

## A Guide to Alpine Ski Racing

### Introduction

Getting into Alpine skiing can be practised on most UK artificial slopes and of course, on freshly groomed mountain runs.

Competitive Alpine skiing usually consists of four key disciplines: Slalom, Giant Slalom (GS), Super Giant Slalom (Super-G) and Downhill, all of which are time-based events.

If you have started skiing and had lessons and gained some experience in skiing recreationally, you may feel that you want to try your hand at alpine ski racing. The best way to start is to join one of the many ski clubs in the UK, based at artificial ski slopes. They will offer coaching and training which provides an affordable and accessible way into ski racing. Clubs will also hold regular local race events to gain experience in slalom techniques, which is the principal ski discipline held at artificial ski slopes across the country.

### Competitive Ski Racing

Once you are a member of a Ski Racing Club there are a range of artificial competitions that extend from club races to regional races, national races and culminating in national Championship races held during the summer season which starts in April and runs through to September. This range of races provides an effective pathway of artificial ski racing.

The various types of competition are described below:

#### Club Level Races

Artificial ski racing clubs organise regular training sessions that often include timed events and run race events during the year which allows racers to measure their performance improvement. Many clubs also engage with local schools to provide access to ski training and organise local Schools race events during the year.

#### Regional Races

Race clubs in England are also members of Regional Ski Associations within Snowsport England. There are presently 8 Regional Ski Associations.

- North East Ski Association (NESA)
- North West Ski Federation (NWSF)
- Yorkshire Ski Federation (YSF)
- Central England Ski Association (CESA)
- Eastern region Snowsports Association (ERSA)
- South West Snowsports Association (SWSA)
- Snowsport South (SRSA)
- London & South East Regional Snowsports Association (LSERSA)

Most of the regions run regular race events and organise Summer and/or Winter leagues involving their constituent clubs. These are well-supported and are an ideal way to make the transition between club racing and national race events. Some of the Regions also organise Regional Ski Championships and Regional schools' races in addition, which are also popular and well-supported.

## National Races (Seeded)

Having gained further experience of racing, at regional level, a racer may want to compete in national races and gain national seed points. There are a range of national seeded race events which provide the opportunity to gain seed points. The rules for the running of National ski races are defined in the British Artificial Competition Rules (BACR)

A competitor's seed point is calculated from the results of races as outlined in the BACR. The lowest seed points indicate the best level of performance. The British Artificial Seeding (BARTS) scheme administers seeding for Home Nations Governing Bodies (HNGB) registered racers competing in recognised artificial ski slope races of national significance.

The BARTS seed list is an on-going list of registered competitors with their current seed points, calculated based on their performance in artificial slope races of national significance compared with other registered competitors competing in each race. Separate lists are maintained for the men and women competing. Separate lists are also maintained for Indoor (iBARTS) and Outdoor (oBARTS) artificial slope competitions.

All national seeded events must be attended by a Technical Delegate, appointed to attend the race by and on behalf of the GB Snowsport TD Forum, whose role is to ensure that the race is run safely and in accordance with the published rules.

All races are published in the Race Calendar and a series of documents will be published by the race organisers prior to the date of the race.

- Invitation Bulletin – sets out the details of the event, including date of the event, eligibility for entries, the closing date for entries, entry fee, and the format of the event. It will also set out an outline programme and details of the key organising officials and their contact details
- Acceptance Bulletin – confirms details of all athletes accepted into the event at the closing date, confirmed programme of the event and whether any late entries will be accepted.
- Start Lists for the initial runs of the event.

National Races are held to various prescribed formats to form a progression for racers from Excel Introductory races; Club National races, GBR Series races to Championship race events. These formats are described below. All Club National and GBR Series events include U10/U12 races, but these are not seeded.

### 1. Excel Format Races

The Excel format was developed as an introduction to national seeded events and allows a seeded race to be run on an outdoor artificial slope in a short period of time, so that the event could be held during a morning, an afternoon, or an evening.

Entrants having no seed points are given priority. Priority for entrants with seed points is given to those with the higher seed points. If the race is oversubscribed, entrants with the best (lowest) seed points will be rejected. No entrant with less than 40 seed points will be accepted and no more than 75 entries will be accepted. Excel format races have a minimum penalty of 10 points for seeding.

The competitions comprise three runs down the same course, with the best single time to count for the result.

The start order for the first run is the same as for a standard two-run race; the top group is drawn first, followed by the remainder of the seeded competitors in seed point order, then the unseeded competitors are drawn as a group at the end. The start order for the second and third runs is the same as the first.

## 2. Club National Races

These are seeded races that can be held on either outdoor or indoor artificial slopes. The format of the event differs for outdoor and indoor events. Club National races have a minimum penalty of 10 points for seeding.

The event is a Special Slalom as defined by FIS with the aggregate time of the two runs to decide the result. Males and Females are to compete in separate races. In addition, the following race formats are approved for seeding:

- Outdoor Club National: three runs on the same course, the better of runs 1 & 2 plus run 3 to count.
- Indoor Club National: two separate single-run races on different courses.

The event must be held on a suitable artificial ski slope, which has either been homologated for the standard of event or conforms to the current Homologation Criteria.

### Outdoor Club Nationals

Entrants having no seed points are given priority. Priority for entrants with seed points is given to those with the higher seed points. If the race is oversubscribed, entrants with the best (lowest) seed points will be rejected. For Under 10/Under 12 events, all valid entries are accepted.

The competitions comprise three runs on the same course. The time for the better of runs 1 and 2 plus the time for run 3 are to count. For age groups U10 and U12, each race will be a minimum of two runs of slalom using stubby poles with the best time to count for the result.

The start order for run 1 is:

U10/U12 Girls drawn for start order, U10/U12 Boys drawn for start order

For U14 and above the start order is:

Women in descending seed point order, those without seed points (including unregistered racers) drawn for start order and to ski first, the top 15 seeded entrants to be drawn for start order and race last.

For Men it will be the same as the Women

The start order for run 2 is the same as run 1. The start order for run 3 is in reverse better time order. If the Jury so decide, all racers who were disqualified or did not finish both first and second runs will be allowed to ski the course before the start of the third run.

Run 2 takes place immediately after the completion of run 1.

For U10/12, girls and boys are drawn separately for start order in the first run, reversing the order for each subsequent run.

## Indoor Club Nationals

Entrants having no seed points are given priority. Priority for entrants with seed points is given to those with the higher seed points. If the race is oversubscribed, entrants with the best (lowest) seed points will be rejected. For Under 10/Under 12 events, all valid entries are accepted.

The competitions comprise two separate single-run races on different courses. The aggregate times of the two races are combined to produce a result for prizegiving. Each single-run race will be seeded separately. For age groups U10 and U12, each race will be a minimum of two runs of Slalom using stubby poles with the best time to count for the result.

The start order for the first race is the same as for a standard two-run race; the top group is drawn first, followed by the remainder of the seeded competitors in seed point order, then the unseeded competitors are drawn as a group at the end. For U10/U12 competitors, the start order is determined by a random draw.

The start order for the second race is determined by reversing the start order of the first race within each 'category' (females, males, U10/U12).

For U10/12, girls and boys are drawn separately for start order in the first run, reversing the order for each subsequent run.

Club National races are well supported and are intended to provide a local pathway into national seeded race events, but also provide an opportunity for unregistered racers to race at this level as Day Entries, albeit they will not gain seed points if entered as a Day Entry.

### 3. GBR Series

The Great British Racing (GBR) Series is run jointly by Snowsport England, Snowsport Scotland and Snowsport Wales.

All competitors must be registered with their respective registration authority.

The GBR Indoor and Outdoor series will each usually comprise six races, but other programmes may be agreed between HNs. Regardless of the number of races the agreed programme must be published prior to the first race in each series taking place.

The Indoor and Outdoor Series are run as separate competitions, and racers may compete in one or other or both. Awards will be made in each Series, for the top three men and women overall, and the top three in each age group (U10, U12, U14, U16, U18, U21, Senior, Master). Points will be awarded at each race to count towards the Series result.

For age groups U14 and above, each race will be run as a standard two run slalom using full-height flex slalom poles with the aggregate time to count for the result. For age groups U10 and U12, each race will be a minimum of two runs of slalom using stubby poles with the best time to count for the result. GBR Series races have a minimum penalty of 5 points for seeding.

For age groups U14 and above the start order for each race will follow BACR I. For U10/12, girls and boys are drawn separately for the start order in the first run, reversing the order for each subsequent run.

At each race, Series Points towards the age group totals are awarded to the first five males and females in each age group. Where two or more competitors obtain identical times, they all receive points appropriate to the tied position.

Points gained at all the races in the Series count towards the final total.

Where two or more competitors Series Points are equal, reference will be made to the overall positions in each race or age group (number of first places, etc.) to determine the order in the final ranking.

#### 4. Championship Races

Each of the HNGBs organise Championship events, both outdoor and indoor. These follow a similar format to the GBR series slalom races, but the Championship races have a minimum penalty of zero points.

Outdoor Championships held during the Summer Artificial Season are:

- All England Outdoor Championships
- Welsh Championships
- Scottish Championships
- Irish Championships
- British Outdoor Championships

Indoor Championships held during the Summer Artificial season are:

- English Indoor Championships
- Welsh Indoor Championships
- British Indoor Championships
- Scottish Indoor Championships

The Championship events are held towards the end of the summer season calendar during August and September. The outdoor events are generally two-day and often include an open slalom event (with a minimum penalty of 5 points) on one day and the Championship slalom on the other day.

#### National Schools Races

As outlined earlier, clubs and regions hold schools race events in their local area.

In addition, the English Schools Ski Association (ESSkia) also run events during the summer season. A programme of regional qualifying race events are held during September and successful schools' teams then are invited to take part in the English Schools Championships held during October.

Similar schools' races are organised during the season by Snowsport Scotland and Snowsport Wales. A British Schools Championships event takes place each year during November.

More details can be found at the ESSkia website [www.esskia.org](http://www.esskia.org)

## Alpine Snow Events

During the winter season between December and April, the British HNGBs and Ski Academies organise a full calendar of Alpine ski races. These are seeded events for age categories U14 and above and most include a programme of U10/U12 race events also. The rules for the running of National ski races are defined in the British Competition Rules (BCR).

The British Alpine Seeding (BASS) scheme administers seeding for Home Nations Governing Bodies (HNGB) registered racers competing in recognised alpine ski races listed in the alpine ski calendar.

A competitor's seed point is calculated from the results of races as outlined in the BCR. The lowest seed points indicate the best level of performance.

Alpine snow races run in accordance with the BCR differ in format from the artificial races (which are run under the BACR). For the technical disciplines, U16 category and older are to comprise a 'standard' two-run race, with the first run start order determined by draw and seed points, all age categories as one group. The start order for U16 and older will be as described in BCR I.

The second run start order is determined by the results of the first run, and the aggregate time to count for seeding. Prizes may be awarded on the basis of aggregate time, or as otherwise directed by the Regulations for the particular competition.

For the U14 technical events, they comprise two single-run races, each seeded separately. Where U14 and other age groups are competing together, they run on the same course and use the same Race Penalty Point which must be applied to each single-run race.

Each race counts separately for seed points, but prizes and medals are awarded on the aggregate time from both races. The start order for U14 Race 1 is determined by a standard draw based on seed points. The start order for U14 Race 2 will be the reverse of their start order for Race 1. When run on the same course, the U14 age group must be run separately from the other age groups, after the remainder of the field on each run unless determined otherwise by the Jury and announced at the Team Captains' Meeting.

For technical disciplines those racers who did not finish or were disqualified in the first run (not including those who did not start) will be offered the chance to run hors concours at the end of the second run, after the qualified competitors. There is no obligation to take up this offer. The jury has the discretion to deny the second run in response to course conditions.

In Super-G events, all competitors will usually run together in the same race. When run together, a single start list will be drawn in the usual manner based on seed points, with no separation by age group. Due consideration must be given to course setting as indicated under 1003.1.5.

The HNGBs also run several FIS events, which cover different the range of alpine ski disciplines, many of which are run alongside their Championships as part of the calendar programme.

Snowsport England organise and run the English Alpine Championships held at Bormio During February. This is held over a week and covers a full programme of ski racing of BASS races for U14 and U16 age categories covering Slalom, GS and Super G races, a full programme of FIS races for U18 and above, also including Slalom, GS and Super G races and includes a programme of U10/U12 races including GS, Parallel GS, and Slalom events. This is one of the largest winter events of the British Alpine Calendar.

More details can be found at [www.snowsportengland.org.uk/alpine-champs](http://www.snowsportengland.org.uk/alpine-champs)

The winter programme of BASS races includes the following events:

- Ambition Champs
- Evolution Speed BASS Races
- Anglo-Scottish Championships
- British Ski Academy BASS Championships
- Welsh Alpine Championships
- English Alpine Championships
- Inter Schools Races
- Aiglon Cup BASS races
- British Children's' Championships

In addition to the BASS races listed above there are two other events held during the year which provide an opportunity for racers to gain BASS seed points these are the Snowsport England Indoor Bass races held over a weekend each year at Landgraaf in The Netherlands, usually at the end of May. The weekend of racing includes two days of slalom races for age categories U14 and include stubby slalom races for U10/U12. Additionally, the programme usually includes an unseeded Pro Slalom event for all categories.

A further event which usually provides an opportunity for racers to gain BASS points is the Lowlands Indoor Championships held at the end of September each year. This involves competitors from Great Britain, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Ireland, Denmark, and Iceland. The event is held at a weekend and includes two days of slalom racing which count as BASS seeded races for GBR racers for age categories U14 and above, and stubby slalom races are held for U10/U12 categories.

### **Key Sources of Information**

Each of the Home Nations Governing Bodies (HNGB) provide details of events that they organise on their respective websites.

The principal source of all Alpine Ski Racing information is provided at the website [www.GBSki.com](http://www.GBSki.com) This website includes a wealth of news and information for alpine ski racing and is the main means of posting all race related information. This site includes:

- News items – used by HNGBs and Organisers to post items
- Calendar and Race Results
  - Key Officials for each race and contact details
  - Race Bulletins
    - Invitations
    - Acceptance Bulletins
    - Start Lists
    - Post-race Results
- Seeding
  - Latest seed lists
    - BASS
    - iBARTS
    - oBARTS
  - Historical seed lists

- Competitors
  - Details
  - List of all previous results for a competitor
- Rules
  - Full contents of BCR
  - Full contents of BCR
  - Guide documents
- Other Resources, which include
  - Race Forms for download
  - Clubs
  - Organisations
  - Age Categories
  - Competition Venues
  - Homologated Slopes