

GB SNOWSPORT – APEX2100 PARTNERSHIP INFORMATION DOCUMENT

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

We understand that many people within the British Alpine system are looking for further information on the partnership between GB Snowsport and Apex2100. We have developed this document with input from partners across the Alpine system to help address some frequently asked questions, and to provide additional information about the ways that we envisage the partnership working to support British Alpine athletes to compete on the World Cup, World Championships, and Olympic stages.

ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP

We all want to create a sustainable, structured pathway based on best practices to increase the number of British athletes delivering Alpine podium performances.

Being a success in Alpine skiing is a long, hard journey that athletes and families embark on. Getting to the top-30 on the World Cup circuit takes tremendous effort and continuous support. The partnership between GB Snowsport and Apex2100 has been developed to create new and much-needed support to the vital National Junior Teams and Europa Cup Teams to help the most promising British athletes to achieve podium performances. Moreover, it will offer GB Snowsport a “home in the Alps”, an asset which rightly or wrongly has been seen as a major barrier to investment by prospective commercial partners for British Alpine skiing for many years.

The partnership has been established to enhance opportunities for the long-term success of British Alpine Skiers at World Cups, World Championships, and Olympic Games. The development pathway it will look to put in place will be inclusive, open, and complementary of existing British Alpine infrastructure with the clear goal of increasing performance. To that end, the involvement of Sasha Rearick and his vision for getting more British athletes onto elite podiums will be a huge boost to the future of Britain’s World Class Alpine programme. In the considerable analysis undertaken by Sasha to date, he has been clear that this is a task which requires the help, advice, guidance, support, and input of the whole of Britain’s Alpine system. GB Snowsport believe in Sasha’s vision and in his ability to drive greater success for British Alpine skiing through this partnership.

Qualification to and selection to GB squads will remain open to all athletes, and will be based solely on each athlete’s capabilities, regardless of where they choose to train, under whose coaching they operate, or within which part of the system they develop.

The partnership is focused entirely on boosting Britain's World Class system. The development pathway supports and encourages working with families to find unique solutions to keep the sport fun and an enjoyable long-term process.

We should also be clear: GB Snowsport's responsibility and focus is exclusively on achieving success for more athletes at World Cup, World Championships, and Olympic Games. The responsibility for the Alpine pathway remains with the Home Nations Snowsport National Governing Bodies, and GB Snowsport independently and through its partnerships will do everything in its power to support them in their vital work.

HOW / WHAT / WHY

WHAT

We recognise that each athlete is an individual and they and their families have different needs. This partnership has been established to show all British athletes the routes and entry points open to them to become World Class British Alpine skiers and to create a sustainable pathway from youth all the way to the top step of World Cup. The pathway involves all clubs, academies and the home nations to support athletes at different levels with the aim of more British medals at Olympic & World Cup level long term.

HOW

To do this successfully, we need to establish a stepping-stone approach which leads from U14 level to World Cup squads.

Athletes, as they progress through the age groups, are in a different place physically, emotionally, socially, and technically. Each development phase has specific needs which require different coaches, coaching, programmes, and race circuits.

This partnership has been established to support and sustain that pathway and to back athletes coaching at every level, and the volume of on-snow training required to achieve long-term performance, supported by athletic development camps, all focused on competing at the right level based on where each athlete is in their progression.

Working Groups and Committees will be established at each level to advise the selection criteria, scheduling, and funding support at each level of the pathway, with input from all partners. We need our criteria to be leading towards high performance with the clear goal of long-term athletic performance, while stimulating the continued pursuit of excellence in skiing.

The delivery of the collaborative aspects of the partnership will be led by Sasha Rearick in constant dialogue with GB Snowsport, the Home Nations Snowsport National Governing Bodies, and Academies and Clubs within the British Alpine system. His expertise in facilitation and collaboration

will complement the existing expertise in the British system to the benefit of the pathway as a whole.

- **U14 Pool Camps**

At the U14 level, GB Snowsport will hire a new Head Coach to run Pool Camps to provide 'best vs best' training for athletes and coaches from all clubs and academies. The athletes selected to attend will remain with their host club or academy for most of the season, coming together at certain times of the year to train to raise their collective level.

Coaches from all clubs and academies will be encouraged to join and participate with their athletes. The goal is to bring together the best coaches and athletes and to form a community for higher performance and long-term athletic development.

The proposal for Pool Camps will give U15s 45 days of off-season (prep period) training ahead of a season racing internationally, 25 days of competition period training camps, and three one-week training camps in season, focused on different aspects of ski racing. For example, this may be a one-week speed camp, a one-week technical camp, and a one-week race prep camp.

A working group will be set up by GB Snowsport to determine the selection criteria and scheduling for Pool Camps in consultation with all clubs, academies, and the Home Nations Snowsport NGBs. Selection will be through head-to-head competition so that there is fair selection to all teams.

- **U16 and FIS (U18 & U19) GB Snowsport Development Team**

There are three entry points to the GB Snowsport Development Team: U16, and the FIS U18 and U19 age groups. Athletes who achieve the qualifying criteria will be invited to join the team for their age group. Joining is, and always will be optional: athletes who qualify but do not wish to join will be free to do so. Development Team athletes will continue to race nationally and internationally while combining their skiing with athletic development and their academic exams.

Each Age Group will have their own coaches, training programmes, and race circuits.

At U16 level, athletes will train 55 days during the off-season before an 80-day competition period.

At FIS levels, athletes will train 65 days during the off-season before a 100-day competition period.

- **National Junior Team**

The National Junior Team is for athletes targeting the World Junior Championships and operates out of multiple training bases across Europe. This is the stepping-stone into the Europa Cup and World Cup teams.

Athletes in the National Junior Team focus on their athletic development and a 65-day prep period ahead of an 80-day competition period, with the goal of achieving podium performances at a World Junior Championships.

The selection criteria and scheduling for the National Junior Team programming will be determined by the GB Snowsport Alpine Director and GB Snowsport coaches in consultation with the GBS Alpine Committee.

The National Junior Team will work alongside existing Alpine teams including the British Children's Ski Team as important joined-up approaches to capitalise on the enthusiasm of and development by Britain's most promising young athletes.

- **Europa Cup Team**

The Europa Cup team is for athletes targeting the Europa Cup and operates out of multiple training bases across Europe with the goal of achieving podium performances at the Europa Cup.

Athletes in the Europa Cup Team focus on their athletic development and a 65-day prep period ahead of a 100-day competition period.

The selection criteria and scheduling for the Europa Cup Team programming will be determined by the GB Snowsport Alpine Director and GB Snowsport coaches in consultation with the GBS Alpine Committee.

- **Coach Development**

In addition to supporting athletes at all levels from U14 through to World Cup alongside all Britain's ski clubs, academies, and the Home Nations Snowsport NGBs, GBS will also provide career development sessions for all coaches as part of this partnership and pathway.

WHY

- To create World Class British Alpine skiers and to create a sustainable pathway from youth all the way to the top step of World Cup with the aim of more British medals at Olympic & World Cup level long term.
- Britain has enjoyed unprecedented success at World Cup and Europa Cup levels in recent years, but there is widespread awareness that the pathway for exceptional young Alpine

athletes has not been as clear as it needs to be to support long-term success at the highest levels of Alpine skiing

- Britain has also suffered in comparison to its closest competitors from the lack of a dedicated home in the Alps, denying a European central base of operations dedicated to Alpine skiing
- Despite those challenges, Britain has consistently punched above its weight on the Alpine circuit, and we now need to capitalise on those achievements to secure Britain's long-term Alpine legacy
- Sasha Rearick's expertise and world class coaching experience make him the perfect figurehead for the technical development work that GB Snowsport wants to support, while Apex's ability to support direct investment into the programme now has been vital at a time where public funding for World Class Alpine skiing is under threat, and where global inflationary pressures mean it requires new private investment

FAQs

Why has GBS partnered with Apex?

- Important step in helping bridge the gap between the World Class Programme and the academy system, which is so important to Britain's Alpine future
- Involvement of Sasha Rearick is a hugely positive step given all of his experience and success in the US system
- Apex hold really strong relationships with the British World Cup team, which will help us in the here and now as well as the longer term
- Athletes on the World Class Programme have been engaged throughout this process, with Dave Ryding giving his own endorsement to Apex's world class facilities and the credibility of Sasha as Apex's Head Coach
- The partnership will also actively contribute to fundraising and efforts to secure new commercial investment for Britain's Alpine World Class programme. All funds raised will support efforts to enhance delivery of the British Alpine World Class programme and will sit alongside GB Snowsport's wider fundraising activities.

How were Apex chosen?

- The partnership has been the subject of long-standing discussions for more than 18 months, and has been developed with input and review from stakeholders throughout the Alpine system

- Both the legal terms of the contract and all necessary obligations have had extensive review, oversight and negotiation to ensure they safeguard and protect the integrity of the British Alpine system, and do nothing to compromise the important role of all official bodies with accountability for British Alpine skiing
- Apex have put forward the most compelling and considered proposal for the long-term development and support of the British Alpine World Cup and Europa Cup programmes that GB Snowsport have received, with extensive input from one of the world's leading Alpine Performance figures in Sasha Rearick
- Apex are the only academy who have readily stepped forward to support GBS at a time of financial need to ensure the sustainability of both the world class programme and the Europa Cup programme

What does this mean for athletes in other academies?

- This is a partnership about supporting the whole system, so while it's GBS and Apex who are working formally together, the system we're putting in place is designed to help bring GBS closer to all of the academies
- From a day-to-day perspective, it won't mean anything at all for athletes currently in the academy system – they'll still be on Britain's radar, and we're all committed to ensuring nobody faces any disadvantage just because they're developing in a different academy

Will GBS only be selecting Alpine athletes from Apex from now on?

- Absolutely not, and that's not something that GBS have ever considered or that Apex have ever asked for
- We've taken the step of updating our Selection Policies to make it absolutely clear that the criteria for being selected for British squads at every age group are not influenced by this partnership

Does this disadvantage coaches and athletes in other academies?

- No, not at all. If anything, we hope that having Apex and GBS working to develop a structure that's transparent and understood by everyone will actually support athletes and coaches wherever they're working in the Alpine system

Doesn't this just add to the problem that only rich athletes can get onto the British Alpine programme?

- We're under no illusions about the sacrifices that British athletes and their families have to make in a sport like Alpine and we can't promise that this partnership makes all of that go away
- What we have been really clear about though, both GBS and Apex, is that we want to make sure cost is the smallest barrier we can make it, so that as many promising athletes have an opportunity to excel in Alpine skiing. As part of this partnership, GBS and Apex are committed to establishing a scholarship fund to ensure the Alpine pathway is as accessible as possible to as wide a range of British athlete
- In the first instance, this will see means-based subsidies made available for athletes invited to attend U14 Pool Camps, ensuring no selected athlete will be denied the chance to benefit from those development opportunities based on cost

What happens to the British Children's Team?

- The British Children's Team will carry on exactly as it currently stands, and its selection criteria and competition access won't change
- The development pathway will only ever exist to complement what's already succeeding within the system, and that includes the British Children's Team

How will you ensure athletes that aren't involved with Apex aren't discriminated against?

- We have really well established selection policies, which should give reassurance that there won't be anything that threatens the opportunities for athletes outside of the Apex system
- We're also really committed to working with partners across the Alpine system to make the pathway simpler and streamlined for all Alpine athletes, and we genuinely hope the benefits are felt by everybody

How will GBS measure the success of the partnership?

- GBS and Apex will be in a process of continuous review to make sure the partnership is operating as effectively as possible, and serving the needs of Britain's Alpine skiers

- There will also be consistent dialogue between Apex, GBS, and all other Alpine stakeholder in Britain to make sure that we can identify and act on any challenges that may emerge. We're very aware that we're developing something new here, and we all want to see it work for British athletes today and in the future

What does this mean for the Home Nations?

- The Home Nations are critical to the Alpine pathway, will have stakeholders in all of this, they have been consulted throughout the process and had in input into evolution of the pathway structure and will retain their vital role in Alpine will remain extremely important right through at every stage of the pathway
- Without the work of the Home Nations, Britain wouldn't have the success in Alpine racing that it's been enjoying over the past few years. We want to make sure that's maintained and that the expertise and track record of the Home Nations is supported by this partnership, not supplanted by it
- While the Home Nations are key stakeholders in the partnership between GB Snowsport and Apex, they do not themselves have a preferred academy and will continue to work with and support all academies that affiliate to them
- The Home Nations will also continue to be responsible for coach education, qualifications, and licencing. GBS and Apex will seek, through the partnership, to support the Home Nations' work in this area and enhance the opportunities for coaches' long-term career development.

Does this have any bearing on recreational skiing in the UK?

- No. The GBS-Apex partnership will focus only on the British elite Alpine programme and development towards elite level skiing
- Recreational skiing is an enormous success story for Britain with exceptional participation levels. The GBS-Apex partnership will seek to support existing efforts to offer a continued progression pathway for talented skiers, but will never seek to impose any guidance, restrictions, or conditions on the thriving domestic participation community which so well served by the Home Nation NGBs and domestic clubs and slopes



Are athletes required to attend Apex full time beyond U16?

- No. We recognise that each athlete is an individual and they have different needs and where they choose to go remains the choice of athletes and their parents. Only athletes within the Apex system would be expected to remain within Apex, and that remains at their personal discretion, as is every athlete's right.