



VARA U14 Training/Pace Day Reports

VARA Girl's Training Day-Pico Mountain, February 22, 2016

Originally scheduled for Suicide Six but due to an unforeseen lift issue Pico Mountain, Pico Ski Club, Justin Lillie of S6 and other MVC coaches really stepped up and organized an eleventh hour switch from S6 to Pico to save the project! The athletes and all involved thank you all for this effort. Athletes were chosen off of current U14 council standings as of February 7, 2016. Athletes represented SMS, BMA, KMS, MMSC, S6, Quechee, Okemo and the Sugarbush Ski Club. All coaches and parent volunteers involved did a great job of helping out and making the project such a success. Pico had already held a full weekend of council racing and for them to take on a third day of racing was really amazing.

We were very fortunate to start the morning with a talk from USST Member/Olympian Julia Ford. Julia spoke candidly, while sharing her insights and knowledge of ski racing and particularly women racers. The girls, shocked to have a USST member take notice of them, eagerly listened and absorbed all Julia had to offer.

Justin Lillie (S6) set the GS in the morning and the girls took 4 timed, full length runs. The surface was perfectly hard and after 4 runs of 22 girls it was difficult to see that 88 athletes had run down B-Slope. The head to head competition certainly raised the bar and the girls raised the level of intensity to the training day. The athletes took a lunch break while Peter Girardi (KMS) set the SL along with the other coaches. The girls had 4 timed runs of SL before heading home.

All athletes were organized, focused and ready to compete. When asked at the end of the day what they thought the positives of the project were they responded with "it was nice to be able to compete with out of council girls before States" and "I really enjoyed meeting the girls from the other councils". That being said, I would say our goals of the project were met. The girls can now go back to their home programs and focus on what they need before the U14 VARA State Championships. It is for the two afore mentioned statements that these U14 projects are extremely important and valuable to our VARA athletes.

A primary observation for improvement is balance. Increasing outside ski pressure especially at the apex of the turn should be an area of focus.

I have to thank everyone involved for all of their help with this project and being able to make last minute changes and "go with the flow".

I have posted a few pictures on the VARA website homepage, www.vara.org and all of the coaches have the times from the 8 runs.

Respectfully submitted, Alex Krebs-VARA Youth Coordinator