



NHARA/VARA U14 Girls and Boys Speed Day Projects Report-Dartmouth Ski Way: 1.19.18 & 1.26.18

Over two Fridays the Dartmouth Ski Way hosted U14 NHARA-VARA girls and boys speed elements projects. 41 VARA athletes and 55 NHARA athletes representing over 20 programs from NH and VT got together to work on speed elements. Thank you to the Dartmouth Ski Way for hosting, Gerd Riess (Project Leader), Fred Turton (NHARA Youth Education Coordinator), Matt Purcell (Ford Sayre) Peter Holland (NH TD) and the many NH and VT coaches that brought their athletes and took time away from their own programs and jobs. The success of these projects depends on many things and one of the most important is the support and help of the coaching staff. Thank you all for taking part in the speed days at the Ski Way.

Our goals for the project were:

- Create a controlled environment to train speed fundamentals
- Provide an opportunity to work on speed skills like gliding, jumping and terrain
- Create an opportunity to work with new coaches and meet NH and VT peers

I believe we met our goals for the project. Dartmouth Ski Way did a great job prepping the hill, securing net and building features. Athletes were able to meet each other and new coaches. In the morning sessions we had several stations: pole jumpers, wave track, straight run glide track and a jump. All stations were done in a progression to build athletes' confidence levels. In the afternoon we did 2 full length SG runs incorporating the jump. Over the two days both the girls and boys worked really hard, were very respectful, represented their programs, State Associations very well and took advantage of the opportunity at the Ski Way.

A few observations: Athletes NEED/MUST do a better job with inspection. This needs to come from coaches' teaching this in training. The Ski Way is an NCAA Championship hill and especially with speed and terrain it is imperative that athletes take the time and focus for a proper inspection, not just a slip of the course. Unfortunately for the girls the light was very flat which resulted in a little more uncertainty, less confidence and a bit more two footed. On the positive though a few of the girls were "unsure" of the jump in the morning, by the afternoon they were much more comfortable and said "that was no big deal!" The following week the boys had much better light and were more confident looking for speed. With both genders, there was a large variance of equipment with GS skis, SG skis, 17-30m side cuts of varied lengths, old skis, new skis, short skis it was clear that many of these athletes have not spent enough time on their equipment. Coaches need to be more involved in finding appropriate equipment for their athletes and getting more mileage on "speed" skis. In terms of aerodynamic positions athletes continue to want to sacrifice a turn for a tuck. They are unclear that a clean arc is much faster than a skidded tuck turn. Tuck positions were a bit all over the map. As Fred put it: "A few of the boys and the girls had solid aerodynamic positions on their skis. A few. In general, we are very weak in prioritizing and teaching good aerodynamics to the kids. This must start at the very youngest groups within our programs." "Realizing it's difficult to allow athletes to "bomb" down the mountain in tucks there are ways even in their ski boots outside of the clubhouse or inside (when it's minus 20 degrees) to work on proper tuck positions. This needs to happen at the early age groups so when they become a U14 they aren't trying to learn a proper tuck position.

These projects are incredibly important for our young athletes for all of the reasons mentioned above. Thank you to everyone involved for your hard work and support.

Respectfully submitted, Alex Krebs (VARA Youth Coordinator)