



AOA U12 Committee Priorities

The AOA U12 Committee was established over the summer of 2018 with a mandate to increase the overall skill level of all U12 athletes, to support coaches and to educate parents. See below for an update on the past season and the future objectives of the committee.

Year 1: 2018-19

- Created a mandate and outlined long term goals for the committee.
- Skills incorporated and reinforcement with terrain-based learning at U12.

Year 2: 2019-20

- Focus on coach education.
- Mont St Louis Moonstone, Dec 6-7, 2019 coaches 2 day on snow training module will be the pilot project designed to help coaches be their best, be a refresher for the coming season and give kids an opportunity to ski with guidance and return to snow.

Year 3: 2020-21

- Committee is currently discussing and considering the following:
 - **Creating a soft cap of 4 race starts for U12s**
 - What is a 'soft cap'? All racers are permitted to have 4 starts. Any U12 who wants to participate in additional races must show that they and their program have been LTAD compliant by tracking their days on snow. To request additional starts they will have to submit an AOA designed template filled out with training days that support a minimum 7:1 ratio of training to racing and 50% of training outside of gate environments.
 - All AOA divisions are in support of this approach to ensure athletes are prepared to
 - **The committee are also discussing the types of skis U12s are permitted to use and how many pairs.**
 - The committee is considering eliminating SL skis from U12.
 - Why? Coach education currently lags behind equipment. SL skis and groomed runs allow kids to develop incorrect technique. Current coach education/training is not producing coaches that are trained to correct this. Hence the coach education focus in Yr. 2 of this plan.
 - Committee is in favor of preparing athletes for future success not only early career race results
 - Community feedback including from suppliers and retailers is to promote a longer SL ski in year one of U12 and then a GS ski in year two of U12.
 - Challenge to mandate across the province and may take multiple years to transition to a change in philosophy on skis at this age group
 - **Progression to full gate SL over the entire season**

- All committee members in support of introducing training and racing full gate SL until the end of the season
- More training outside of gates should be the focus and in gate work with PSL and stubbie should be the priority
- **Terrain integration into race courses and training**
 - Create variable environments for athletes to thrive and progress outside of a traditional alpine field of play
 - Adaptable athletes are the key for future success, longevity and retention
 - Kids have FUN in different terrain – they are challenged in different ways mentally and physically
 - Difficult for clubs to guarantee terrain for racing – can be costly and resort operators hesitant to cooperate