

# 2021 Snow Sports NZ Alpine Forum Minutes

**Meeting Date:** 17/10/2021 10:00 AM

**Meeting Subject:** Snow Sports NZ Spring Alpine Forum

**Location:** Zoom



## Participants

- Hannah Hazeldine
- Jono Howson
- Nic Cavanagh
- Fiona Boyer
- Jeremy Ullrich
- Neil Knight
- Fiona Stevens
- Melissa Vistoli
- John Adams
- Suzanne Adams
- Jackie Cheyne
- Noel Simpson
- Margy Pohl
- Peter Jackson
- Katrin Blumberg
- James Lazor
- Jesse Teat
- Nils Coberger
- Chris Mosaed
- Erika Harris
- Patrick Mulrennan

Apologies: Cameron Wilson, Simon Wi Rutene, Flick Wallace, Garth Hinton

## Minutes

1. The meeting was opened by the Alpine Sport Committee Chair, Jono Howson. He acknowledged Jackie Cheyne, SSNZ Board Chair and Nic Cavanagh, SSNZ CEO and Fiona Stevens, NZ's FIS Alpine Representative and thanked them and all our members for their attendance.

### 2. Welcome and Report from Snow Sports NZ CEO, Nic Cavanagh

First and foremost I wanted to acknowledge the extremely difficult and challenging conditions that we all faced this season. In retrospect, looking back on this season, it was as difficult as last. And as we head towards the Northern Hemisphere those challenges of operating, competing and performing in a global pandemic will be with us for some time yet.

Thank you to the Alpine Sport Committee for all the mahi you have been doing and will continue to do, not only for our elite and youth athletes but for our next generation of alpine ski racers.

Thank you to the volunteers and all the race organising committees that have operated this season. Even with the changes and challenges that we have had the delivery of events has been very good.

To Snow Sport NZ's Alpine resort partner NZSki, thank you for all the work you have been doing and continue to do. We are in our last year of a four year agreement and we are looking to commit to an agreement for another 4 years in the coming months.

A special thanks to Simon Wi Rutene and Jonny Rice from the ASC who have worked tirelessly on that committee and everyone has benefitted from their experience and expertise.

Thanks to Fiona Stevens, her incredible work rate as a volunteer and the work that she does to lobby and advocate on NZ's behalf, and even the southern hemispheres behalf, it is very much appreciated. Thank you

for all the work you do and continue to do.

Finally, thank you to Jono and Hannah for your leadership in the Alpine space for Snow Sports NZ. We wouldn't be in this place without your leadership so thank you very much.

Looking ahead, the big challenge on the horizon is Insurance and we will need to land on a solution in the next week or so. We have three live proposals at the moment. With BUPA falling over we have worked really hard to find the best coverage for the lowest premiums for our athletes moving overseas and we will be making further announcements on that soon.

I want to acknowledge that Snow Sport NZ has no ability to advocate for MIQ spaces. We do have MIQ spaces guaranteed by the government for our Olympic and Paralympic team members to return home but apart from that we do not have any ability.

Looking ahead to April 2022, the Board will embark on a 'whole of sport' strategy review. That 'whole of sport' strategy will complement and add to the High Performance strategy which is currently being done. I would encourage everyone to actively participate in that 'whole of sport strategy' review, it is an opportunity for us to critically look and review where we are at as an NSO and how we are delivering to our members right across the Board from elite to age group to youth and then into development.

And finally good luck to Alice Robinson who has been selected for Beijing. But also to Piera Hudson, Jack Adams, Willis Feasey, Colbey Derwin and Will Cashmore as they head off overseas in their attempt to make the qualification mark for Beijing 2022.

### 3. Nic Cavanagh announced the board appointed and elected members of the Alpine Sport Committee for 2021/22.

It's with great pleasure that I announce that the Board has appointed Jesse Teat and the two elected members are Nils Coberger and Chris Mosaed. On behalf of the Board and of Snow Sports NZ, thank you very much for your efforts, for putting your hand up and for looking ahead to doing all the work that is required to keep our sport in the shape it is.

Current composition of the ASC:

Name			Joined the ASC	Term Starts	Term Ends
Jono Howson	Auckland	Elected	2016, 3rd term	October 2020	October 2022
Cameron Wilson	Auckland	Elected	2018, 2nd term	October 2020	October 2022
Erika Harris	Queenstown	Board Appointed	2018, 2nd term	October 2020	October 2022
Jesse Teat	Dunedin	Board Appointed	2021, 1st term	October 2021	October 2023
Chris Mosaed	Christchurch	Elected	2017, 3rd term	October 2021	October 2023
Nils Coberger	Queenstown	Elected	2021, 1st term	October 2021	October 2023
Hannah Hazeldine	Wanaka	SSNZ Staff Member (Non-Voting)	2015		

? Qu: Peter Jackson: How are the Board appointed positions sought and filled? Is geographic representation considered?

Ans: Jono Howson: Referring to the SSNZ Constitution, section 21. The ASC, in conjunction with the SSNZ Board and CEO, seeks a person with highest possible level of expertise to represent the Board on the ASC. There are no set criteria, except that we look to identify someone with a wide background who can bring FIS, Olympic and World Championships expertise and experience and who is still in touch and involved in the sport.

Although regional representation is not an explicit criteria in the constitution we aim to find a fair and unbiased group to lead our sport. We accepted that currently the North Island ski area representatives are thin on the ground. This is both a side effect of the state of North Island ski racing in the past few years and of our sport at the elite level.



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? Qu: Peter Jackson: How do Snow Sport NZ seek applicants for the Board appointed positions?

Ans: Jono Howson: the ASC will consult with the SSNZ Board on what skills and expertise are needed and put forward suggestions for suitable candidates. There isn't a formal process in place for this. In 2021 there was one nomination for the appointed position.

Being a member of the ASC is a significant time commitment and where there are members with the requisite skills and time, they are more than welcome to contribute.

Ans: Nic Cavanagh: The make-up of our committees and the appetite for our volunteers to step forward and be part of those committees is a critical element of the 'whole of sport' strategy review in April 2022. A healthy committee needs diverse people with diverse thinking, both north and south representation and how we do that will be something that we look at in that review process in April next year.

### 3. Approval of the [Minutes of the online Alpine Forum held 18th October 2020.](#)

The minutes of the Alpine Forum held 18th October 2020 were approved by Chris Mosaed and seconded by Erika Harris.



2020 SSNZ  
Alpine For...

### 4. Report on behalf of the Alpine Sport Committee (ASC) from ASC Chair, Jono Howson Review period: Period 1 July 2020 through to 30 September 2021

#### **Domestic and International season Overview**

As with everything, COVID defined both our domestic season and that of our Alpine athletes who travelled to the Northern Hemisphere – to the extent that more than a handful could travel. At home we opted for a 'festival' National Championships with no ANCs or FIS races possible. Our first year FIS athletes registered for National Points only, as there was no point in registering for a FIS license, Youth races (U14/U16) took part in a selection process for the NZL Youth Squad in the knowledge that no one would travel, and our Interfield calendar carried on unaffected by events outside of New Zealand.

Our National Team athletes moved north in fits and starts with patchy results at the beginning of the season, but at the end there was a World Cup season and it was remarkably safe and relatively COVID free. Categories of races below the World Cup suffered and our athletes with an eye to Beijing 2022 found their opportunities to travel and compete severely restricted.

The postponed 2020 FIS World Ski Championships did finally happen this January - now the 2021 FIS World Ski Championships at Cortina. NZL enjoyed some good results, the most important event in the Alpine world. Alice Robinson began her return to form with a GS 4<sup>th</sup> before an outstanding gold medal GS run at the Lenzerheide finals. She steadily improved over the season and has begun to experiment with Super G at World Cup. Willis Feasey achieved a SG 28<sup>th</sup> at Cortina and Piera Hudson a 12<sup>th</sup> in the Parallel before her season was cut short after breaking her arm during training.



After April our athletes returned home to rest and prepare for the new season and thoughts of meeting Olympic nomination criteria. Alice Robinson's coaching team planned to train in New Zealand for August and September, and there was hope that a Trans-Tasman bubble would allow the ANCs to go ahead this year. As

we know the bubble failed and so to the ANCs, but we were determined to run a FIS calendar and not to lose 2 years in a row of first year FIS athletes. Robinson's team did arrive and were able to put together an excellent training block superbly supported by NZSki Coronet Peak through all the ups and downs of the August and ongoing lockdowns. Our other National Team athletes including for the men: Jack Adams, Willis Feasey (also coaching) and Will Cashmore enjoyed a good training block and for the women Piera Hudson at Cardrona. Our FIS events (FIS Tech, and Nat Champs) did go off in the end with small fields and benefitting from the FIS Points Rule change Art 4.4.4. Again, we must thank and acknowledge the efforts of not only our ROCs to make these events possible but both Cardrona and NZSki (CP and Mt Hutt) for making these races possible in the knowledge that there would be no international field taking part.

Our Youth (U14/U16) athletes were looking forward to a full calendar, development camp and selection process with the prospect of travel in 2022. Our Interfields got off to a great start at Coronet Peak attracting 238 entrants and the Coronet Peak National Points followed with a large enthusiastic field in glorious conditions. And then we all know now what happened. As the South Island moved back to COVID level 2 our resorts and ROCs rallied and we were able to run our National Points, Interfield and school events in a tightly packed calendar, noting the impact and significance the ongoing lockdown in Auckland. The Snowvision Development Camp had to be abandoned yet we look forward to revisiting this again next year.

As of today, there are Youth Squad selections to be finalized, preparations for travel and Insurance cover to be sought, final nominations for the Winter Games at Beijing, the Games themselves, the Alpine World Junior Championships at Panorama and of course the World Cup - all to look forward to. Alice and Piera are at Sölden one week out from the start of the season opener. All our other athletes are on the move. We wish them and all our other National Team, FIS and Youth athletes the best for the season as they head off the represent New Zealand on the world stage.

## 6. Rules Proposals for consideration by the ASC

Summary of Rule Proposal	Summary of Discussion
 <p>Rule Proposal ...</p> <p>Submitted by Jono Howson. The proposal to reduce the minimum vertical drop for National Points Giant Slalom from 200m to 175m to be able to run on Easy Rider and Outwide.</p>	<p><i>This proposal was supported by Fiona Boyer, who has been the Technical delegate at the Coronet Peak National Points races for the past two seasons who explains that Easy Rider has been a good and safe slope for National Points competition.</i></p> <p><i>The proposal is also supported via email ahead of this meeting by Melissa Vistoli, Head of Race and Events for Coronet Peak.</i></p> <p><i>The rule change is supported and carried forward to ASC.</i></p>
 <p>Rule Proposal ...</p> <p>Submitted by Hannah Hazeldine The proposal will extend the valid period for the 2022 Super G base list from July 2020 to October 2021.</p>	<p><i>Unfortunately all Youth Super G events were cancelled in 2021 and so no points have been scored this season. Going in to 2022, if this rule change was not implemented, the base list points for Super G would be bumped up +50%. The consequence of which would be that we are much more likely to have penalties where we are applying the maximum points value and therefore not accurately reflecting the standard of the athletes.</i></p> <p><i>This proposal, which is based on the very similar rule changes implemented at FIS level, would extend the valid period for the points from the start of the 2020 season through to the base list for 2022.</i></p> <p><i>Simply put, the Super G Base List for 2022 will be the same as for 2021.</i></p>

	<i>The rule change is supported and carried forward to ASC.</i>
Submitted verbally by Elle Coberger, Mt Hutt Ski Club Rules for the South Island and North Island Championships titles to be added to the NZ Competition Rule book	<i>Carried forward to the ASC</i>

## 7. 2022 Draft Alpine Calendar



2022 Alpine Calendar\_...

JH: The discussion we are having around the 2022 calendar is informed by the perceived likelihood/chances that we may still not be returning to a 'normal' international calendar in 2022.

The ANC sub-Committee (Chair Fiona Stevens NZL, Jono Howson NZL, Nils Coberger NZL, Lachlan Clark AUS, Shawn Fleming AUS) met last week with NZSki to calendar the 2022 ANCs. Dates for the NZ leg of the series have been set and dates for the National Championships FIS races have been set to follow after.



Fiona Stevens and Nils Coberger provided some context for the difficulty Australian resorts have had recently. Their resorts have been hit hard by COVID lockdowns. The Australian development pathway has a strong focus on school races. The ANC sub-Committee will continue to collaborate with the aim of including an Australian ANC leg. If the borders are open and we can host an international race series we will go ahead, otherwise we will fall back to our current model. Once international travel returns to normal we must have both AUS and NZ legs for it to be a valid Continental Cup under the current FIS rules.

Fiona Stevens has joined the FIS Alpine Future Vision Working Group which has been tasked with developing a recovery and growth plan for Alpine. One key focus for NZ will be to work on growing membership in the sport and an NZ working group may be set up and tasked with developing a strategy to support this. A secondary focus will be to find prizemoney and sponsorship, TV coverage for the ANC series which has been lost since Winter Games NZ no longer operate in the Alpine space. Noel Simpson reiterated his interest in developing a sub-committee or working group to leverage things like schools racing in the effort to grow the grass roots base of the sport and utilise the skills of the parents/members on these projects. This will be brought forward to the ASC.

The current draft calendar as attached is the preferred dates as submitted by ROC's and has not yet been through the process of highlight conflicts in dates and conflict is resources (timers, volunteers etc).

The FIS schedule will include the Cardrona Tech Series (dates TBC), the ANCs at Coronet Peak and the National Championships (with National Junior Championships titles likely as a paper race) at Coronet Peak. The Youth and Junior Interfield schedule will follow a very similar format to this year.

## 8. Any other business

 Neil Knight_J...	Neil Knight and Garth Hinton submitted similar proposals around a Junior FIS wider training group or Development Squad.  There was a discussion on the current pathway, in which athletes are required to meet the under 65 FIS points minimum criteria to be part of the Development Squad before they are recognised by Snow Sport NZ as a member of an NZ Team as FIS athlete.
 Garth Hinton_N...	The argument for this is that athletes who are named to a national squad at any age, be it Youth (U14 & U16) or Junior (U21) would be able to access benefits such as

...in youth (U17 & U18) or junior (U21) would be able to access benefits such as regional trust funding and access to insurance as well as the recognition the schools need to be able to give them additional leave for training and competition.

Fiona Stevens spoke to the previous junior development squad programmes run in the early 2010's and one major difficulty then was to find a training location and coach which all selected members would agree on.

The counter points was raised that our FIS youth squad athletes are not obliged to train together but the simple act of naming a squad allows them access to wider benefits which are still very valuable to the athlete and their families.

The ASC recognise that starting in FIS racing and meeting criteria for the National Development Team is a daunting process. It is a priority to work through this issue at the ASC level.

At the Snow Sports NZ level we will to work to differentiate between the different sport code squad/teams to the public.

One step the ASC have taken in addressing this issue in 2021, and taking into account the effect of the pandemic, is to widen the criteria for the 2022 World Junior Championships at Panorama from 65 to 90 FIS Points for SL and GS; and from 90 to 105 for SG, DH.

The ASC have already been working on a model to include a wider training group/development squad which would be based on a benchmark for each YOB in the U21 bracket leading towards the goal of reaching dev team status by U21. Prior to this Forum the ASC's model would not have necessarily have included first or second year FIS athlete without Northern Hemisphere racing experience. The points raised in these proposal and in this forum would have the criteria stretched wider still and that will be taken into consideration at the ASC.

In his absence Jono read Garth Hinton's proposal so that it could be properly tabled and minuted.

QAST - Jury Training *Carried forward to the ASC*

#### 9. Jackie Cheyne, Snow Sports NZ Board Chair

I have appreciated being a part of the Alpine Forum today and really just wanted to listen and to start to get a better understanding of some of the challenges that are in the Alpine space and it has certainly helped me. The Board have asked Jono Howson to be a more regular part of our Board meetings and that will continue so that our whole Board understands a little more of the context and challenges for Alpine.

Nic Cavanagh mentioned earlier the work that Sport NZ is kicking off in April which is part of the 'strengthen and adapt' initiative post-COVID which will give us a really good opportunity to look at our whole of sport strategy, and this forum is obviously a really big part of that picture.

I am really keen to get the communications working better between the ASC and the Board and working with you more closely in the future.

10. There being no further business the meeting was closed. Next Meeting - Autumn Alpine Update (TDs and ROCs) – Online 5th June 2022