



Eastern Region SnowSports Association

www.ersa.co.uk

Development Plan

2010 – 2014

History

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ERSA Today – Where we are now....

The region consists of both artificial and indoor slopes with many people taking part in racing from all ages. As a region we aim to promote and encourage participation in snow sports throughout the Eastern Region, to encourage participation in Regional, National and International snow sport events and to assist in the provision of a framework for running competitive and recreational snow sports at all levels for all age groups and abilities.

The purpose of the Regional Summer Race League race events are as follows;

- To encourage participation in entry level racing for all ages and to act as an educational base.
- To provide a framework in which teams can win a league championship based on their season.
- To encourage clubs to learn about running events and provide an entry level for race officials.
- To provide friendly competition for all standards and a focal point for regional activities throughout the summer.

Traditionally ERSAs has been focused on developing ski racing in the region and that is still one of its main focus areas. However in January 2010 it was agreed to change the name from Eastern Region Ski Association to Eastern Region Snowsports Association and to start promoting other Snowsports within the region.

ERSA is an innovative region and one that is prepared to try new approaches and experiment to ensure that participation continues and grows while the racers continue to have fun. Some of the approaches have already been adopted by the national governing body once they have seen success.

1. Affiliated clubs

The region covers a wide area and there are a variety of snow sports taking places at different clubs. ERSAs is funded from the grant it receives from Snowsport England (SSE) based on the membership of SSE affiliated clubs in the region. Our other funding is generated from the income of race entry fees for the regional races. This money is ploughed back into the sport for the region in many different ways.

Update 2011: Two additional clubs have named ERSAs as their main region, Elite Snowsports and Team Evolution.

The affiliated clubs as at October 2011 are;

Bassingbourn
Brentwood Park
Elite Snowsports (snow club)
Hemel Ski Racing Club *
Impulse Racing (snow club)
Norfolk
Ski Milton Keynes *
Suffolk Vikings
Tallington Lakes
Team Evolution (snow club)
Welwyn Garden City

*Indoor Snow Clubs

Membership of clubs representing a wide range of snowsports in the region:

<u>Club</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>
Bassingbourn	164	20 *
Brentwood Park	40	27
Hemel Ski Racing Club	182	280
Impulse Racing	22	29
Norfolk	4287	4258
Ski Milton Keynes	165	112
Suffolk Vikings	47	46
Welwyn Garden City	33	48
total	4974	4852

- Reduced membership due to uncertainty over the access to the slope. This has been resolved and membership should increase to reflect this in 2011.

2. Committee

The current structure of membership includes:

Chair

Secretary

Vice Chair

Treasurer

ROTP Chair

Schools Development

Regional Race Manager

Publicity/Sponsorship Officer

[Child Welfare Officer](#)

[ESSKIA Representative](#)

[SSE Sports Development Officers](#)

The above members are all volunteers and are elected each year (with exception of those in blue). The committee also includes representatives from each club so giving a good insight into what is happening at both club and a regional level. Those highlighted in red are posts that are hoped to be added in the future.

All committee members are volunteers and no one receives financial funding, although claims are made for out of pocket expenses, such as stationary and other items required to run races. The committee is assisted by many other volunteers and officials during the summer season. ERSA has no office although the secretary's home address is used for any correspondence.

The committee meets about 5 or 6 times a year including the Annual General Meeting (AGM) held in October when committee members are elected. As most committee members also attend the regional races there is often a meeting at the end of a race to review the progress and to discuss any urgent issues. The committee has further sub committees:

[Race Organisation Technical Panel \(ROTP\)](#)

ROTP 's focus is to look at the Race calendar, the rules and format for the Summer League races in the region and how to improve the running of the races as well as participation. ROTP members form the core of officials on race days assisted with other volunteers from clubs. This generally meets once a year and during the race season as and when issues crop up.

Race Managers Group

This comprises of the race managers from each of the clubs who meet to discuss any matters concerning the race format, calendar and team events once a year prior to the beginning of the Summer League season. This group meet with ROTP once a year.

3. Communication

ERSA has its own email list for the Alpine racing, which is used to notify parents and racers about the summer league series and some of the winter events. The website has been redesigned and re-launched in 2010 (www.ersa.co.uk) and continues to be developed as work in progress to increase functionality and accessibility to members.

4. Alpine skiing

Summer League

ERSA has its roots derived from Alpine Skiing and so much of the emphasis has been on the Alpine skiing until recently and is working on changing the emphasis. However until other areas are developed ERSA currently organises a summer league consisting of 8 races , six of which are on the outdoor artificial surfaces and latterly, 2 indoor snow races at Hemel Snow Centre and Milton Keynes. Skiers are encouraged to take part and have fun. Points are to be won for individuals and club teams for prizes at the end of the season and ERSA organises a Championship race at the end of the season usually in late Sept/October.

Although against a backdrop of national economic decline ERSA has managed to secure the entrance fee of £9 per race for the last 8 years. At the AGM in 2010 it was agreed to increase the entrance fee to £10 to pay the replacement of Perpetual Trophies and additional timing equipment. There are discounts for families where parents and children race. Numbers entering races had fluctuated slightly, but ERSA still has managed to maintain a healthy number of racers entering the summer league and Championship races and has actually increased the numbers of entrants in the 2011 season. This is encouraging despite a packed national race calendar where there are plenty of races for those who are prepared to travel can go to. However ERSA does not remain complacent and will continue to encourage new participation in the sport.

Sponsorship

At the beginning of the 2011 season, ERSA was fortunate to enter into a partnership with Team Evolution, a ski academy, who offered a bursary and other prizes to the winners of the different age categories throughout the season. This had received favourable feedback from racers and parents as there was a 90% take up of the bursary places. This partnership has been beneficial to both parties and ERSA are looking to continue this partnership into the 2012 season and are looking for other partners for future seasons to compliment Team Evolution.

Tri- Regional Event

In addition to the Summer League and the ERSA Championships, ERSA are involved in the TRI REGIONAL event held at the end of the summer between the three regions - SRSA (Southern Region Ski Assoc), LSERSA (London and South Eastern Snowsports Assoc) and ERSA. This is a fun event and enables 8 teams (40 skiers) from each region to compete against each other for a series of trophies.

Each region takes it in turn to organise the event and is highly successful in providing a fun day out and encouraging inter regional links, all regions have to provide officials to run the event. ERSA have been very successful in this competition in the past.

The Inter –Regional Event

This is a dual relay event organised by Snowsport England where all the regional associations recognised by SSE are entitled to enter regional teams. Each region selects their teams; they are allowed to enter only 3 teams per region. The race attracts some of the top skiers and is very competitive in comparison to the Tri-Region event. ERSA were winners of the 2009 Inter-Regional Trophy.

5. Freestyle/Snowboarding/Skier cross

Groups of the above disciplines meet and train at a few of the slopes over the region, but there is little organisation at a regional level. They tend to organise their own events or enter the nationally organised competitions that are hosted by individual clubs. It is hoped to attract a representative from the Freestyle community on the ERSA committee in the future to enable a more regional approach to the discipline.

6. Schools

A large number of schools within the ERSA region currently are affiliated to the English Schools Ski Association (ESSKiA) and enter teams into the qualifying races and have been successful in qualifying for the National and British Championships.

Some of the clubs have links with the schools on an individual club basis and children feed into the clubs' race teams. Other than the ESSKiA races there have been no specific races organised for schools in ERSA.

7. Coaching

ERSA has appointed a Regional Coach during 2010. Coaches from the region have attended Level 2 training course at Norfolk Snowsports Club and ERSA will encourage more of the region's coaches to attain more coaching qualifications in the future and also encourage other racers to progress to coaching.

8. Child welfare

The region is committed to following the SSE policy in ensuring that all children and vulnerable adults are able to enjoy Snowsports in an environment where they are protected from poor practice.

Five Year Plan - Where we want to go..

The following section describes specific areas we have identified for further development and how we plan on developing the region as a whole over the next five years. As previously mentioned ERSA has traditionally focused on Alpine Racing as that was its founding roots, but needs to look wider at other SnowSports, and this is one of the challenges over the coming years. We have tried to set realistic targets which we feel are achievable, especially considering the region is run by volunteers and against a back drop of external factors. We have to consider that with the changing economic climate people are being much more selective about what activities they take part in.

The region has traditionally focused solely on Alpine Racing and has been very successful in developing the summer league series but it recognises that there needs to be greater involvement and recognition of other SnowSports taking place in the region. As a result of the success of the summer league series and the focus on that, it has meant that certain areas have not developed on a regional basis but solely at the individual club level or not at all. The region would like to improve the ties with other Snowsports in the region to help promote them to a wider audience and also give the opportunity for new people to find out what is taking place in the area.

This development plan will continue to evolve over time and is not set in stone. It is a working document which will be reviewed and modified against a backdrop of many factors. How it evolves will depend on many things such as the feedback from parents, participants, economic climate, funding, what is happening elsewhere in Snowsports nationwide etc. and the continued commitment by those individuals who give their time voluntarily due to their passion and commitment to their sport.

1. Increase Participation

Look to continue the increase of racers into the regional races. This needs to encompass new people coming from the schools races and encourage them to take part in the clubs around the region. As a region we also want to continue encouraging more racers to take part in the national races and snow races over the Winter. We will work in partnership with our sponsors to devise methods to encourage new racers and continue the participation we already have.

Measure: Comparison of the numbers of people in the region taking part in regional races and national races.

Responsibility: All committee members and clubs.

2. Communication

ERSA has its own email list for the Alpine racing, which is used to notify parents and racers about the summer league series and some of the winter events. While this has served the region well and continues to do so, it is still important to utilise other communication methods. The feedback received from people in the region is that they certainly want to receive notifications but generally more about what is happening. Some of the methods which can be better utilised are described below and ERSA will continue to use these and explore other methods of communicating with the different age groups within the region's membership.

Email

The current email list has been built up over the past few years and now contains over 600 email addresses of people. The primary purpose of this list has been as a notification mechanism for issues relating to Alpine skiing and general committee issues. These same emails are then forwarded by

individual clubs to their own internal email lists of members. The club lists are maintained separately by the clubs.

The distribution of emails on the list is tightly controlled and sent out by one person in the region, when contributions are sent.

Not all ERSA members receive emails from the central list for a variety of reasons, so additional methods will also be used to ensure that we communicate to as many members as possible.

Whilst the email list has proved very successful, we will continue expanding it for more members, making it easier for them to subscribe to and leave the list. It also needs to allow more than one person to send emails, although the email list will still have to be tightly controlled by nominated people.

In summary ERSA will:

1. Continue to promote via the email list to members
2. Work with clubs in the region to ensure their members are aware of the regional and club email lists
3. Improve the ways which people can subscribe to the list.
4. Incorporate the members registering on the ERSA website
5. Improve the format and information contained in the emails

ERSA Website

There has been an ERSA website since 1999 which has been maintained throughout the years predominantly by one person. It has a wealth of information which has been built up over the years and has focused on the Alpine racing. The challenges within the existing website are around improving and adding more content about other SnowSports and allowing other people to publish.

2010 has seen the launch of a new Website which has been updated to reflect the changing technology on the Internet, which will allow it to be maintained more easily and by more individuals, thus giving greater visibility to the region. Some of the new capabilities on the website are;

- Improved communications
- More information about other SnowSports in the region
- Improved navigation
- Search capabilities
- Feed aggregator
- Ability to create feedback forms
- Improved accessibility for mobile devices.
- Online bookings for races

This is only the first stage and a major aim for 2011. Over time more information needs to be added in the following areas;

- More details about other regional SnowSports
- Allow more people to post information on the site
- Members area
- Improved information for new members
- Schools information

Facebook/Twitter

Facebook has a huge following with both racers and parents, over 500 million members now which is far too big for anyone to ignore. Many members, especially the younger members ages 12 – 21, in

the region do not use the traditional means of obtaining information but will take notice if it is published in a Facebook group.

ERSA now has a Facebook group which is used to publish information about the races and results, which was the initial aim for 2010.

Future uses of Facebook need to be expanded to include the publication of information relating to other SnowSports. This could take the form of adding to the existing Facebook group or more likely the creation of another group to focus on those areas. During 2011 and beyond it is important to find other members from the region to provide content for the group.

Increasingly racers and parents also have their own Twitter accounts so ERSA now has an account to give information thus offering another form of media to exchange information.

Other

ERSA will aim to:

- Utilise other media for promoting the region eg. trade magazines such as Racer Ready and The Piste.
- Ensure that each issue of the magazines contains information relevant to the region.
- Investigate what publications exist for other SnowSports and how the region can make use of these.

Measure: Evidence of continued website development, continued visits to the website, more information published via the website and other social media.

Responsibility: All committee members.

3. Alpine Skiing

Traditionally the bulk of the support ERSA provides to the clubs in the region is throughout the summer. Very little happens through the winter months with clubs and members hearing very little from the region.

ERSA aims to:

- Improve this by publicising the events that racers from the region have entered on snow. Through publicising the achievements of ERSA racers on snow it may encourage other children and parents to have a try at racing on snow;
- Hold winter events in the form of a Fun Race and Night Slalom, more Indoor Events eg Giant Slalom events. ERSA members had given feedback that these sorts of events was favoured, but the timing of the events needs to be carefully reviewed for future events;
- Continue to encourage club members to enter the regional summer league races and encourage more parents to get involved in the running and organisation of the races;
- Promote the national development path for racers and encourage and support the top racers already participating at this level.
- Highlight the Racing Starter Pack – there is currently a section on the website relating to this though a paper version in booklet form may be introduced at some stage in the future. Some clubs already have their own packs they issue to new entrants to the racing scene.

Measure: Numbers taking part in the races at the regional, national and winter races continues to increase.

Responsibility: All committee members and clubs.

4. Freestyle

Individual clubs across the region already organise freestyle sessions and host national and local competitions.

ERSA will aim to:

- Promote the exchange of information between clubs at a regional level through the website, Facebook, Twitter and appoint a committee member.

Measure: It is easier to find out what freestyle events and training is taking place in the region,

Responsibility: All committee members and clubs

5. Improve Contacts

Refine and establish the contacts with the clubs and other Snowsports organisations in ERSA by contacting all the groups by the end of 2012 and encouraging members to attend the ERSA committee meetings.

Measure: Record of meetings and actions.

Responsibility: BW/DD

6. Schools

ERSA have appointed a committee member responsible for organising a schools race in the region.

ERSA are committed to:

- Organising an Eastern Region Schools Championship race.
- The Schools Development committee member liaising with ESSKIA, SSE and other bodies to work on expanding schools participation in skiing and the regional events.
- Work with the regions sponsors and partners to make this happen.

Measure: Run a schools race in the region.

Responsibility: BW/BP

7. Coaching

ERSA will develop and database of coaching qualifications within the region based on information from all the member clubs. This will help to highlight where we can encourage other development in skills to support various Snowsports in the region.

Investigate funding opportunities with SSE and other organisations to encourage further development.

Measure: Evidence of a database of coaching qualifications. Information on coaching courses and officials courses available and supported on the regional calendar and website.

Responsibility: BW/JR

8. Planning

Improve ERSA planning through better use of the website for races, meetings and other events in the region and nationally.

Measure: Visibility of the calendar on the website and updated

Responsibility: BW

9. Planning Support

ERSA to provide all the information necessary to support the planned events in the region whether these be the summer league races, national and winter races or other Snowsports events. This information should be published to the website, emails and other social media to ensure the information reaches the widest audience.

Measure: Evidence of races run, advertising of events around the region and attendance.

Responsibility: All committee members and clubs.

10. Improve Recognition of Achievements

Improve the recognition of the achievements of those racers and participants taking part in all forms of events in the region or nationally. This should be done via the ERSA website and social media,

Measure: Website promotion and articles in appropriate media.

Responsibility: Committee

11. Develop Links with Other Regions and SSE

Continue to enhance the ties with the other regions. Currently there are close ties with LSERSA and SRSA especially through the Tri Regions race. Need to expand the communication to other regions and also the SSE sports development officers.

Measure: record of attendance at meetings.

Responsibility: Committee

12. SnowMark

ERSA to support and encourage clubs in the region to work towards attaining the SnowMark accreditation.

Measure: See an increase in the numbers of clubs attaining SnowMark each year.

Responsibility: all clubs

13. Funding

ERSA to keep abreast of the potential sources of funding and advertise across the region any information gained and also that which is provided by SSE sports development officers.

Measure: Visibility of information relating to funding.

Responsibility: BW and committee

14. Sponsorship and Partnership Deals

ERSA to develop further the sponsorship and partnership deals which are also of benefit to the region.

Measure: Additional sponsors coming on board.

Responsibility: BW/DD and committees

15. Training

ERSA has already provided some training courses and will aim to provide more courses in the following areas:

- Race Calculations (timing, results)
- Level 1 & 2 Alpine Race Officials, with support from SSE
- Child Welfare Officers

Measure: Evidence of information about courses published and list of attendees.

Responsibility: BW

Appendix A – ERSA Constitution

A copy of the current ERSA Constitution can be found online at the ERSA Website here http://www.ersa.co.uk/ersa_constitution.