



EXCELLENCE

An Elite Performance Conference for USSA Clubs



2014 USSA Club Excellence Conference May 14, 2014

Alpine S.W.O.T. Analysis

Evaluating national athletic success from grassroots development to transitioning into elite competitions and the national team.

Strengths

- Skiing is fun
- Number of participants
- Family Orientation
 - Life long sport
- Challenging
- Life skills
 - Teaches how to deal with adversity
 - Teaches independence
 - Teaches relationship building – athletes and coaches Teaches risk/reward evaluation
 - Teaches hard work/work ethic
 - Teamwork
- Coolest gear
- Social aspects
- Outdoor activity
- Promotes healthy lifestyle
- Part of a larger community
- Development levels give something to aspire to
- Seasonal at the development level – allows for participation in multiple sports
- Success at the top level leads to role models for development levels
- Excitement factor – even at development levels
- Venues – excellent nationwide
- Well developed competitive structure
- Club Diversity – different models for success
- Opportunity to travel
- Access to sport science
- Educated and passionate coaches
 - Independence – teaching to the athletes
 - Developed club system leads to professional coaches at most levels
 - Governing body

Weaknesses

- Gap at U16 between the elite level and the club level
- EXPENSE
- Geographical challenges

- **Injuries (opportunity)**
 - Difficult profession to make ends meet – coaches
 - Difficult to recruit national team coaches when clubs are paying more
 - Academic challenges
 - Not the most prominent sport in the United States
 - Small career path for elite level athletes
- **Lack of integration with college system – two separate systems**
 - Depth and numbers
 - Misalignment with sport science – race starts vs LTAD
 - Lack of media exposure for the development levels
 - Parent involvement – high and younger levels leads to over involvement
- **Governing body –**
 - Membership benefits
 - Membership cost
 - Website
 - Dual missions – elite performance and grassroots focus – how do you align both?
 - Elite team cost – still paying to be involved at a high level
 - Taking Elite level skiers from away clubs – over emphasis on early results (too early)
 - Culturally unsustainable model – running a European model on US athletes
 - Elite athletes not returning to their regions
 - Rules – moving targets with selection criteria and equipment rules
 - Lack of transparency
 - Age change – lack of participation in races and increased drop out
 - Lack of stakeholder involvement in major decisions
- Lack of access for US athletes to NCAA ski teams
- **Loss of industry participation at the grassroots level**
 - Seasonal at the grassroots level vs year round at the elite level
 - Difficulty of hosting speed events

Opportunities

- **Untapped resources** – athletes doing non-USSA racing
- **Better alignment with PSIA and NCAA and USCSA**
 - College model integration – use of resources
- **Expense control** – some of it is under our control
 - Streamline the competition pipelines – minimize the travel expense – calendar reform – selection reform
 - Clubs helping clubs – collaboration
 - Sponsorships, venues, business opportunities – collaboration
- **Media coverage** – not relying on traditional resources
- Recognizable stars
- Branding
- **Captive parental audience** –

Threats

- Climate change
- Cost structure
- Non-USSA racing organizations
 - Video games – growing levels of distracted/less active kids
 - Less expensive/more accessible sports – school sports
 - Sport Culture in the US
 - Early specialization
 - School/teacher flexibility
 - Rising cost – for athletes and organizations
 - Loss of volunteers due to more professional clubs – loss of community involvement
 - Insurance/litigious nature of our society
 - Mistrust between involved parties – lack of buy in within regions/programs/USSA/clubs
 - Rising barriers to entry – lift ticket cost, equipment rental cost
 - Not extrinsically rewarding enough at younger ages – lack of instant gratification
- Uneducated parents
- Ski area involvement – ski area priorities