



# PROJECT EXCEL

**RANDOM START ORDER  
WHITE PAPER**

**OCTOBER / 24**



# ACCELERATING ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT

The **Random Start Order (RSO)** is a new approach to seeding the start order at U14/U16 races. This method not only aims to replicate the race environments athletes will encounter as they transition into FIS-level competition but also promotes equity and inclusiveness by giving all athletes a fairer chance at better course conditions. RSO was successfully implemented across the country during the 2023/24 season with positive outcomes.

This White Paper outlines the benefits, structure, and planned implementation of RSO for the 2024/25 ski season.

## FOUR KEY BENEFITS OF RANDOM START ORDER

### ACCELERATE YOUR ATHLETES' DEVELOPMENT

1

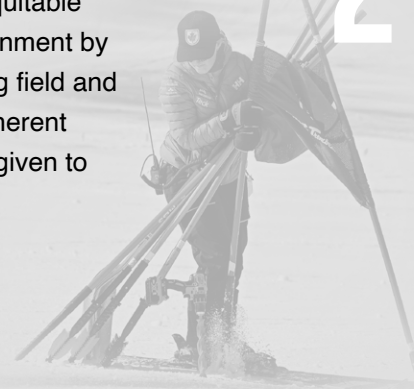
Provides athletes with faster, more efficient technical, tactical, and mental skill development, as well as helping them sharpen their abilities and prepare for the challenges they will face in the future.



### PROMOTES FAIR COMPETITION

2

Creates a more equitable competition environment by leveling the playing field and neutralizing the inherent advantages often given to early starters.



### FOSTERS DIVERSE CONNECTIONS

3

Combining former cohorts, the random draw start format promotes diverse and expansive relationships among competitors, encouraging broader interaction and camaraderie.



### BROADENS ATHLETIC DEVELOPMENT

4

Provides athletes with the experience of starting from the back which trains them to overcome challenges they will encounter as they advance in ski racing, building resilience and adaptability for future competitions.



The concept of a Random Start Order (RSO) in ski racing challenges the traditional seeding model, where athletes are ranked based on accumulated points. Historically, this system has favored early developers and top performers by allowing them to start on a fresh, well-groomed course, which typically offers better conditions. As the race progresses, the course deteriorates, and with limited maintenance after the initial group, it becomes harder, and potentially less safe, for later starters to secure a fair chance at a top 30 result.

**RSO offers a more equitable approach**, giving all athletes an equal chance to start on a better course. This format accelerates skill development for younger racers by exposing them to a variety of race conditions earlier in their careers. It encourages a more inclusive environment, where skiers must learn to adapt to different course conditions, reducing the early advantage held by top-seeded racers. While some critics argue that RSO is unfair to former top performers and may introduce safety risks, supporters emphasize that the benefits outweigh these concerns. In fact, evidence shows that consistent track maintenance throughout the event ensures a safer course for all competitors, including the last racer. By exposing athletes to the unpredictable conditions, they will encounter as they advance from U16 to FIS-level racing, RSO better prepares them for the realities of competitive skiing.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1

### FOSTERING ATHLETE RETENTION

Creating a competition environment that motivates athletes to continue participating in ski racing, allowing them to reach their full potential.

2

### INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT FOCUS

Shifting the focus of the development system toward the majority of ski racers, not just the top performers.

3

### EMPHASIZING LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT

Prioritizing long-term growth and development over short-term success, ensuring sustainable progress for all athletes.

4

### SMART SCHEDULING FOR SUCCESS

Implementing well-planned calendars to support both strong athlete development and competition success while keeping the increased cost of travel in mind.

5

### SKILL-BASED ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT

Adhering to Alpine Canada's Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) model, which emphasizes building fundamental skills as a foundation for success.

## 2024/25 APPROACH

The ACA U16 Regional Championships (East and West) will use the approach outlined below.

It will be left up to each Province to determine how they wanted to structure their own provincial events leading into the Regional Championships.

## U16 RACE FORMAT

For events that include both U14 and U16 athletes, it is recommended to randomize all racers together and use course sets that meet the parameters for both age groups. If the Race Organizing Committee (ROC) requests to run the age groups separately and receives approval from BCA, each group will be randomized separately.

- **DNF Rule:** If a racer does not finish (DNF) in the first run, they will still start in their assigned position for the second run. (e.g. bib 100 of 100 DNFs, they (bib 100) still start first in the second run). The racer will receive a run time but will not be included in the overall result calculations. This is to maximise the athletic development of the athlete.

---

### ONE-DAY RACE

Random draw for the first run, with a full field flip for the second run.

#### Example: With 41 Racers

Race 1:

- **Run 1:** 1-41
- **Run 2:** 41-1

Race 2:

- **Run 1:** 21-41, 1-20
- **Run 2:** 20-1, 41-21

#### Example: With 100 Racers

Race 1:

- **Run 1:** 1-100
- **Run 2:** 100-1

Race 2:

- **Run 1:** 51-100, 1-50
- **Run 2:** 50-1, 100-51

#### Example: Two Different Disciplines with Four Race Runs Total

GS:

- **Run 1:** 1-41
- **Run 2:** 41-1

SL:

- **Run 1:** 21-41, 1-20
- **Run 2:** 20-1, 41-21

If there are more than four race runs, a new draw is conducted after the first four runs.

---

### ADJUSTMENTS FOR WEATHER

If weather or snow conditions force the ROC to reduce the program (e.g., only two disciplines with four total race runs, such as one GS and one SL race), the original draw will remain the same for both disciplines. Or if you run six slalom runs, a new draw should happen after the fourth race run.