

2019 AUSXC Race Calendar Re-Structure

Background

In 2018 SSAXC began a review of the Australian XC Race Calendar from the perspective of athlete development. While some components of this review are ongoing, in December SSAXC agreed to make a number of changes to the structure of the calendar for 2019 and beyond.

The main driving force behind the re-structure was to allow a longer preparation time before the Australian Junior Championship, and to encourage an increase in the ratio of training days to racing days. Similar recommendations were made from the recent SSA Alpine Review. In determining event dates and locations SSAXC considered a wide range of factors including long term athlete development, snow conditions, impacts on junior and senior athletes, demands on race organisers and interstate travel requirements. The new calendar structure will apply for 2019 and 2020, with a slight variation being considered for the following two years 2021 and 2022 when there are only four weekends in August.

Australian Junior Championship Dates

For 2019 and 2020 the Australian Junior Championship will be held on the fifth weekend of August (the weekend after the Kangaroo Hoppet). For these two years there are five weekends beginning in August, allowing the longest preparation time while retaining the start of the championships in August, the most reliable month for snow conditions. The location of the championship will continue to alternate between Victorian and NSW, with the 2019 championships to be hosted at Falls Creek.

The Junior Championship event formats and distance are still under review, with recommendations to be considered by SSAXC in April meetings, however the weekend will continue to include both Sprint and Distance events.

Australian Open Championship / FIS Races

Two weekends of Australian Open Championships and FIS events will continue to be held, while the locations for each of these weekends will revert to alternating between Victoria and NSW. Currently the only FIS homologated race courses are at Falls Creek and Perisher. For 2019 FIS races will be held on the last weekend of July at Falls Creek, and on the third weekend of August at Perisher. For 2020 the locations will switch, with the Falls Creek FIS races again being on the weekend before the Hoppet. The main rationale for this change is so that every second year there are not three consecutive weekends with major races for juniors in Victoria.

Selection Races

The number of Junior Selection Races during the Australian winter will be reduced from six to four. This was the number of junior selection races prior to 2014. For 2019 the Junior Selection Races will be the Australian Open Championships at Perisher and the Australian Junior Championships at Falls Creek.

In making this change to junior team selection SSAXC took into account other changes made to the selection policy in 2018, which allow for consideration of factors other than

performance in selecting athletes. These factors include adopting a professional approach to training and competition, and are outlined in more detail in the National Team Selection Policy (available via ausxc.com).

There are no new changes proposed for World Cup Team and Continental Cup Team selection, which will continue to be based on FIS points and the non-racing selection factors, nor to the U23 Team selection, which includes both FIS point and Australian Championship performance standards.