

# **THE BSS U16 SQUAD, INTERNATIONAL RACE ALLOCATION, SELECTION PROCESS AND THE HOME NATIONS U14 AND U16 SQUADS.**

## **Executive summary**

This document begins to outline the processes for U14 and U16 squad selection and International Race allocation for the 2014-15 season. In essence the U14 squads are Home Nations based and the Home Nations will nominate skiers to the BSS for International Race selection. There will be a BSS U16 squad. Being in this squad will qualify athletes for international race allocations but will not guarantee that. There will be provision to consider non-squad athletes who perform exceptionally at Xmas races

## **Introduction**

In late December BSS made its first response to the Review of The British Children's Ski Team conducted by Tim Fawke, Director of BSS. That document provided an outline of discussions involving the Home Nations and BSS on the establishment of Home Nations squads at U14 and U16 levels. It also discussed the establishment of a BSS U16 squad and the programme of international racing at both U14 and U16 level.

Today BSS would like to outline further detail on the structure of squads and international racing for 2014-15. This announcement covers in detail those aspects that BSS is directly involved in: the BSS U16 squad; U16 international race allocation; and U14 international race allocation.

It should be emphasised that change is often a process that takes time. In particular, both Snowsport England and Snowsport Wales were well down the path of establishing 2014-15 criteria for U14 and U16 squads before the joint discussions properly took hold. And while this document is not designed to pre-empt the individual announcements of the Home Nations a full and proper development and co-ordination of all criteria for all squads may not be in place until late 2014 for the 2015-16 season.

## **Reason for change**

BSS would also like to provide some background for its appetite to sponsor change in these areas where appropriate. The few serious adult international alpine racers representing GBR deserve all of our respect and admiration. But from the perspective of the governing body the numbers here are a small proportion of what is required to engender confidence that GBR can consistently mount challenges to the highest international honours. There are many factors at play. But BSS remains concerned that some part of the problem is at the younger end of the sport. There are views that incentives placed on short term results by the structure of national squads and international race allocations reduce focus on basic skiing skills and add unnecessary pressures to athletes at an age where they should be having fun in an exciting sport. BSS will continue to consider these issues.

The balance of this document covers five areas:

- The BSS U16 squad
- BSS U16 international race allocation
- BSS U14 international race allocation processes
- Detail on BSS selection and appeals processes
- Details of the Home Nations squads

## THE BSS U16 SQUAD

For 2014-15 BSS will run an U16 squad but will not run an U14 squad. For the avoidance of doubt, only athletes within the required FIS definition of age groups are eligible to be selected to the BSS U16 squad.

### ***Purpose and function of the BSS U16 squad***

BSS believes that its U16 squad should be part of a journey rather than an end in itself. It aims to treat the BSS U16 squad as an important part of preparing our most promising young athletes for the rigours of competitive alpine skiing as a junior and above. BSS would like to see such preparation spread more widely and in consequence the BSS U16 squad may well be more inclusive than has historically been the case. But BSS will try to select appropriate athletes and will not set definite numbers.

- BSS will expect its U16 squad members to participate in the early levels of the performance management programme that is at the heart of the BSS provision of sports science services to its older athletes.
- This programme will focus particularly on strength and conditioning, nutrition, injury management and sports psychology.
- BSS will offer off-snow services through webinars and applied workshops throughout the year. Details for these events will be posted to all BSS squad selected athletes.
- BSS will host no snow based training at this stage and believes any separate BSS U16 squad weekends would be an unwelcome addition to an already busy calendar. There may be some squad weekends hosted by SSE, SSW and SSS and BSS U16 squad members would be expected to attend these as appropriate.
- BSS will expect all of its U16 squad members to demonstrate commitment to a snow-based programme that incorporates high levels of commitment to improving their individual skill levels.
- Being a member of the BSS U16 squad **will** be a pre-requisite for *early season* international U16 race selection.
- But being a member of the BSS U16 squad **will not** guarantee an international race allocation.

### ***Invitation to trial***

As in previous years the selection process for the BSS U16 squad will be a two stage selection process. The first of these stages involves qualifying for an invitation to trial.

- BSS will issue invitations to trial for squad selection shortly after the British Children's championships. These invitations will be based on race results across the season.
- BSS will consider applications for trials from coaches, but will limit the number of applications per coaching organisation to a maximum of one athlete of each gender for each year of birth. Each of these applications will require video evidence of a high level of skills as well as up to 600 words of written context. They will need to be lodged with BSS within five days of BSS announcing the list of athletes it has invited to trial. This announcement is currently anticipated in the second half of April.
- BSS will not set precise criteria for the video evidence which should be decided by the coach, but if guidance is required on what might be regarded as a useful format, coaches could look at levels 4 and 5 of the USSA skills quest. Details of this programme can be seen on:

[www.ussa.org/alpine-programs/athletes/development/skillsquest](http://www.ussa.org/alpine-programs/athletes/development/skillsquest).

Video evidence should be no more than 10 minutes long.

- BSS is also interested in advice on athletes who are potentially GBR qualified but who have been racing under other jurisdictions. BSS will use its judgement on whether to accept such individuals for trials.
- BSS is expecting to co-ordinate trials of athletes at the SSE/SSW and SSS hosted UK based selection weekends. Details of these weekends will be published when final arrangements have been made.

### ***Content of trials***

The second stage of the selection process involves taking part in a trial.

BSS expects that trials for its U16 squad will be conducted in conjunction with a wider trialling process hosted by the Home Nations for their U16 and U14 squads. Neither BSS nor the Home Nations see any need for separate trial processes. It is currently anticipated that there will be one selection weekend in England and one in Scotland, both hosted during May.

The logistics of these weekends have yet to be finalised but for those being considered for the BSS U16 squad we anticipate they will include:

- An athletic capacity evaluation (ACE). Details of this are expected to be published in the next few weeks.
- An evaluation of sports nutrition and performance sports psychology knowledge and personal application. This will be achieved by deploying two multiple choice questionnaires.
- BSS may accept video evidence for athletes with strong reasons for not being able to attend trials.

BSS is also discussing with the Home Nations the possibility of an assessment of skiing skills at some point during the year. There is still work to be done on the potential logistics, content and conduct of such skills assessments for both U14 and U16 athletes and BSS also expects to continue discussing aspects of this with a number of coaching organisations.

### ***Selection to the BSS U16 squad***

The selection Committee will meet shortly after the selection weekends to ratify all potential nominations. The Committee will then inform athletes.

- Athletes who trial but are significantly short of expected levels may not gain selection but be nominated instead for selection to a Home Nations squad to work on those areas that were highlighted as being areas of work.
- Over time athletes who show deterioration in any relevant area of performance may have their BSS U16 squad status suspended or rescinded. BSS will work with parents, coaches and athletes on how these issues are handled according to the specifics of each individual case.

In the case of suspension, reinstatement will likely occur when the athlete exceeds his/her previous profile of performance.

### **U16 INTERNATIONAL RACE ALLOCATION**

- The programme of international racing at U16 level will continue to focus on 5-6 international meetings subject to calendar clashes.
- At the U16 level race allocation will be according to the following criteria:

- Early season allocations will be made from members of the BSS U16 squad
- International Race allocations will be made purely on race results of athletes in the BSS U16 squad. Selectors will be expected to consider race results over the previous twelve months.
- Athletes will be informed in late September or early October
- Later season allocations will also allow for exceptional race results over the Christmas and New Year period, and will be open to all who compete at these events.
- Athletes will be informed of late season allocations in mid-January.

## **U14 INTERNATIONAL RACE ALLOCATION**

The programme of racing at the U14 level will also continue to focus on 5-6 international meetings subject to calendar clashes. At the U14 level race allocations will continue to be made in conjunction with the Home Nations, as was the case for the 2013-14 season.

- BSS will not be running an U14 squad and all race allocations will be made from lists of potential athletes provided by the Home Nations.
- BSS and the Home Nations continue to work closely together in this area and there is clear sense in having consistent criteria across the Home Nations. But final decisions on how these allocations are made have not yet been taken.
- Early season race allocations will be announced in late September or early October
- Late season allocations will be announced in mid-January.
- If the Home Nations wish to add to their lists of potential athletes post the Christmas and New Year races these athletes will be eligible for race allocations, but such allocations are not guaranteed.

## **BSS U18 and U16 SELECTION PROCESSES**

BSS has an established U18/U16 selection Committee in place and expects to continue with that body. This is currently made up of:

- A BSS appointed Chair of Selectors
- The BSS Performance Director
- A Snowsport Scotland nominated coaching expert
- A Snowsport Wales nominated coaching expert
- A Snowsport England nominated coaching expert
- A BSS Youth & Children's Consultant (attending with no vote)
- The BSS CEO may attend (with no vote)

Previous versions of this body have included two positions which are no longer in existence: the BSS Alpine Performance Manager and the BSS U16 Head Coach. It is possible that there will be further evolution to this body, and if these are significant BSS will make them public.

As in the 2013-14 season BSS expects candidates for U14 International race selection to be brought forward by the Home Nations representatives on this Committee.

## **APPEALS PROCESS**

The BSS appeals processes are structured to conform to UK Sport guidelines. All appeals must be made in writing, by the parent or legal guardian of the athlete with accompanying evidence and additional information to the BSS office.

Regarding British U16 Squad Selections and British U16 and U14 International race allocations, notification of appeal must be made within five days of the relevant announcements together with a fee of £100 which will be reimbursed if the appeal is successful.

All appeals will be considered on an individual basis. Appeals will first be reconsidered by the original selection committee, who will explain their reasons for the decision to the Athlete or legal Guardian. If the Athlete or legal Guardian is not happy with the process or the outcome of the selection committee's final decision, then the Athlete or legal Guardian may opt to refer the matter to an internal appeals committee.

The BSS will nominate an Internal Appeals Panel made up of at least three people who did not sit on the original selection committee. In cases of appeal against non-selection for Squad, all appellants should be aware that it is not the task of the Appeal Panel to substitute its selection views for those of the original committee.

They are asked only to determine whether, on all the facts which they had – or should have had – before them, the original selection committee made a reasonable and fair decision using the currently applicable Selection Policies – the Panel has no power to alter those policies but may comment upon them - i.e. that the original decision fell within bounds of what was objectively reasonable.

If the dispute remains unresolved, it will be submitted for an exclusive, final and binding determination to the Sports Dispute Resolution Panel (SDRP). BSS understands that both parties will undertake to execute in good faith any decision of the SDRP.

BSS and the Appeals panel will not operate any other process in relation to athlete selection for the squad or race allocation and neither BSS nor the members of the Appeals panel will be obliged to enter in to correspondence regarding selection decisions or process other than the correspondence necessary for running of the process defined above.

## **DETAILS OF THE HOME NATIONS SQUADS**

### ***Snowsport England Squads***

For 2014-15 SSE will run an U14 and U16 development group. Details surrounding the function of these groups and related selection policies were announced on January 24<sup>th</sup> and can be found at:

[www.snowsportengland.org.uk/news/2014/01/alpine-squad-and-development-group-selection-policy](http://www.snowsportengland.org.uk/news/2014/01/alpine-squad-and-development-group-selection-policy).

### ***Snowsport Wales Squads***

For 2014-15 SSW will run an U14 squad and an U16 squad. Full selection details are expected to be announced on or around February 28th.

### ***Snowsport Scotland Squads***

For 2014-15 SSS will run an U14 and an U16 squad. Full selection details are expected to be announced before February 14th. It is also currently expected that there will be some form of UK based selection weekend during May 2014.