



VARA U14 Speed Elements Day Reports

On January 20th and 27th VARA U14 boys and girls joined NHARA U14's for two separate boys and girls speed elements projects at the Dartmouth Ski Way. Each of the councils submitted their lists of athletes either based off of current council standings or last year's Eastern Championships. VARA athletes represented SMS, GMVS, OMS, S6, BMA, MSA, KMS, SWSC, Pico, Quechee, MMSC and Middlebury. We had an incredible coaching staff that were all very knowledgeable with speed elements and U14 athletes. Thank you to the programs that lent their coaches to the projects. These projects depend on VARA coach participation to be successful and a great experience for our young athletes.

Our goals for the project were:

- Create a controlled environment to train speed fundamentals
- Provide opportunities to work on speed skills like gliding, jumping and terrain
- Create an opportunity for VARA U14 athletes to work with each other as well as different coaches and their NHARA peers
- Introduce VARA and NHARA athletes and coaches before U14 Eastern Championships
- FUN and create new friendships

Goals were accomplished through speed element stations, experienced coaches, a great venue and hard work and focus from the athletes. In the morning athletes inspected the hill and then took 2 full length free runs. Elements were then set with pole jumpers (set around 10 meters), a wave track (set around 12 meters crest to crest), a glide turn section and a jump. All stations were set in a progression where athletes were able to work at their own pace and gain confidence with speed and terrain. In the afternoon the athletes took 2 full length SG runs, leaving from the start house and ending just before the jump. The decision was made not to incorporate the jump in the course so the athletes could continue to straight run and work at their own pace.

When athletes were asked at the end of the day how the project went the first response was FUN! I asked numerous parents for feedback their athletes shared with them and answers were, fun, met new friends, met new coaches, became more comfortable with speed, learned new tactics for speed and their GS has improved.

Throughout the day it was obvious that athletes started looking for speed as they became more comfortable. The boys worked really hard on the movement of going over the jump and progressed throughout the day. The girls had difficulty with the movement over the terrain. Across the board athletes like to "sacrifice a turn for a tuck". The Ski Way is a NCAA championship hill and athletes skied the pitch really well and progressed throughout the day.

Not only was this a learning environment for the athletes but coaches really enjoyed working together with other VARA coaches and NHARA coaches. These projects are a great opportunity for coaches' education.

Thank you again to all of the coaches' that attended the project, the Dartmouth Ski Way, Gerd Reiss and Matt Purcell.

Respectfully submitted, Alex Krebs-VARA Youth Coordinator