationwide than it ever has been. He stated that that's not to say that USSA itself is educating coaches better than it ever has. He stated that there have been many good education programs in the past, run by guys like Peter Ashley, and Steve Gaskill, and Ruff Paterson, among others. And USSA is doing what it can do now, though regional clinics, the video and manual put together by Mr. Grover and Miles Minson, and the National Coaches Conference. But in addition to those things, we've also seen effective initiative from the leaders of this sport; like Rick Kapala, who brought the Swedish coach Bengt Stattin to Sun Valley and used him to educate Intermountain coaches. Like NENSA, who runs an aggressive coaches education program region-wide here in New England. Like Ahvo Taipale, who for a number of years has brought a foreign national team coaches into the Twin Cities to do education there. Like the Chairman of the coaches' subcommittee, Reid Lutter, who's now organized a Twin Cities coaches' education seminar series, using experts like Sten Fjeldhiem and Mr. Grover to deliver top-level information to the coaches in that area. He stated he's certain there are many more examples that are not mentioned here, but that he hopes we can inventory later in this meeting. He stated that more and more coaches are also educating themselves in non-traditional ways, exploring the internet for the latest information, talking with one another, and networking.

He stated that, even though we can see that great coaching's a critical success factor, we need to be careful about drawing conclusions here. Look at who's succeeding. Of the seven athletes who scored some of our best-ever Olympic results last winter, they worked with three different coaches, or actually coach-teams. Ms. Kemppel worked with Jim Galanes and Frode Lillefjell. Justin Wadsworth with Torbjorn Karlsen. And Kris Freeman and Andrew Johnson with Mr. Grover and Mr. Minson. And while the common factors in these relationships are great athletes and great coaches, it's hard to say that they all coached with the same style, or that specific elements of their coaching were new innovations that were consistent with one another, and led to the simultaneous rise of these athletes.

He stated that this is also the case when you consider the best-ever athletes we've seen at the Junior World Championships. At that level, there's an even wider range of coaches when you look at that group of athletes and the coaches they work with.

Really confounding any conclusion, he stated, is the fact the three of the seven best-ever athletes, John Bauer, Patrick Weaver and Carl Swenson essentially operated as their own coaches, and hadn't worked directly with a coach in some cases for as long as eight years.

He stated that we can say that coaching's been a big part of the picture of success, but that we can also say that great coaches have actually been working in this system for a long, long time, and that something else might have provided a spark, which opened some new doors for the athletes.

He stated that there are a few things that have probably contributed to opening some new doors for the athletes. There are a few consistencies within that group of Olympians. And there are a few simple, but significant changes in the way the sport's been structured since 1996 that have probably played a quiet role in opening those doors.

He stated that this isn't meant to be a complete list, but at least a starting point.

He stated that first and foremost is the USSA Vision. Bill Marolt took over the leadership of USSA in 1996, and immediately made it clear that USSA would be focused on athletic performance at the top-level, and activities that weren't focused on top-level athletic performance wouldn't fall into the scope of the organization. The Vision he set for the organization is to be the best in the world in Olympic skiing and snowboarding by 2006. And the mission is to make that vision a reality by fielding and maintaining teams of world-class skiers and snowboarders.

He stated that USSA does run other programs in addition to simply fielding and maintaining teams of world-class athletes. USSA provides coaches and officials education, tools to clubs, such as youth materials, and race and club insurance. And USSA helps to run high-level competitions. But really, these programs are all focused on pulling athletes up the pipeline, with the goal of being the best in the world.

He stated that when that vision was set, it made the purpose and operation of USSA much more focused. Prior to that, USSA was tackling a huge scope of programs within skiing at a lot of levels. He stated that Mr. Todd can tell you this well. The scope ranged from high-level competitions, to recreational skiing, to divisional programs, to masters skiing, to youth skiing, and in the end of the 80's, it was starting to incorporate national team activities. He stated that the job is a whole lot easier now, because USSA's focused on a clear and specific vision and mission.

He stated that when that vision was set, it not only made it very clear what the scope of the operations would be, and it also helped to clarify the roles of those individuals, and clubs and organizations who were outside of the USSA structure in its strictest sense. He stated that in reality, we're all part of the same skiing community, and that's really the way we have to view ourselves. But when roles were clarified, competition clubs began to hone in on their role, which is predominantly the development of young skiers, who can enter into the U.S. Ski Team program. He stated that the mentality that it's a club's job to put a kid on the Olympic podium has largely been put to rest, and for good reason.

He stated that someone like Dick Hunt, who wanted to see USSA provide greater services to masters and recreational skiing realized that those programs weren't in the scope of the organization any longer, and it helped him focus on new ways to provide better service to masters racers, which he is still trying to find a way to do today.

He stated that regional and divisional organizations came to realize that their job was to produce a structure in the regions, which would recruit and advance kids up the pipeline into the Junior Olympics, to help them be successful there by providing coaches educated at that level, and then eventually graduate them into clubs focused on elite junior development.

He stated that USSA as an organization would provide the pipeline structure, defined by rules, competitions and team selection methods, and would field and maintain teams of world-class athletes. And that's what Trond Nystad and his team, and Mr. Grover have set out to do. And they've done it extremely well. But even so, we know that we won't capture everyone who will make it to the top. Who could have known that John Bauer would essentially come out of retirement to achieve what he did last year. Patrick Weaver's another athlete who was in the same boat. He stated that there were plenty of people who questioned Patrick's selection to the Olympic team. He stated that there are limits in the number of athletes the team can support. He stated that's why those who've helped us to create a wider safety net, like the factory teams and the best college teams, and teams like Gold 2002 have played a large role in the recent successes.

He stated that when the vision of USSA was clarified, the roles of programs throughout the development pipeline really became focused. This was a constant across the board, and is something that is a lot different from where USSA was at six years ago, and which has probably helped to tip us toward success.

He also talked about the competition ladder. Over the past six years, a number of competitions have been added to the pipeline, such as the Junior Scandinavian Cup, focused on athletes 17 years old and younger. There have been somewhere in the neighborhood of forty athletes that have taken part in this new competition series, and it's helped to inspire confidence in our juniors because it's easier to compare relative talent to peers in Scandinavia at a young age. This project seems to have had an important impact on our young skiers, and an impact that didn't exist before. He stated also that the juniors as a group are performing at best-ever levels because they can see the progress and successes of the older athletes, and that is motivating for them, and provides them with a new level of confidence that they haven't had in a long while. In international competition, they feel like they belong there.

He stated that we also have a very strong domestic competition series. The Nor/Am's raised the level of importance of domestic competition dramatically over the past six years. Where it used to be that the national championship was really the only domestic competition of any consequence during the year, we've added 14 high-level, meaningful competitions to the calendar. We pay a total of \$65,000 of prize money to the athletes through this series, and each competition has a lot of meaning, helping athletes to qualify for international competition, including the World Championships and Olympics. Athletes can now advance directly to the World Cup from the Nor/Am, they can qualify for the Junior World Championships and U-23 World Championships through the Nor/Am, and they can win Junior and U-23 champion titles at the Nor/Am level. And add to that mix the International Spring Series, which Rick Kapala started in Sun Valley, and the Europa Cup, which is being attacked now at the development level for the first time, and we've got a pretty meaningful competition calendar. Through the selection system, and the methods of seeding for the nationals and Junior Olympics by our National Ranking List, regional scored competitions are tied into a national system, and increased their value and meaning.

He stated that high-level domestic competition's a common factor now between our top Olympic performers. They've all benefited from the Nor/Am. For some, like John Bauer and Patrick Weaver, who weren't on the team leading up to the Olympics, it gave them a venue to hit high-level competition weekend after weekend leading up to the Olympics, and it forced them to elevate their game. They had to perform consistently against our top competitors. They were evaluated over a long period of time. And there was a big group of athletes chasing the Nor/Am. One organizer last year estimated that there were about 150 athletes following the Nor/Am circuit. And when you saw the athletes on that circuit, you could see the pressure to perform. A couple of good races wouldn't cut it. They needed to perform with the best,

consistently. And while they were out achieving these better-than-normal results weekend after weekend, they were also racing at venues in several different parts of the country where junior athletes were exposed to them, and could compare their performances, and develop their heroes.

He stated that the top performers were rewarded for their performances. Team or not, those athletes could essentially earn their funding on the road when they won races. Whether or not someone was supported by the U.S. Ski Team or a Factory team wasn't a big deal. He noted that the industry stepped up in a big way to support the athletes in getting to the Nor/Ams. He stated that, on the Nor/Am, if you're successful, athletes can pay their expenses. They can earn their funding.

She stated that we now have a strong and meaningful domestic competition program where, not too long ago, we basically had none, and that this isn't the first time we've had a high-level competition series at home. USSA's organized a strong series in the past, with the legendary Dannon Series, nearly twenty years ago. And coincidence or not, he pointed out that we also had excellent results back then.

He stated that the Nor/Am's also become an effective tactic for our top team. He pointed to competitors like Kris Freeman and Andrew Johnson, John Bauer and Patrick Weaver, Carl Swenson and Wendy Wagner when he had their breakthrough performances in Lahti in 2001. These are athletes who didn't race in the World Cup in the months immediately leading up to their breakthroughs with international successes. They raced the Nor/Am. They honed their skills at home. They raced in races where the competition level was high enough that no one was dominating, and they spared themselves the travel and the stress of competing in Europe in the early season. They brought the sport from Europe over to their back yard. He stated that that's a good step, and we have to continue down that road. He stated that we all need to recognize the contribution that our Nor/Am organizers are making now, because these are big-time events, they're difficult to organize, because the athletes demand high-quality, and they're expensive. He stated that it's not easy to accommodate and reward our top athletes, but there are a lot of communities who are excited about organizing Nor/Am competitions, and they're pulling them off. He stated that these organizers have absolutely contributed to our successes.

He stated that in our last several meetings, we've talked a lot about the ways we've changed the methods of team selection, and that we can point to this as another factor in the team's recent success. Not only are we picking better teams, because we're evaluating the athletes over a longer period of time and in a variety of situations, from races domestically to races in Europe, and not only are we applying a certain pressure to perform over a longer period of time, but we're also able to allow our very best performers a longer advance notice, in a roundabout way, that they can focus on the championships internationally, and not at home. As an example, Carl Swenson could have told you after the end of the 2001 season that he was going to the Olympics, and that was what he was focused on, not an Olympic Trial. He stated that Patrick Weaver's a classic example of this. After some outstanding races in the end of 2001, he felt very confident that he'd done enough to qualify himself for the Olympics. It wasn't set in stone, but he could estimate that his ranking would survive through the early part of 2002. And with that in mind, he focused himself on a top performance at the Olympics, and he used the Nor/Am, the Gold Cup and the National Championships as preparation for that. He didn't need to peak to get to the Olympics, he peaked at the Olympics.

He stated that high-level domestic competition seems to be a common factor, as does the way we've gone about selecting our teams.

He stated that he'd also like to point to the concept of TEAM. He stated that this is something the Committee talked a lot about at the last meeting, and when new staff were hired in, this was a priority that the team was after. He stated that, as can be seen now with the new coaches on staff, this is a big focus for them. It was also a major focus coming into the Olympics last winter, and transitioning over to this season, when it became apparent that the majority of the national team members would be living and training together on a daily basis.

He stated that the coaches have addressed this in a number of specific ways, but primarily, their focus has been on the creation of a residence program. On the development level, we've had kids in residence at Gold 2002 in Anchorage, in Park City, and in Marquette, and now all but one of the U.S. Ski Team

members living and training in and around the USSA headquarters in Park City. The athletes are serious about operating as a team. They want to live and train together with the team coaches. They understand that they're on the road with the team coaches for almost 200 days a year, and they feel that it's important to be coached by the guys they're in contact with the most.

He then summarized the things the team and program have to stay focused on as we move forward. He stated that we have to continue to do the good things we're doing now, which without saying, but it's not that easy. Regional organizations need to keep pushing forward, and to keep dragging new resources into the sport. Coaches need to keep pushing their knowledge and experience to new levels. National team coaches, technicians and team managers need to find ways to create a "home-field advantage" in Europe, and specifically in Italy moving toward 2006. We need to stay vigilant in the area of doping control. We have to continue to grow the Nor/Am, creating more opportunities and more rewards for the best athletes, whether they're part of the national team or not. Factory and college teams need to continue to create opportunities for athletes who aren't identified by the national team, or who aren't willing to jump fully into the national team program. We have to stay focused on the specific areas where we, as individuals or organizations, can have the greatest impact. We have to keep the steps up the competition ladder small and attainable. We have to stay smart about how we select our teams, and look for opportunities in those selection methods to increase the number of important competitions for the athletes, and we have to continue to increase the importance of the competitions we already have. And we need to continue to innovate in the areas of ski preparation and coaching, and to allow those professionals to define the specifics of their operations, and to assess how we as a Committee can best support them in their efforts.

7. Youth Ski League

Mr. Bodensteiner explained what USSA is currently doing to service the Youth Ski League. He stated that YSL clubs receive a newsletter aimed at their youth members, a club manual, and a "Star Chart" achievement chart. He stated that, in cooperation with NENSA, a CD ROM children's book entitled "Johnny's Ski School" had been made available to many youth in USSA and NENSA sanctioned youth programs, and that this book was available to others. He stated that the bulk of the administration of the youth programs around the nation was done on a local basis, by local clubs, and that the goal from the national perspective was to provide those local clubs with tools and information. He stated that the ultimate goal would be to provide that sort of information to youth clubs even if they are not a part of the USSA youth ski league program, and that the first step to that end had been taken with the Johnny's Ski School project.

Mr. Todd stated that the Youth Ski League was originally established to be a pipeline device, which would start with kids at the grassroots level, and bridge them up to the Junior Olympics, and that the tools provided through the program would aid in creating consistent competitions, coaches education, and the promotion of youth skiing. He stated that a secondary goal was to provide a central point for information sharing and hero development.

Mr. Allaberg asked the regional representatives how regional competitions currently reach down into the youth level, as this is a critical point to reach down.

Mr. Cote stated that in addition to including JIII classes in the Eastern Cup, New England organizes a two day youth festival, including an obstacle course, a costume parade, and relay and sprint race, so there is a mix of competition and non-competitive events.

Mr. Lutter stated that the Midwest is looking into the concept of organizing a youth festival during the Junior Olympics.

Mr. Caterinichio stated that the situation in Alaska is very similar.

Much discussion was had amongst the members about what sort of youth programs are taking place in different parts of the country, and a general decision was made that the first step in increasing youth

services would be to begin to inventory and share information about what different clubs and youth programs were doing. The Committee felt that this step may help to increase innovation within the various youth programs.

8. Regional Competitions

Mr. Bodensteiner gave an overview of the current status of regional competitions.

Mr. Brown suggested that the regional competitions help to fill a traditional gap in the second half of the season, and that whatever could be done to increase the importance of those regional competitions would be helpful to a large group of athletes just below the level at which they graduate to compete in Europe. In his opinion, the movement of the NCAA schools to have their meets sanctioned as FIS events is a good step in that direction.

Mr. Aalberg suggested that a way to increase the importance of these events would be to create Regional Championship events, which would add importance to the second half of the season.

Ms. Caterinichio pointed out that many regions already have good regional championships, but these are mostly filled with junior competitors, and the older competitors are either competing in college races, marathons, or races overseas.

No decisions were taken.

9. Marathon Races

Mr. Brown noted again that the marathon races are an important part of the development pipeline, and that a large group of racers are kept in the sport annually by these races.

The general consensus was that these races have been healthy and strong for a long time, and continue to be strong as individual organizers, that they provide good exposure for the sponsors of a certain level of athlete, and that they are appropriate for older athletes who are not competing in Europe at the Championship or World Cup level.

10. Junior Olympics – daily program post-2003

Currently, the Junior World Championships, U-23 World Championships and Olympics/World Championships all have mass-start competitions on the competition program. The members of the Committee discussed the question of whether or not a mass-start competition should also be included in the program of the Junior Olympics.

Mr. Brown stated that mass-start racing is tactically demanding, and that it takes a specialized set of skill to compete well in this sort of event, which can only be developed through experience. In his opinion, the mass-start should be included in the program.

Mr. Grover stated that through the Nor/Am and through the various Junior Olympic qualification series', many of which are now including mass-start competitions, there are other avenues to develop mass-start tactics.

Mr. Brown stated that he felt the best way for the top skiers to develop their tactics is to do it in high-level racing, where the stakes are high, and the best competitors are together. He stated that mass-start skills are learned, and racing at the regional level is much less valuable than when racing for a junior national title.

Ms. Caterinichio recommended that it be suggested to the divisions that they include a mass-start competition in their JOQ series'.

Mr. Engen stated that the point of making this change would be to have a positive impact on the results at the Junior World Championships, and based on the timing and level of the event, he could not see how the addition of a mass-start would have a material effect on the results of U.S. athletes in that event.

It was pointed out that Mr. Kapala, Chairman of the Junior Working Group, felt that there are several questions concerning courses and seeding that need to be resolved before a decision to add a mass-start can be made. In an email prior to the meeting, he stated that there are very few venues with courses wide enough to effectively handle a mass-start competition, and the addition of this format may severely limit the number of sites who can host the event.

Ms. Caterinichio stated that this is a concern, but that we can't cater to the weak. She stated that we need to place the event in sites which are ready to handle the event, based on the specification that are right for the athletes, and the development of the sport.

Ms. Cateirinichio pointed out that a mass-start event used to be held at the Junior Olympics, but that, of course, the field sizes are much larger now, so issues with seeding and the width of courses are a concern, as Mr. Kapala had suggested.

It was decided that this issue should be referred to a study group led by Ms. Caterinichio, and including Mr. Kapala and Chris Axelson, and others appointed by Mr. Kapala, who would bring a recommendation forward to the Junior Working Group for them to consider at their next meeting.

11. Junior Olympics – initiatives to raise field size

Mr. Bodensteiner posed the question of field size at the Junior Olympics to the Committee. He stated that the number of participants has increased steadily over the past years, and continues to increase gradually. He stated that the size of the field of participants was a strength of the event, in that the participants bring greater revenue to the organizers through entry fees, sponsors and local communities. He stated that, since this is one of the major strengths of the event, the Committee should keep considering ways to increase this field size.

Ms. Caterinichio stated that field size is a strength, but her worry is that the larger teams are already at maximum capacity when it comes to managing their teams. She stated that, when team sizes start to exceed fifty athletes, it becomes tough logistically. She also stated that some divisions already do not use the entire quota that they are allowed, or bring nearly everyone who tries out for the team. She stated that a goal should be to continue to increase participation, but it may be that the best way is to increase the number of teams, not the number of athletes per team. She stated that the Committee expects to see a proposal to form a "high-plains" district, which would enter another team into the mix.

Mr. Lutter stated that we need to be careful in this regard, since the qualification process to get into the Jos is one of the very important components of the program, and increasing divisional quotas can make the qualification process less meaningful.

12. Spring Series in the future

Mr. Bodensteiner asked the Committee for their guidance in determining the priorities of the Spring Series. He stated that in the past, when the Spring Series was organized exclusively in Sun Valley, there was a nice blend of high-level World Cup racers, U.S. Ski Team athletes, junior club teams from Scandinavia and U.S. Juniors. Now that the Spring Series has begun to be organized at different locations around the country, he would like to be able to give the organizers a sense of priority when trying to decide whether to prioritize their funds on prize money, support for top-level senior athletes, or support for foreign junior clubs.

Ms. Caterinichio stated that it is the top-level seniors, who really drive junior participation in the event.

Mr. Grover stated that, in his mind, the most important thing to do is to get the U.S. Ski Team athletes to participate. He stated that their participation is oftentimes minimal, in that it's late in a long season, and

there isn't the motivation for them to get there. He stated that incentives like prize money will help to make the sport more professional at home, and even if no junior competitors from Scandinavia attend, the U.S. Ski Team athletes provide plenty of good and appropriate competition for the junior competitors. He stated that the prize money requirement should be set high, and high enough to attract the U.S. Ski Team athletes, and foreign World Cup competitors.

Ms. Caterinichio stated that it is nice for the event to travel around the country, but at that time of the year, the motivation of the athletes to participate is driven in a significant way by their ability to compete in a nice environment, where the weather is good, and the scenery is beautiful.

Mr. Cote proposed that there be two Spring Series, one in New England a week prior to the traditional dates, and one during the traditional period immediately after the close of the World Cup. He stated that New England will test such a spring series this year as a regional competition, but that it would aid the series if the minimum penalty could be lowered to bring it on-par with the main spring series.

Mr. Bodensteiner stated that such an arrangement could split the field of juniors, making both events less meaningful, and that it would be impossible for the top seniors to compete in an earlier series, since they are still in Europe, competing on the World Cup.

Mr. Cote agreed to report on the experiences of the test event in New England, and to re-visit the issue in the spring.

Based on that feedback and the general agreement of the Committee, Mr. Bodensteiner will take that information to the Spring Series organizers.

13. JI Scandinavian Cup

Mr. Grover gave an overview of the JI Scandinavian Cup, the benefits the program has realized through this project, the team selection criteria, the logistics of traveling to and competing in the event, and the method of selection for assistant coaches. He stated that the goal of the event is to give kids a good, high-level competition experience in Europe before they head off to the World Juniors, and to motivate more and more JI competitors to participate in the National Championships. He stated that as the program was originally established, it was intended primarily to focus more on experience than on performance, but, he stated, performing well is also a factor.

Mr. Lutter stated that he didn't know how performance could be emphasized even more for this event if they wanted to. He stated that the goal is for the kids to race fast, but not to have the pressure of having to perform, and in his opinion, this is being accomplished.

Mr. Grover stated that coaches would again be selected through an application process, and that he would screen those application based the following criteria; coaches who are working hard with athletes at that age-level, coaches who have not already had a lot of international experience, the role the coach needs to play within the team, coaches' availability, whether or not a coach would have any of his or her athletes competing in the event, coaches from different regions, and especially for this event, coaches who are willing to put in the time to organize the logistics, since there are no U.S. Ski Team staff coaches who attend this event. He stated that this is traditionally a tough trip to plan based on the loose planning by the organizers, and due to the need to plan with a local club to give the athletes the experience of training and racing with that club prior to the event.

Mr. Bodensteiner stated that selecting coaches for the Jr. Scandinavian Cup and the Junior World Championships is an artful decision, and Mr. Grover needs to have some latitude in selecting coaches who can fit into the overall planning. He stated that a strict selection criteria for coaches would need provide the best solution, and the best level of support for the athletes. Therefore, he made a motion to authorize Mr. Grover to select coaches for the Jr. Scandinavian Cup and the Junior World Championships based on the criteria he had outlined. Mr. Engen seconded this motion.

Motion carries.

Ms. Caterinichio requested that special attention be paid to bringing female coaches to these competitions. Mr. Grover agreed to this, but added that he has had nearly no application from female coaches to attend these trips.

Mr. Aalberg stated that special attention should be paid to getting the word out about the application process, since many qualified coaches seem to feel that they haven't received invitations. Mr. Grover pointed out that this has been a region-driven process, and that he depends on the regions to get the word out and to send qualified candidates to him. He stated that he has only considered candidates, who have been nominated by the regions.

Ms. Caterinichio suggested that the coaches on this trip be tasked with the additional responsibilities of getting the kids exposed to the local culture of where they travel to, and to incorporate social activities. She also stated that she felt the team should be outfitted in additional uniform pieces, so that they could feel more like a team. Mr. Grover said he would look into both accounts.

14. Junior World Championships

Mr. Grover gave an overview of the Junior World Championships, the support staff he is putting together to help the athletes perform at the highest levels, the team selection criteria, the logistics of traveling to and competing in the event, and the method of selection for assistant coaches. He stated that the goal of the event is to win our first-ever medal at the World Juniors, and to have another athlete finish in the top-5. He stated that coaches will be selected in a manner similar to that of the JI Scandinavian Cup, but that he would focus more on the role the coaches could play within the overall staff.

15. NCAA Competitions – USSA Collegiate Tournament and Nor/Am Opportunities

Mr. Bodensteiner gave a report as information to the Committee only. He stated that he has asked Knut Nystad to investigate with the other NCAA coaches an extension of the newly approved USSA collegiate tournament at the Nationals. He stated that it would be very simple to name any of the Nor/Am competitions as "collegiate tournaments", thereby giving college programs the same ability to request additional funds from their athletic departments, and travel to some of the early-season races, and that he is waiting to hear from the college coaches as to whether or not there would be interest for this.

Mr. Todd stated that it may be helpful to offer to draft up an invitation to the Nor/Ams, which could be sent to the Athletic Directors of the schools.

Mr. Brown noted that it would be important to continue to accommodate college meets who want to register their races as FIS competitions, and there was general agreement that this was important, and a progressive step by the colleges to improve their position in the pipeline.

16. U-23 World Championships

Mr. Grover gave an overview of a new event, the U-23 World Championships. He stated that this event was held as a Europa Cup for U-23 skiers last winter, and that it will be held again this year in Italy. This event is not an official World Championship, but is recognized commonly as such by all of the major ski nations. He stated that the event was originally scheduled to take place in Soldier Hollow, but due to logistics around the World Championships, it was rescheduled to take place in the U.S. in 2004. He stated that the bulk of the support staff for the event would be provided by staff coaches, but that he also planned to invite a coach from one of the regional training centers to assist, and to continue on into the Europa Cup. He stated that the goal of the event is to achieve a podium finish, and to have another athlete finish in the top-5, and gave an overview of the selection criteria. He also stated that as we gain more experience with this event, it will become more and more of an entry point into the NDG, but noted that currently, it is

tough to define what sort of success the team is looking for at the event, and that this will become more apparent as we gain experience with it.

17. American Birkebeiner

Discussion regarding this event was tabled, except to note that it is an extremely important event for the sport in this country, and belongs as a step on the development pipeline. It was noted that it would be great to be able to enter U.S. Ski Team members into the event, but it normally conflicts with the Olympics and World Championships.

18. Nor/Am – “Traditional Sites”

Mr. Bodensteiner explained that the Nor/Am was settling into a good and predictable pattern, and that some traditional sites and dates were beginning to emerge. He stated that Fairbanks is such a site, the U.S. Nationals is a tradition event though it takes place at different sites, and that the West Yellowstone/Silver Star rotation can also be considered a traditional rotation. He stated that these traditions put the organizers in a good position to increase and solidify the event services they can provide, as well as the support to the athletes. The Committee gave its general approval to these Nor/Am traditions.

He stated that it would be nice to explore the development of other traditional sites, and that there may be some opportunity to do so in the West in December, but that flexibility between the East and Midwest needs to be maintained in January in order to ensure that FIS races hit those regions on a regular basis.

19. Nor/Am – Additional opportunities

Mr. Bodensteiner stated that in order to expand the competition opportunities and prize money available to the athletes through the Nor/Am, that he would like to begin to look into adding a Nor/Am weekend in Anchorage in the middle of November, a week after the traditional opener in Fairbanks.

Mr. Grover voiced his support of this event, but stated that he would recommend that the minimum penalty for this competition be set at 35.00 points, as is the case in Fairbanks, since the middle of November is still very early in the season, and that in his opinion, it would be wise to de-value that competition slightly.

Mr. Engen stated that a second weekend of competition in Alaska may make traveling to Alaska a more attractive package for the athletes, and the addition of an event may help them to earn their travel costs back. He stated that it will likely encourage more and more athletes to travel to Alaska for good early season training.

Based on the general approval of the Committee, Mr. Bodensteiner stated that he would negotiate with Canada to get their authorization to pursue the addition of that event.

20. Nor/Am – Long-distance competition

Mr. Bodensteiner stated that one of the continuing criticisms of the Nor/Am calendar in the past seasons has been that there is a lack of long-distance events, making it hard for long-distance specialists to qualify for international events. He stated that a 15/30km event had been added to the program in December, and that a 15/30km is part of the Nor/Am during the National Championships in January. He stated that the idea of adding a marathon competition to the Nor/Am had been explored, but the timing is not good, given that the marathons take place in the second part of the season, after the top competitors have left to compete in Europe. Based on this, he asked the Committee for guidance on this subject.

Mr. Engen stated that he had also heard much of the criticism, as the athletes' rep, and felt that the criticism was mainly only a result of the cancellation of the long-distance race in December. He felt that without that cancellation, much of the criticism would have been eliminated. He stated that, in his opinion, there is a good balance in the program between long-distance, middle distance, sprints and new formats. He stated that to add more long-distance racing would be counter-productive.

Mr. Grover echoed his comments, stating that in his experience, the athletes who can really perform at a high level in long-distance races at the international level are also those who excel at middle distances.

No action was taken, and no recommendation to add an additional long-distance competition was made.

21. U.S. Nationals

Mr. Aalberg made a proposal that the “duathlon” pursuit be included in the national championship program from 2004. He stated that the championship organizers were equipped, and in Rumford’s case, willing to organize such an event.

Mr. Brown echoed this statement, saying that it is important for the U.S. to be on the forefront of this competition format, for the U.S. to name a national pursuit champion, and to include the duathlon pursuit in the program as soon as possible.

Mr. Bodensteiner stated that with nearly 250 men typically entering into the pursuit race at the Nationals, a stadium of over 400m in length would be required to host that many competitors, and that no venue in the country could handle those numbers.

Mr. Aalberg stated that the solution to that problem would be to limit the field size to approx. 75 men, as is the case on the World Cup.

Mr. Bodensteiner stated that the championships are at a healthy level now because of the great field sizes the event has experienced in the past three years, and he is against any limitations there. He stated that there are several additional issues, including seeding methods and junior team selection that would be impacted by this change, and without solutions to those, the proposal should not be accepted. He stated that he agrees that the athletes need to be provided with experience in this event, and pointed to the Nor/Am schedule already for this season, which includes three such events. He stated that the pursuit in this format is manageable at the Nor/Am level, where the field sizes are typically smaller, and that this is the appropriate venue for giving the athletes experience in this event.

It was decided that this issue should be studied further before any decision is made. Mr. Aalberg was tasked with reporting back to the Committee in the spring.

22. Europa Cup

Mr. Grover reported that the Europa Cup has been established as a very meaningful development tool over the past two seasons. He stated that this competition series is viewed as a development tool which brings young skiers along at the right pace and in the appropriate level of competition, and not a B-level racing circuit, meaning that the focus of support is on entering athletes who have been identified as development-level skiers, not just the next best group of competitors after the World Championship team. He stated that these races are open to entry by any FIS competitor, and are not limited by quotas, which is why selection criteria have not been established. He stated that only specific Europa Cup competitions have been designated to be scored to the NRL, so that the focus is kept on domestic racing in the first half of the season, and that there is an emphasis on racing in Europe when the top athletes are gone to the World Championships, World Cup, etc. He stated that this is also a good dovetail to the World Junior Championships and U-23 Championships, and provides a venue for athletes who compete in those events to continue racing in Europe for additional weeks.

23. World Cup – USST strategy and October World Cup update

Mr. Bodensteiner updated the members on the U.S. Ski Team’s strategy regarding World Cup. He stated that, based on the experiences leading up to the Olympics, where the best performances came from those athletes who did not travel to Europe to compete in the World Cup in December, but rather from those who stayed home and competed in the high-level Nor/Am competitions, Trond Nystad has made the decision to

race the Nor/Am in December, and not travel to the World Cup until the middle of January. He stated that this would reduce the travel stress the World Cup skiers have experienced in the past, and allows the athletes a longer lead-in time in Europe before the World Championships. That is, this year, the World Cup skiers will be able to arrive in Europe almost six weeks before the World Championship, instead of ten days, which has been the norm for the past few championships.

He stated that this tactic would be re-evaluated again after the season, but right now, this is Mr. Nystad's long-term plan during championship years. He stated that in 2004, when there is no major championship, that the team would plan to compete on the World Cup during the entire season.

He also stated that the World Cup begins this season in the end of October, with a sprint race in downtown Dusseldorf. He stated that the U.S. Ski Team would not field a team to this event this year, but may in the future. He also stated that the FIS has agreed to include the winners of the Nor/Am overall sprint into the paid quota for the event, so that the best sprinters from the Nor/Am season would be able to have their travel expenses covered for the competition.

24. World Championships

Mr. Bodensteiner gave an overview of the level of detail of the planning effort for the World Championships. Some of the members of the Committee asked to be copied on the "Operations Manual" that would be completed before the championship.

25. 5-year planning projections

Mr. Bodensteiner stated that in August, the staff had completed the latest version of the 5-year plan, and he gave an overview of how that planning is structured. He stated that the first step is to take an inventory of all of the athletes who are competing at a high level at the different steps of the athlete development pipeline. Those athletes are then charted, and an estimation of what they can realistically achieve in the next five (and in some cases ten) in the various international competitions that the team measures itself by. Through that process, he stated, the staff can then build out a picture of its team goals, which ultimately are based on what the individual athletes can achieve. He stated that the team goals are not based on where they think the team should be to become the best in the world, but are a realistic estimation of what the athletes who are actually in the development pipeline can accomplish. He stated that this process also allows the staff to project the team size, both for the national team and the development team, which will be necessary to support the athletes who can achieve those goals. He stated that, based on those goals and the projected team sizes, a detailed 5-year budget is built, which addresses the tools that are necessary to have to deliver athletic success. Tools, which are not already a part of the core program, or which grow in size based on team size projections are prioritized according to need, and those become the targets for building out the program.

He stated that though this process, the staff is aiming to build the team size significantly, both on the national team and development end. Based on the projected growth of the development team, and the projected growth of the coaches' education program, adding an assistant development coach to the staff is the top priority for the team. Other projects being considered are the re-introduction of a spring camp for the top athletes. He stated that the traditional spring camp was removed from the program this year, based on the feedback of the athletes, who said that the camp is too demanding on them at a time when they need to be away from snow and from a structured training environment for a while. He stated that this seemed to be a reaction to the intense buildup to the 2002 Olympics, and stated that it was normal for the athletes not to want to jump right back into a camp atmosphere after such an intense period. He stated that what the team missed by not having the camp was a chance to bring the team together early in the season, do the pre-season planning that has to be done with the athletes, lay out the expectations of the team, and to begin the team-building process with new athletes and staff. He stated that the team would strive to compete in more World Cup competition in 2004, and possibly in October on an annual basis. Finally, he stated, there is a desire to add a second REG camp in each region each year, which would be staffed by team coaches.

He stated that in order to support this type of programming, based on draft budgets, he anticipated that the team would need to realize a 45% budget increase in 2004, remain flat in 2005, increase another 35% in 2006, and that the team could absorb a 10% decrease in 2007, based on anticipated athlete retirements. He stated that these are big increases, but Mr. Marolt and Mr. Ashley have been able to provide budget increases equally as big over the past five years. He did state, however, that based on the rising number of athletes who are performing at a high level, the budget will likely have to increase just to support a larger number of athletes, and that this would take precedent over the addition of new programs.

Mr. Bodensteiner invited comments from the Committee, who asked questions, and gave their general approval to the process, and the plan.

Sept. 13, 1:30 pm – 5:00 pm

1. Athlete Competency Statement – revision overview

Mr. Grover stated that he and the other staff coaches had begun to undertake a revision of the Athlete Competency Statement. He stated that, in his experience, it contains good information and can be a valuable tool for coaches at a lot of different levels, but that the formatting has made it non-user friendly. He stated that, since this is essentially a summary of our national training system from the grassroots level to the Olympic podium, the information contained in it requires some updating. Additionally, he stated, this manual can provide a good basis for a coaches' education curriculum, which is sorely lacking in the program. He stated that this update would take him through the rest of the fall, and then he would have a draft to distribute to the Committee members.

2. Clubs/education – National Coaches' Conference 2003

Mr. Grover stated that he had begun to draw out the plans for the 2003 National Coaches seminar, and that he would like additional guidance from the members of the Committee. He stated that the first conference, which was held in the summer of 1999 in Lake Placid, was a presentation of all facets of what the U.S. Ski Team undertakes. Based on the feedback of the participants, it was clear that they desired to get more into detail on a specific subject, than brush over a number of different topics. He stated that, in reaction to this, the 2001 in Midway, Utah focused on a single subject – women in cross country skiing – and brought in a number of experts from overseas through support from FIS and the IOC. He stated that, unfortunately, FIS and IOC support would not be available for the 2003 conference, but that the tactic he would like to suggest this time is to focus on two or three topics over two or three days, and to use a mix of U.S. cross country coaches, and experts from related fields.

After thorough discussion, it was decided that the staff will look into hosting the 2003 seminar at the Olympic Training Center in San Diego sometime in July or August, and that one of the topics to focus on will be power and sprinting.

3. Regional Elite Group

Mr. Grover stated that he is hoping to build out a second REG camp in each region, also staffed by USST coaches, in the future. He stated that this has been an extremely popular program, and that he would like to build on that success.

He stated that the current model in some regions, in which senior athletes are named to the REGs, has not been extremely productive. Although it had been suggested that JIII athletes should be considered for REG status and camps, he didn't agree that this was necessary. He stated that the most benefit from the REG camps come when JII, JI and OJ athletes participate, and he recommended that this be the focus of the program.

Ms. Caterinichio stated that it was important that we recognize in some way the senior athletes who have not made it into the national team program. She stated that this designation is very important for those

athletes, even if they don't get much out of the REG camps. She stated that senior skiers should continue to be named to the REGs, but that the camps should focus on the junior members of those teams.

She also suggested that standardized guidelines for all of the regions should be produced, so a certain level of athlete was being selected in each region, to which Mr. Grover responded that those guidelines had been established, and communicated to the regional leadership.

4. Official Training Centers – results of OTC review

Mr. Bodensteiner stated that, when the OTC program was established in 1998, it was stipulated by the Committee that a review of each of the programs would be conducted after each Olympic cycle, and that review would be done against the program requirements laid out by the Committee, and communicated to each of the centers. He stated that these specifications were the backbone of the application process, and hadn't changed over the four years.

He stated that a working group of Reid Lutter, Chris Klein and himself had been assigned to review the status of the three OTC programs, and he presented the results of that review. The results are as follows:

OTC REVIEW – 2002			
	U.S. Ski Team Campus Park City, UT	APU Nordic Ski Center Anchorage, AK	Olympic Education Center
1	Activities	Description	Description
	Ski Trails		
1.a	Access	Soldier Hollow - Free access, lighted trails in progress White Pine Touring Center - Free access	Free and easy from all points of city, 15-20 mins. Al Quall - Free Access, 5km lighted Free Access, 3km lighted
1.b	Distance from lodging	Soldier Hollow - 17 miles White Pine Touring Center - 2 miles	Kincaid Park 5 miles. Hillside Trails 5 miles. Many trails out the back door Al Quall - 13 miles Blueberry - 6 miles
1.c	Off-season use	Soldier Hollow - 3.5km rollerski loop, running White Pine Touring Center - None	Unlimited Al Quall - 3-5km rollerski loop in planning
1.d	Grooming equipment/schedule	Soldier Hollow - 2 Pisten Bullies, best-line trackset, daily grooming White Pine Touring Center - Snowmobile grooming, daily	Daily grooming by NSAA. Pisten Bully groomed. All trails maintained daily with Pisten Bull
1.e	Homologation (FIS COC min.)	Soldier Hollow - FIS World Cup homologation White Pine Touring Center - none	Kincaid Park has FIS homologated courses None. Process to homologate Al Qual is
1.f	Length of season	Soldier Hollow - Dec. 1 until late March White Pine Touring Center - mid-November until mid-March	Mid October to mid April Early November to Mid-April
1.g	Snowmaking	Soldier Hollow - 27km of snowmaking White Pine Touring Center - None	None None
	2 Dry-land Facilities		
2.a	Trail running	Nearly unlimited	Nearly unlimited. Ski and Mountain trails Nearly unlimited
2.b	Hill bounding	Canyons and Park City Ski Resorts, as well as Soldier Hollow trails.	Nearly unlimited. Numerous areas with smooth trails and plenty of vertical Al Quall - alpine hill
2.c	Sustained hill intervals	Canyons and Park City Ski Resorts, as well as Soldier Hollow trails.	Unlimited. Both for roller skiing and foot Marquette Mountain for hill running interv
2.d	Cycling/mountain biking	Nearly unlimited	Good Nearly unlimited
2.e	Rollerskiing	Soldier Hollow - 3.5km paved loop	Adequate 4 main loops of 1-3 hours each
2.f	Strength facility access	Dedicated strength facility only for U.S. Ski Team athletes - full-time access	Unlimited Two team-only facilities facilities - full-time

2.g	Strength facility (proper equipment)	Plyometric area, rollerboard, double-pole machine	Added \$105,000 of new equipment, Sept 1, 2002	Plyometric area (dome area), indoor and gymnasiums, rollerboard, double-pole ma
2.h	Swimming/Running track	Lap pool available at no charge, running track available 5 minutes from athlete housing	None	Lap pool available at no charge, running
3 Sports Science/Testing				
3.a	Labaratory	TOSH - Salt Lake City, skiing treadmill, gas analyzer, running treadmills, lactate analyzers	ARH-Alaska Regional Hospital	Gas analyzer, rollerski/cycling treadmill, 6 lactate analyzers
3.b	Staff	Andy Walshe - USST Sports Science Director Sue Robson - USST Senior Physiologist Scott Higgins - USST Physiologist	Dr. Jan Koval	Dr. Watts - NMU Sports Science profess students
3.c	Data tracking	Performed by sports science staff in-house	Yes	Test date tracked and presented by Dr. W
3.d	Data interpretation	Performed by sports science staff in-house	Yes. Interpreted by Dr. Koval and Jim Galanes	Dr. Watts assists in the data interpretation Fjeldheim, PhD in Sports Science
3.e	Nutrition assessment	Susie Parker - USST nutritionist (full-time)	Ruth Townsend and staff at ARH	Donna Marlor, RN (full-time)
3.f	Nutrition education	5 team lectures per year, manuals	Yes	Two team lectures performed per year
3.g	Supplements	Supplement are provided by Pharmanex, certified for purity and monitored by sports science staff	Yes. Provided by athletes with coaches recommendations	Iron supplements provided by team, traini consumed by athletes (doping education)
4 Ski preparation				
4.a	Ventillated room w/ equipment	Garages in athlete housing equipped w/ benches	State of the art...new facility	40x38 wax room w/ wax beinches
4.b	Stonegrinding	Machine owned by program and operated by USST technician (cross country skis only)	Pay...regional and local grinding available. Nordic Ultra Tune Systems. Alaska Mountainering and Hiking.	Wintersteiger machine (used for XC and R Rack ski shop. Unlimited free access.
5 Headquarters				
5.a	Meeting room	2 private meeting rooms available (10 person and 20 person rooms), video, whiteboards and sattelite television (OLN)	Yes. Private Team room, dedicated classroom and facilities at APU	Team living room with video, whiteboards
5.b	Video	TVs and video equipment available	Yes. TV and video equipment available from APU	TVs and video equipment available
5.c	Administration	Phones, laptops, fax machines, high-speed internet, travel agent, workspaces, all available in-house	Computers, fax, phones, high speed internet all located in house.	Phones, laptops, fax machines, high-spee all available in-house
5.d	Projectors	2 LCD projectors for video and presentations	Yes	None
6 Daily Coaching				
6.a	Staff	Chris Grover - U.S. Ski Team Development Coach Trond Nystad - U.S. Ski Team Head Coach Pete Vordenberg - USST Asst. Coach	Jim Galanes - Head Coach Frode Lillefjell - Assistant Coach Jon Quinn-Hurst - Program Manager	Sten Fjeldheim - Head Coach (fulltime fro Jenny Ryan - Assistant Coach (fulltime 9 r
6.b	Individual training programs	Yes	Yes	Yes
6.c	Field testing	YSI lactate analysis, standard rollerski, running and hill walking field tests, monthly lactate curve tests	Yes, Every two weeks and system of daily monitoring.	YSI lactate analysis, standard rollerski, r field tests
6.d	Training logs	Electronic standard training log	Paper and new on line system including daily training monitoring	Team training log, bound paper

6.e	Strength coaching	Scott Higgins - Physiologist and Strength Coach	Yes	USST Core strength program used, Steve consultant
7 Sports Psychology				
7.a	Staff	Dr. Jon Hammermeister and a graduate assistant with him	Jon Quinn-Hurst	Dr. Olson (psychology professor on campus)
7.b	Education	Mental skills course designed and implemented by Dr. Hammermeister (university professor)	Yes	1 classroom session per year, college psychology available
7.c	Individual Consultation	Up to 22 days per year in person, unlimited availability by phone	Yes. Whenever needed	Up to 14 days per year
7.d	Team building	Team cohesion agreement signed in the spring, team outings (barbeques, bungee jumping, etc.)	Yes	Fall retreat (camping trip)
7.e	Individual mental skills training plan	Yes	Yes	No
8 Sports Medicine				
8.a	Staff	Dr. Jay Butcher - Team Physician Dr. Larry Gaul - Assistant Team Physician Melinda Roalstad - Medical Director (in-house, full-time staff)	Dr. Jan Koval	UP Sports Med. Provides a doctor on campus access daily at clinic
8.b	Physical therapy	5 PTs on rotation with the team while on the road, PT available in-house 3 days a week	Yes, if necessary	3 training rooms on campus open on daily Sports Med.
8.c	Assessment	Physical exams and functional assessments done annually	Yes, if necessary	Physical exams done annually
8.d	Access to medical care	Immediate walk-in local access, no cost	Yes. Local Access	Local access normally at no cost
8.e	Blood analysis	No cost, blood drawn at ski team headquarters, results come back through Ms. Roalstad, and are interpeded by medical team before being distributed to coaches & athletes	Yes	Done 1 x every 2 month though University
9 Recovery methods				
9.a	Massage	Available to athletes for \$15 per hour (Scott Clark)	No - many therapists in Anchorage	Massage available regularly from trainers Crowley(masseur) - provides \$15 per hour basis
9.b	Whirlpools	PT tubs and whirlpools available at no cost	No	Available at no cost
10 Research and education				
10.a	Research	None.	Yes	Jenny Ryan study - Double-pole max VO2 max VO2 related to ski performance Current study - Effects of shifting center of mass and vertical vs. skiing velocity
10.b	Publication/dissemination	Publication of articles in the USSA Nordic Coaches' Newsletter, manual, video and at national clinics	Yes. Printed and web site	4 regional education clinics per year in cooperation with USSA
11 Off-season on-snow training				
11.a	Training venues	Wairou, New Zealand, Fairbanks, AK	Thomas Training Center (on Eagle Glacier 45 minutes from center's headquarters)	None
11.b	# of days on-snow (off-season)	20	Normally 4 weeks	0

	season)			
12	Technique analysis			
12.a	Video tools	Digital video cameras, displays, video editing capabilities	Video Camera, video editing	Digital video camera, limited video editing
13	Race support			
13.a	U.S. Nationals	Grover, Nystad, Vordenberg, Hall, Powers	Yes	Fjeldheim, Ryan
13.b	Jr. World Championship Trials	Grover, Nystad, Vordenberg, Hall, Powers	Yes	Fjeldheim, Ryan
13.c	Junior Olympics	Not applicable	Yes	Not applicable
13.d	Nor/Am	Grover, Nystad, Vordenberg, Hall, Powers	Yes	None
13.e	Spring Series	Grover, Hall	Yes	Fjeldheim, Ryan
13.f	Europa Cup	Grover	Yes	Fjeldheim, Ryan
13.g	Travel/logistical support	Katie Gould - Team Manager	Yes	Fjeldheim, Ryan
13.h	Equipment preparation	Staff Technicians (Hall, Powers, Berget, Oyaseter, Lah)	Yes	Fjeldheim, Ryan
13.i	Split timing	Grover, Nystad, Vordenberg	Yes	Fjeldheim, Ryan
13.j	Daily coaching	Grover, Nystad, Vordenberg	Yes	Fjeldheim, Ryan
12.k	Feeds	Gould, Butcher, PT	Yes	Fjeldheim, Ryan
14	Athlete education			
14.a	Topics covered	Mental training, team cohesion, the travelling diet, the female triad, cooking class, hydration and nutrition, peak performance, media training all by experts in the fields.	Team building, training theory, technique development, psychological skills,	Topics as related to current training
14.b	Frequency	1-2 times per week	Monthly	1/week
15	Direct financial support			
15.a	Financial support	Funding to USST camps and competitions	Yes, \$5,000-12,000 per athlete-year	All expenses except air travel to National
16	Athlete Housing			
16.a	Subsidized housing	Housing provided at no cost	For students on APU campus	Housing provided at no cost
17	Education			
17.a	High school	Park City Winter School (private school, who's school year runs from April to October)	Yes- to local residence	None
17.b	University	University of Utah	Yes	Northern Michigan University
17.c	Tuition assistance	In-state tuition available to all team members, tuition assistance available to each athlete	Yes, over \$30,000 per year	Scholarships available to athletes in the M during a PG year
17.d	Internet Course Access	Laptops for learning (students provided a laptop to access internet courses)		Correspondence courses ("notepad univer to every student for web learning
18	Employment			
18.a	Employers/flexible schedules	Home Depot work program Park City Racquet Club	Many opportunities for employment in Anchorage. Athlete's responsibility	Local network
19	Community programs			

19.a	Local seminars/clinics	1-2 in the past 4 years	Yes	Athletes run occasional clinics with local league
19.b	Master skier mentoring	None	Yes - Successful Masters program with high participation, over 100 maters at this time	None
19.c	Local-level competitions	Available	Yes - Weekly local races and regional Besh Cup	Available
19.d	Social events	Team barbeques	Yes	Attendance at fundraising events mandator
20	Media			
20.a	Local press network	Press releases submitted regularly to Park Record, Salt Lake Tribune and Deseret News	Yes	Sports information director on full-time sta
20.b	Local TV/Radio	KPCW, live morning show TV used as media training ground	Yes	Local TV conducts interview w/ team men
21	Board of Directors			
21.a	Athlete representation	Yes	No, university has students-athletes invovled in it procedures and process.	None
21.b	USSA representation	Yes	None	None
22	USST/NDG athletes			
22.a	USST	Carl Swenson, Andrew Johnson, Kris Freeman, Torin Koos, Wendy Wagner	None	None
22.b	NDG	Kristina Trygstad-Saari (under 18 - part time), Andy Newell (full-time), Melissa Oram and Aubrey Smith (summer only)	Kikkan Randall	Lindsey Weier, Melissa Oram, Aubrey Smith
22.c	Other	Aelin Peterson, Scott Loomis, Zack Simons	Alaska Regional Teams	Lindsey Williams, Chris Cook, Bryan Cook, Seethaler

Mr. Bodensteiner stated that, while all three programs have different ways of doing business, it can be seen that all three are excellent programs. He stated that, based on the results of the review, the Committee needed to provide direction regarding their views on whether or not the individual programs should be continued, and whether or not they are still committed to having one center in each region for a maximum of four centers.

Mr. Brown stated that some of the centers don't have a lot of top-level athletes, but that if we look down the road and see the number of top-level athletes increasing, then we shouldn't contract the number of centers, since eventually, if we keep improving like we have, we will need additional homes for those athletes.

Mr. Lutter said that there is an undeniable benefit to the athletes when they get together and train out of centers like these, so we shouldn't expand, since this would reduce that effect, but at the same time, we need to maintain some flexibility for the athletes.

After a short discussion, the Committee agreed that the direction they've already approved, that is to work with a maximum of four centers, one in each region, was the direction that should be continued.

5. Official Training Centers – Status of Eastern OTC

Mr. Bodensteiner reported that currently, there is no OTC located in the Eastern region. He stated that the Committee had authorized him to work with Zach Caldwell on the development of an OTC to be run out of

the Stratton school, but that planning did not come to fruition, and through the mutual agreements of Sverre Caldwell at the Stratton Mountain School, and Mr. Bodensteiner, that partnership was ended. He then asked Mr. Cote to report on the possibilities of establishing an OTC in the East.

Mr. Cote reported on the Maine Winter Sports Center, and expressed his belief that the program that is being operated there can be suitable to the OTC program, and that the desire of the New England Nordic Ski Association is that MWSC be considered for this status.

Mr. Brown echoed those comments, and stated that he's eager to begin the application process.

It was decided that Mr. Bodensteiner will work with Mr. Brown and Mr. Cote to deliver an application to Mr. Lutter for his Subcommittee's review.

6. Official Training Centers – Application/re-application process

Mr. Bodensteiner stated that, when the Committee designed the OTC program, they specified that each center would have to re-apply for their status after each Olympic cycle, and at that time, applications from new prospective centers in the same regions could be accepted. He asked the Committee for their guidance in the re-application process.

Mr. Todd stated that it was his feeling that the centers shouldn't be asked to re-apply, and that the process should not be opened up to public bidding by other programs who would like such a designation in regions where an OTC already exists. He stated that the Committee has done an audit of each off the center's performance against the criteria established by the Committee, and unless a center was found to be negligent, that they should continue.

The Committee gave its general agreement to this process.

Sept. 14, 9:30 am – 12:00 pm Coaches' Subcommittee

After a brief presentation by the Rumford organizing committee about their preparations for the 2003 U.S. Cross Country Championships, Mr. Lutter called to order the meeting of the Coaches' Subcommittee.

1. Review 2004 Calendar

Mr. Bodensteiner presented the most current draft of the 2004 calendar:

CALENDAR DRAFT 2004

Date	Location	Comments
Nov. 8-9	Fairbanks, AK	Nor/Am Opener Sprint, Pursuit
Nov. 27-30	Silver Star, CAN	Nor/Am Sprint, Pursuit, F
Dec. 6-7	West USA/CAN	Nor/Am C/F
Dec. 10-14	West USA/CAN	Nor/Am Sprint, 15/30km C mass-start, F
Jan. 3-11	Rumford, ME	U.S. Nationals – Nor/Am Day 1: 15/30km F Day 3: 5/10km C Day 5: 5/10km F Day 6: Sprint

		Day 9: 30/50km C Mass-start
Jan. 17-18	East or Central USA/CAN	Nor/Am C/F
Jan. 21-25	East or Central USA/CAN	Nor/Am Finals Sprint, C, F
Feb. 2-8	Stryn, NOR	World Junior Championships
Feb. TBD	Soldier Hollow, UT	U-23 World Cup Sprint C, Pursuit, 15/30km F Mass-start
Feb. 14-15	Cent. Europe	OPA-Cup
Feb. 21	Hayward, WI	American Birkebeiner 52km F
Feb. 21-22	Cent. Europe	OPA-Cup
Feb. 28-29	Cent. Europe	OPA Cup
Mar. 8-13	Lake Placid, NY	JOs
Mar. 6-8	TBD	NCAA Championships 5/10km F, 15/20km C Mass-start
Mar. 6-7	Europe	OPA Cup
Mar. 28-Apr. 4	TBD	International Spring Series Sprint F 5/10km C 5/10km F (P) 10/15km F Mass-start National Sprint Relay C

He stated that he was looking for the approval of this calendar as a draft, since it will direct him in pursuing Nor/Am bids from certain regions for certain weekends.

He stated that he would like to look into the possibility of adding a Nor/Am weekend in the middle of November, potentially in Anchorage, on the weekend after the Nor/Am opener in Fairbanks. He stated that this move was supported by the U.S. Ski team staff, but that he had not approached the subject yet with the Canadian ski federation, and he would need their agreement first to proceed.

The Committee authorized Mr. Bodensteiner to investigate with Canada and with the organizers in Anchorage the possibility of adding that Nor/Am weekend.

Mr. Engen noted that Rumford was again on the calendar in 2004 as the National Championship organizer, which was a point of discussion in the spring meetings, and that based on the comments of the Committee, this issue should be revisited before the drafting of the 2005 calendar. Mr. Bodensteiner reiterated that this was a decision of the management team, and that the Committee can't effectively take action on this. He stated that, based on his position as a board member, the best course of action would be for Mr. Engen to contact Alan Ashley directly to discuss the concerns of the Committee, and to try and resolve the issue in that way.

Based on that, Ms. Caterinichio made a motion to request that Mr. Engen bring discussion on this issue forward to the USSA management, and was seconded by Mr. Lutter.

Motion carries.

Based on these discussions, Ms. Caterinichio made a motion to approve the draft calendar, and was seconded by Mr. Grover.

Motion carries.

2. National Development Group – strategic overview

Given the time of the meeting, Mr. Lutter asked Mr. Grover to proceed with his National Development Group overview.

Mr. Grover began by introducing the NDG philosophy. He stated that the focus of the program is on long-term development rather than short-term success. He stated that the average age of World Cup winner is 30 years old, and that the primary focus of the group is training. He stated that the secondary focus is competition results. The athletes and coaches focus on the accomplishment of daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly training markers. With the focus on improvements in training, competition results will accompany the completion of these markers.

He stated that consistency in training from year to year is critical at this level, and that athletes and coaches must be patient. The focus of the program is on the fundamentals of technique, aerobic endurance, general strength, anaerobic capacity and specific strength.

He stated that the athletes, coaches, and staff are committed to the production and maintenance of a positive and harmonious team environment that will allow each member us to achieve his or her potential. He stated that group cohesion, in combination with a strong work ethic, is a powerful mechanism for enhanced performance.

Mr. Grover pointed to the fact that we have talented and hard-working athletes in our country, and that the following list of athletes are examples of this fact: Chris Cook, age: 22, 1st World Junior Champs Sprint Qualification. Kris Freeman, age: 21, 15th Olympic Winter Games Pursuit. Andrew Johnson, age: 24, 22nd Olympic Winter Games 30 km. Torin Koos, age: 22, 11th Pre-Olympic World Cup Sprint. Andrew Newell, age: 18, 6th World Junior Champs Sprint. Melissa Oram, age: 22, 3rd NCAA Championships. Kikkan Randall, age: 19, 6th World Junior Champs Sprint. Aubrey Smith, age: 22, 2nd NCAA Championships. Kristina Trygstad-Saari, age: 17, 6th World Junior Champs 5 km. Rob Whitney, age: 23, 7th World Junior Champs 10 km. Lindsey Weier, age: 18, 14th World Junior Champs 15 km. He then stated that there are other athletes of similar ability in the pipeline.

He stated that, in order to earn a nomination to the National Development Group, an athlete must; demonstrate the ability to be among the very best in the world at their current age, meaning the World Juniors and U-23 Championships. Demonstrate future ability to be among the very best in the world at the highest level, that is the World Championships and Olympic Games. Demonstrate a progressive, year-'round training history and a plan for improving future training volume and quality. Demonstrate the highest level of commitment towards international excellence in the sport. Demonstrate the capacity for effectively absorbing high levels of training.

He stated that in order for an athlete to remain as a member of the NDG, that athlete must; be a full time resident in a Regional Training Center. Be actively pursuing training markers, and accomplishing a very high percentage of these markers, which are created and agreed upon in advance by the athlete, his or her RTC coach, and the Development Coach. Be younger than 25 years of age.

Mr. Grover suggested that the Regional Training Center concept was key for several reasons. One being that development of athletes is accelerated when skiers of similar ability levels can train together on a daily basis. Another is that the development of athletes is accelerated when skiers are surrounded by the best tools, including: year-'round coaching, training partners, excellent training facilities, financial support, education/career opportunities, ski service, experts in physiology, strength, nutrition, psychology, medicine, etc. He stated that exceptions to Regional Training Center participation can be granted to athletes who are still of high school age.

Mr. Grover stated that it takes courage to make the kind of commitment necessary to be a member of the NDG. He quoted JFK in saying the "Only those who dare to fail greatly can ever achieve greatly." He stated that every U.S. athlete and coach must work together to find a pathway to success that is individual

to each skier. He stated that innovation, or taking calculated risks, is key in the development of individual skiers.

He stated that technique must be addressed while the skier is relatively young, so that muscle memory reinforces good technique. He stated that technique is a daily commitment, and that it must be addressed in the direction of general to the specific, in the order of; body position. Basic motions. Energy application. He stated that the fundamentals of good technique, such as body position and basic motions, don't change as the sport evolves, and only the advanced principles of technique like timing and energy application change.

He stated that strength must be developed in the direction of general to specific, in the order of; general strength. Core strength. Specific strength. He stated that strength and technique are interdependent, and that an athlete with only 90% technical efficiency can only use 90% of his strength, and visa versa. He stated that strength training is a year-'round activity.

He stated that focusing on endurance, strength, and intensity during different training blocks reduces overall stress on the athletes. He stated that the development of strength, endurance, and technique are ineffectual unless athletes develop the psychological skills necessary to perform at elite levels. He stated that the team focuses on the development of mentally tough athletes. He stated that the primary skills taught through the team's sports psychology program are self-confidence, concentration, arousal control, handling adversity, and optimal motivation for elite ski performance. He stated that periodization maximizes long-term training adaptations, and that concentrating on volume during the late spring, summer, and early fall allows for more recovery close to the competition season and more consistent results, that is a longer peak. He stated that endurance training is a year-'round activity, and that recovery is as important as training in the adaptation process.

He stated that sport-specific education is absolutely critical in attaining the end goal, which is that the athlete becomes his or her own coach. He stated that a coach is only successful when he or she is no longer needed.

Mr. Grover then began to outline specific NDG activities. He stated that, regarding competition, competitions must be challenging and appropriate, that is success must be possible. He stated that the development competition program includes the World Junior Championships, U-23 Championships, Nor/Ams, Europa Cup, Scandinavian Cup, U.S. Senior Nationals, and the International Spring Series. He stated that, for athletes at this level, summer skiing is a luxury, and not a necessity. He stated that summer skiing is good for keeping in touch with skiing feel, but can compromise and disrupt the dry-land training program. He stated that field testing is used on a daily basis, and that important field testing includes time trials repeated through the training year, heart-rate zone identification, lactate and heart-rate monitoring, and fluid balance testing.

He stated that goal setting and monitoring are critical in helping athletes improve rapidly, that educational and career opportunities must be readily available to athletes, and that the development of well-rounded individuals who are valuable members of their community are fostered through the NDG program.

Mr. Engen stated that he really appreciated the update, and this update really provides the specifics of the plan to those who say there is no plan. He encouraged Mr. Grover to continue getting the word out about this plan to the community.

Ms. Caterinichio stated that there needs to be some level of support for those athletes who choose not to participate in a Regional Training Center, and a way for them to be supported.

Mr. Grover stated that there are still open team selection methods for the Junior Worlds, U-23 Championship and World Championships that these athletes can qualify for, even if they aren't a part of the NDG.

Sept. 14, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm
Officials' Subcommittee

Mr. John Aalberg, Chairman of the Officials' Subcommittee, called the meeting to order.

1. FIS Update

Mr. Aalberg gave a short presentation on the rule changes and new guidelines set forth by the FIS Cross Country Committee, and informed the officials that these guidelines will be in effect in USSA and FIS competitions this winter.

He stated that the sprint guidelines were discussed and new guidelines will be coming from FIS in October. Preliminary discussions covered:; no protest will be accepted during heats. 3 out of 5 (majority) jury members can make a jury decision. Some specific sprint rules were moved to general rules. Sprints are more demanding for the jury. Short track skating rules will be studied for adaptation to CC Sprint rules especially levels of disqualification, and will be available at the October Officials' seminar to decide; what are levels of disqualification? What is obstruction? What is interference? How to handle infractions of rules?

He stated that there will also be a discussion of point's calculation factor for mass starts and new pursuit.

The Subcommittee recommended that coaches not be part of the jury for any level USSA events.

2. JO Rules recap

Mr. Aalberg presented a short list of issues within the Junior Olympic rules, that he proposed needed clarification. He stated that the composition of the Jury needed to be re-formed, so that the fifth member of the Jury was a regional TD appointed by the JO organizers and approved by the Officials' Subcommittee. He stated that the rule regarding start lanes in the sprint should be clarified to specify six start lanes. And he proposed that the Jury for the National Championships

3. Discussion of incorporating new Junior Sprint rules for Senior Nationals

Mr. Aalberg explained that, for the first time, a "Junior Final" would be contested at the U.S. Cross Country Championships after the sprint qualification, and prior to the main heats and finals. He stated that it was his desire to establish some rules for how this junior final would be conducted, and he proposed that the rules for the Junior Olympic sprint be adopted for this event, as well.

He asked the group to look at what rules can apply to Senior Championships and made some suggestions. He stated that the Jury Composition rule 79.0 has been changed to 5 members who can include a locally appointed TD (appointed by district or organizer). He stated that this rule is also officially applicable to Senior Rules, and is an opportunity for the local organizer to appoint a local TD to learn. He noted that NorAm/FIS Competitions would be required to have a jury of at least three members: USSA TD, Chief of Competition, USSA Technical Representative.

He stated; that the sprint lanes to be a minimum of six start lanes and 4 finish corridors; previously nine start lanes. That rule 82.1.6 Free Technique upheld and recommended for Senior Nationals. That there be a 90 minute break between qualification and heats. That the seeding rules should be simplified to help organizers, especially the less experienced. That the Junior Rules suggested in principle to be used as a reference for Seniors; exception 85.7.1 Alaska Cup which is not applicable to Senior Nationals. He stated that, if this was the decision, the Competition Guide 2003 has been published, and changes to guide will be in 2004.

In discussion, Mr. Bodensteiner stated that the JO sprint rules were not appropriate for the conduct of the Junior finals at the U.S. Championships. He stated that the bulk of the rules were specific only to the Junior Olympics, and cited several examples.

Mr. Aalberg stated that he agreed that all of the rules do not apply to the U.S. Championship situation, but that there are some rules in that section which can apply.

Mr. Bodensteiner stated that the rules that apply are contained in the normal section governing sprint racing, and that only the normal sprint rules need to apply. He stated that these rules are clearly spelled out, and in his opinion, adding the JO rules to the section governing the U.S. Championships would create confusion.

No decision was taken on this issue, and the normal sprint rules will apply to the U.S. Championships.

4. IT working group session

Mr. Aalberg addressed the various timing issues, which have arisen over the past season. He stated that the IT Working Group has evolved to help organizers create professional and standardized results. He stated that they are in a position to provide tools for organizers, such as a determination of what the results formats should be like, what equipment do organizers need, standardization of result formats, and examples of different types of formats. He stated that the Chief of Timing should oversee Timing Company to insure quality assurance.

The Subcommittee decided that point calculations and penalty should be printed on official results for scored competitions.

5. Presentation by the Rumford Organizing Committee

Mr. Roger Arsenault, Chairman of the Rumford Organizing Committee, gave a presentation of the event preparations for the 2003 U.S. Cross Country Championships.

Mr. Arsenault stated that the web site is www.chisholmskiclub.org, and that online registration, course maps, and schedule are posted. He stated that the two year commitment allows organizer to showcase Rumford and make capital improvements, such as expansion of the stadium and improvements to the snowmaking system. He stated that changes have been made to the start/finish area to eliminate congestion, including a new mass start area, which will accommodate larger field.

Mr. Aalberg stated that the new stadium area can also accommodate a future rolling pursuit (new pursuit) if directed to do so by USSA. His proposal for such an event would be to limit the field size as follows: FIS=65, USA=? He stated that the distance for men would be 10+10, and women 5+5. He stated that Rumford would need to construct a change-over area, and that two duathlons scheduled by NENSA this season. He stated that discussions regarding new pursuit at 2004 Sr. Nationals should be put on agenda for USSA CCC Spring meetings.

Mr. Arsenault stated that the projected field size for this year's championship is 220 men and 175 women.

Mr. Arsenault asked for advice from the group about the type of camera is appropriate for photo-finishes.

Mr. Aalberg stated that they should use the highest quality video camera possible for slow motion and freeze frame.