

Task statement:

We want to grow the sport of Biathlon in the US and develop more athletes in the Biathlon pipeline.

Key background:

- We need to accelerate progress in developing and expanding Biathlon clubs and athletes. USSS has access to a larger community of XC clubs, volunteers, and stakeholders, including potential athletes.
- U.S. Biathlon has been strengthening relationships across the community - focused on grassroots growth and building close relationships and engagement with clubs, including Nordic clubs.
- The challenge now is that we are siloed, with duplicated infrastructures (e.g., systems, schedules, environments, etc.) for Biathlon and XC.
- Listening to clubs, their communication mentions the difficulties of trying to do both (e.g., needing two memberships, calendars don't align, etc.).
- It needs to be simpler to participate in both Biathlon and XC (for athletes, volunteers, clubs, etc.)
- We have the opportunity to integrate and streamline to better utilize limited resources.
- We need to think collectively for the strength and growth of both sports. For example, better synergy across sports will provide more opportunities for athletes who stay involved longer.
- We want to get people in and have them stay

Session outcomes:

There are two desired outcomes:

- a) A list of priority ideas for how to grow the number of athletes competing in Biathlon
- b) A list of priority ideas for how to better develop youth biathlon talent

Working statement:

How to make sports programming more attractive and accessible to athletes? (XC and Biathlon)

Sample ideas:

- Provide additional international race experience opportunities
- Introduce laser rifles to Nordic Programming
- Create the social interactions that keep kids engaged
- Incorporate Biathlon programming within the Nordic Clubs
- Provide a menu of things to do beyond ski and biathlon
- Identify the different challenges different places have for attracting kids

Samples: What Success looks like:

- We will have an increased retention of athletes
- We will have an increased pool of athletes
- Coaches seeing the bigger picture and are bought into both sports interacting
- Parents are having a better experience with the interface between the two sports
- The pipeline is producing athletes and bringing talent forward
- More kids are progressing up the pipeline at the desired competitive levels

What Success of a merger looks like:

We are being successful making it easier for people and clubs to engage in both Biathlon and XC when:

- More XC clubs that have developed a physical infrastructure and programming for Biathlon.
- We have significantly more athletes engaged in both Biathlon and XC
- There is a robust domestic biathlon event schedule that aligns with XC to enable athletes to compete in both sports