

MCSA Midwest Collegiate Cup: Vasaloppet USA Results

and MCSA Regional Championships Preview

by Luke Dykowski

2/13/2022

MCSA Midwest Collegiate Cup: Vasaloppet USA

UMNTC Women narrowly hold Cup lead; UMD Men seize top spot; CSO wins the day

Undaunted by bitterly cold temperatures, an MCSA field of seventy-eight skiers navigated the winding plains of Mora, MN at Saturday's 50th Vasaloppet USA. With both the 48km Vasa and 34km Dala races scored, this was the Midwest Collegiate Cup's third event of the 2021-22 season, and its first skate-only event of the competitive year. Aided by a fast and well-groomed deck and fortified by the Vasaloppet's signature blueberry soup, athletes elevated the chase for the Cup to a fever pitch as the University of Minnesota-Duluth took the lead in the Men's standings, the University of Wisconsin-Madison Women closed their gap behind University of Minnesota-Twin Cities Women to a bare nine points. Winning the day with packed podiums in the 34km Dala, the College of St. Olaf moved into third place in both the Men's and Women's divisions.



Above: St. Olaf's Peter Carlen (left), winner of the MCSA field and second place overall in the 34k Dala. Photo courtesy of Skimmyski.com.

Below: University of Minnesota - Twin Cities Vasa and Dala finishers on Main Street, Mora. Photo courtesy of Ella Bogenschuetz.



While the Cup circuit has been no stranger to [adverse weather](#) this year, the 2022 Vasa-Dala may well stand as the coldest race in memory for many of Saturday's skiers – even given the merciful absence of wind. As Rogers and Evans' "Happy Trails" echoed across the Main Street start line, the thermometer stood at -11°F, and would not rise above -2°F for the duration of the day's races. Energy drinks and blueberry soup crusted beards, buffs, and bibs in orange and purple ice, and frostbite marked the cheeks and noses of many finishers. Braving the cold themselves, the Vasaloppet volunteers were essential to conducting a safe and successful event, diligently monitoring the course for at-risk skiers and pulling those in need of a fast warm-up. As University of St. Thomas President Nathan Hohenshell aptly noted, completing this year's race "was an achievement in and of itself" given the blistering temperatures – to say nothing of the blistering MCSA paces and intense competition that marked both the Vasa and Dala.

Vasa-Dala Breakdown

As one of only three competitors in the MCSA **Women's 48k Vasa**, UMNTC's **Lily Den Hartog** delivered a dominant performance on Saturday – finishing with a nearly fifty-minute lead in 2:40:03. Den Hartog was followed by **Phoebe Schwartz** (UWM), who returned to Main Street in 3:28:28. In third for the MCSA Women was **Isabel Cannell** (CC), whose 4:14:19 secured Carleton College's first MCSA podium.

Fraternal rivalry marked the **Men's 48k Vasa**, with University of Minnesota schools occupying all MCSA three podium spots. They were led by **Benjamin Bauer** (UMD), who made his debut Cup performance with a scorching 2:07:57. Teammate **Ethan Anderson** (UMD) took second in 2:10:45, while **Nathan Bich** (UMNTC) finished in third with 2:11:59.

The **Women's 34k Dala** was a near-repeat of the Mt. Ashwabay Skiathlon results, with **Erica Meyers** (CSO) winning her second MCSA race in as many weekends in 1:48:39. As in Bayfield, **Katie Susong** (UWM) followed Meyers, completing her skate in 1:57:01. In third, a fresh face: **Lily Hubanks** (CSO) finished in 2:03:30 (a mere second ahead of teammate Kristina Rohrer).

Despite its impressive showing in the Women's Dala, St. Olaf's biggest race of the day was the **Men's 34k Dala**. Erecting a veritable orange wall at the top of the standings, CSO swept MCSA spots one through four, led by **Peter Carlen** – whose 1:29:18 also earned him a second-place overall finish. Carlen was followed by teammates **Kieran Mullen** and **Forrest Dorsey**, finishing only five seconds apart in 1:40:36 and 1:40:41, respectively. Another Ole, Tor Hanson, took fourth.

Its performances in the Men's and Women's Dala carried the day for the **College of St. Olaf**. Led by Meyers, CSO's three skiers in the **Women's Division** took home a team win with 126 points. The **University of Wisconsin - Madison** was close behind with 114 points, while the **University of Minnesota - Twin Cities** took third, scoring 96 points. In the **Men's Division**,

CSO's Dala podium sweep (bolstered by fourth-place finishes in the Dala for Hanson and in the Vasa for Brian Olson) was more than enough to secure a win. Their 204 points marked the largest single-day total of the 2021-22 Cup. Not to be left behind, the **University of Minnesota - Duluth** posted the second-largest score of the season (191 points). The **University of Minnesota - Twin Cities** took third, with 165 points.

Turning to the Midwest Collegiate Cup standings, Saturday continued the **Men's Division** shakeup that began with the Mt. Ashwabay Skiathlon. While the **University of Minnesota - Duluth** arrived in Mora in third, they seized the lead for the first time in league history, with 468 points. The **University of Minnesota - Twin Cities** remains in second but has gone from leading UMD to seven points to trailing them by twenty, with 448 total points. Perhaps with an eye towards the upcoming Regional Championships, Michigan Tech remained north of the Brule this weekend – leaving the field open for the **College of St. Olaf** to surge into third. Pushed by their Dala dominance the Oles more than doubled their score on Saturday, rising to 345 points.

In the **Women's Division**, the **University of Minnesota - Twin Cities** (350 points) continues to lead the league, thanks in large part to Den Hartog's Vasa victory. However, the **University of Wisconsin - Madison** closed their gap against the Gophers to only nine points, with a total score of 341. The **College of St. Olaf** remains in third place, with 238 points.



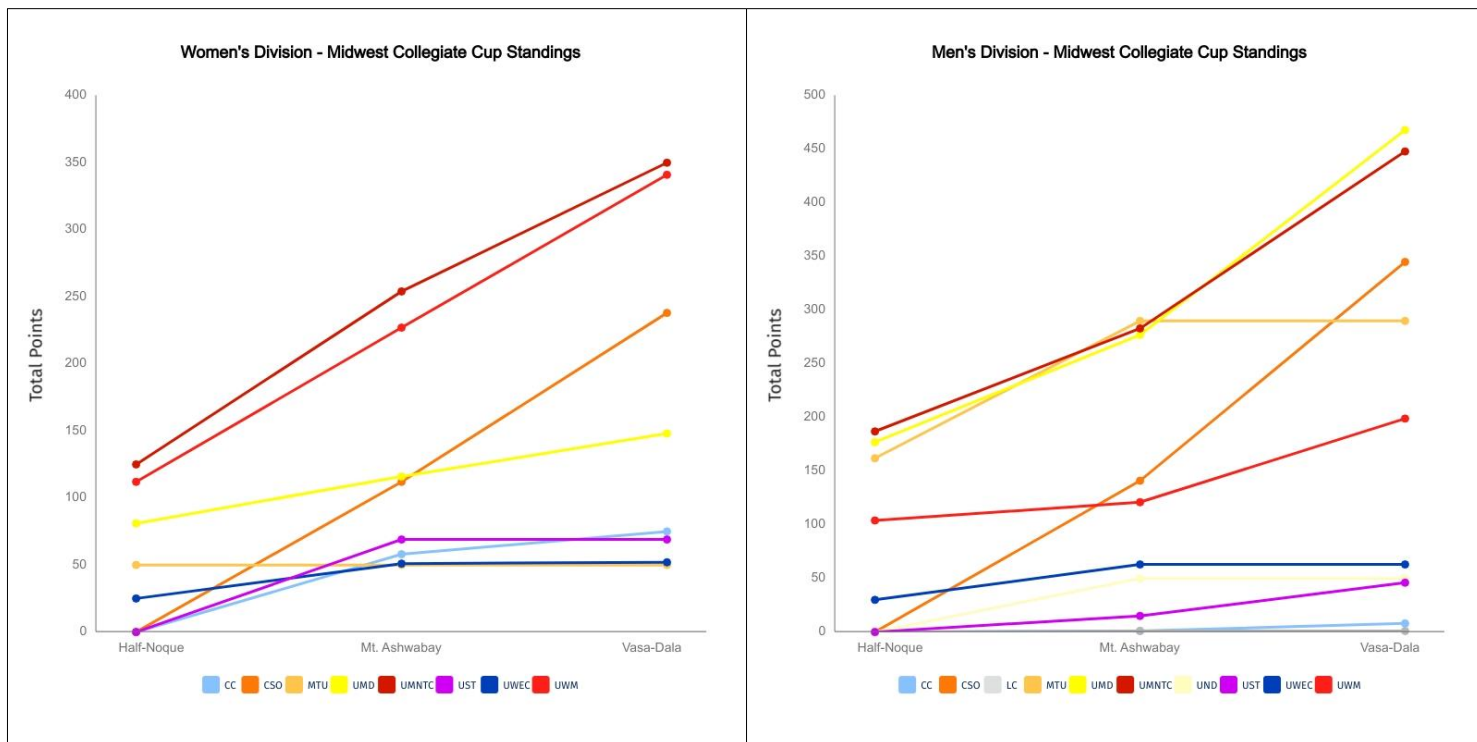
Above: CSO's Mullen and Dorsey finish in Mora, building the Ole's 'orange wall' in the Dala. Photo courtesy of Skimmyski.com.

Team Scores: Women (Vasa-Dala)							
MCSA Rank:	Team:	Composite Score:					
1	CSO	126	Meyers (50)	Hubanks (40)	Rohrer (36)		
2	UWM	114	Susong (44)	Koehler (27)	Reinemann (26)	Schwartz (10)	Klein (7)
3	UMNTC	96	Den Hartog (50)	Reineke (19)	Mittelstadt (13)	Anderson (10)	Delker (4)
4	UMD	32	Suhr (31)	Houts (1)			
5	CC	17	Horne (16)	Cannell (1)			
6	UWEC	1	Williams (1)				
Team Scores: Men (Vasa-Dala)							
MCSA Rank:	Team:	Composite Score:					
1	CSO	204	Carlen (50)	Mullen (44)	Dorsey (40)	Olson (40)	Hanson (36)
2	UMD	191	Bauer (50)	Anderson (46)	Dybing (34)	Grabow (31)	Davis (30)
3	UMNTC	165	Bich (43)	MacKinnon (37)	Gude (32)	O'Connor (27)	Dykowski (26)
4	UWM	78	Wenz (28)	Lee (15)	Dicke (14)	Koob (12)	Barnhill (9)
5	UST	31	Hohenshell (24)	Burkum (7)			
6	CC	7	Sivula (5)	Holcomb (1)	Roslansky (1)		
Total Teams: 12							
Total Skiers: 78							

Above: Vasa-Dala Team Standings, 2/12/2022. Calculated using the Mathie-Halvorson Scoring System.

Midwest Collegiate Cup Scores: Women					
Collegiate Cup Rank:	Team:	Collegiate Cup Score:	Half-Noque	Mt. Ashwabay	Vasa-Dala
1	UMNTC	350	125	129	96
2	UWM	341	112	115	114
4	CSO	238	0	112	126
3	UMD	148	81	35	32
6	CC	75	0	58	17
5	UST	69	0	69	0
7	UWEC	52	25	26	1
8	MTU	50	50	0	0
Midwest Collegiate Cup Scores: Men					
Collegiate Cup Rank:	Team:	Collegiate Cup Score:	Half-Noque	Mt. Ashwabay	Vasa-Dala
	UMD	468	177	100	191
	UMNTC	448	187	96	165
	CSO	345	0	141	204
	MTU	290	162	128	0
	UWM	199	104	17	78
	UWEC	63	30	33	0
	UND	50	0	50	0
	UST	46	0	15	31
	CC	8	0	1	7
	LC	1	0	1	0
Total Teams: 18					

Above: Midwest Collegiate Cup Standings, 2/12/2022. Calculated using the Mathie-Halvorson Scoring System.



Above: Midwest Collegiate Cup Standings, 2/13/2022. Calculated using the Mathie-Halvorson Scoring System.

From the Athletes

Reflecting on his stunning Cup debut, Ben Bauer (MCSA Vasa winner, leading scorer for the UMD Men) described his race as one he “would not soon forget.” With Saturday also his first marathon-distance skate competition, Bauer “didn’t know quite what to expect,” but “warmed up and felt good throughout the course,” finding the snow “very fast” despite the cold. While Peter Carlen (MCSA Dala winner, leading scorer for the CSO Men) could not be reached for comment, CSO Coach Kevin Brochman remarked wryly that he “told Peter not to allow any [non-MCSA] skier to draft off him.” With respect to Carlen’s second-place overall finish in the Dala, Brochman noted that overall Dala winner “Nathan [Porath] got a nice long pull” from the Ole, which he translated into a ten second margin on Main Street.

UST President Nathan Hohenshell (leading scorer for the UST Men) wrote that the course’s flat terrain enabled him to shift into “V2 autopilot and the k’s seemed to just fly by,” and “really felt like this year’s Vasa was one of [his] best performances, and definitely [his] best race of the season.” For Shelby Suhr (leading scorer for the UMD Women), the cold temperatures “kept [her] moving and kept [her] tempo fast to stay warm,” while the lap structure of



Above: UMD’s Bauer on lap one of his Vasa. Photo courtesy of Skinnyski.com.

Below: UST’s Hohenshell finishes in Mora. Photo courtesy of Skinnyski.com.



the Dala's "excellent course" provided a pacing aid and a clear cue to make the second lap her "go-time." In contrast, UMNTC Co-President Lily Den Hartog (MCSA Vasa winner, leading scorer for the UMNTC Women) described personally feeling "pretty rough this time around," with the conditions being "no help," but was nevertheless "very proud of all our skiers for braving the cold and doing a fantastic job."

Looking ahead to the MCSA Regional Championships, Den Hartog noted that UMNTC's athlete composition "has changed a lot this year with several new young skiers," and that she is "looking forward to keeping [the team's] great momentum going next week at Rhinelander to hopefully continue holding off the other Midwestern clubs." Pleased with "a great weekend at the Vasaloppet," UMD President Ethan Anderson wrote that "it's super cool to take the lead" in the Cup chase, and that the Bulldogs are excited for the collegiate-distance, MCSA-only races Regionals will bring. CSO's Brochman appears to share Anderson and Den Hartog's enthusiasm, writing that "Regionals will be very good" for the Oles. Following this hoedown in Hodag Country, the American Birkebeiner will conclude the Midwestern Collegiate Cup – a race that Hohenshell reported UST has "been putting in the work for [...] this year," and one they hope will be "the crowning achievement on what's been awesome season."

MCSA Regional Championships Preview

The Cedric A. Vig Outdoor Center in Rhinelander, WI will [once again](#) play host to the [MCSA Nordic Regional Championships](#) next weekend, with racing on Saturday, February 19th and Sunday, February 20th. Saturday's format is slated to be 10km Skate echelon-start; Sunday will be structured as a 10km classic interval start. These Regional Championships races will include two tracks of scored competition.

First, the events will serve as a 'stand-alone' Regional Championships, wherein teams and individuals will be eligible for Regional Championships medals and awards, and teams will qualify for the [USCSA National Championships](#) in Lake Placid, NY. The top two Men's and Women's teams after both days of racing will qualify. For individual medals, team awards, and Nationals qualification, the races will use the USCSA National Championship scoring system: a team's top three finishers will score, while finishers four and five will displace. Only skiers who have met MCSA Nordic's regular season participation threshold will be



From top: MCSA field winner Lily Den Hartog; UMNTC skiers Luke Dykowski and Isaac Maruyama, ahead of UWM's Jack Wenz; UWM's Katie Susong. All photos courtesy of Skinnyski.com.

eligible to medal, score, and displace – those skiers who have not met the regular season participation threshold will be allowed to compete as non-scoring, unranked guest skiers.

Second, the Rhinelander races will constitute the fourth event of the Midwest Collegiate Cup circuit. For Cup standings, the races will be scored using the standard Mathie-Halvorson System – which has been used for all Cup races since the 2019-20 season. All skiers at the Regional Championships, irrespective of their meeting the regular season participation threshold, will score towards the Midwest Collegiate Cup with the Mathie-Halvorson System. These two scoring systems will be used in parallel: the Midwest Collegiate Cup has no bearing on Regional Championship medals, awards, or Nationals qualification.

The Regional Championships are noticeably different from the rest of the competitive season in their emphasis on collegiate-style races and distances, in contrast to the longer, marathon-style distances which predominate in the Midwest. Look for podium performances from both the College of St. Olaf Men's and Women's teams: conventionally partnered with the NCAA, the Oles are no strangers to the pace and intensity of collegiate distances, and their standout showings at Mt. Ashwabay and the Vasa-Dala reflect a clear desire to assert themselves in the MCSA and return to the USCSA National Championships. Brian Olson, Peter Carlen, and Kieran Mullen will likely lead the CSO Men; expect Erica Meyers at the head of the CSO Women and the Women's MCSA field.



Throwback photos from 2020's inaugural MCSA Nordic Regional Championships, also held at Rhinelander's CAVOC. Both photos courtesy of Drew Birschbach.

Above: Gophers and Badgers pose with their now-iconic race suits.

Below: Then-freshmen Erik Jensen (MTU) and Sam Hagedorn (UWM) in the 15km Skate Pursuit.



Lake Placid, where they attended Nationals after in 2020. Meanwhile, both the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities and University of Minnesota - Duluth have deep rosters with the capacity to contest qualifying

Competition will be tight between the University of Wisconsin - Madison and University of Minnesota - Twin Cities Women. UWM's Katie Susong raced closely with CSO's Meyers in the Mt. Ashwabay Skiathlon and the Dala, and Katherine Koehler and Ella Reinemann both skied competitively in these contests. While pulled from the Dala due to potential frostbite, Jane Straka's Half-Noquemanon Skate performance could promise to help the Badgers gain a top-two position on Saturday. The Gophers, however, are sure to see powerful skate races from Lily Den Hartog and Kaia Hilgendorf-Roost, and Isabelle Mittelstadt will lend crucial classic speed on Sunday. While the University of Minnesota - Duluth Women may be a podium longshot at Regionals, individual medals – particularly for Shelby Suhr in the classic race – are certainly not out of the question.

For the Men, Michigan Technological University's Henry Campbell proved untouchable across skate and classic disciplines at the Half-Noquemanon and Mt. Ashwabay Skiathlon, and is a clear favorite for medals, or outright wins, on Saturday and Sunday. Fast skiing from teammates Jonathan Hudrlik and Erik Jensen could help the Huskies return to

spots. UMNTC's Nathan Bich and Luke MacKinnon have been the Gophers' leading scorers across the Half-Noquemanon, the Mt. Ashwabay Skiathlon, and the Vasa, and will be formidable on both Saturday and Sunday. Teammate Thomas Ryan will provide skate firepower on Saturday, while Alex Gude should prove a strong strider on Sunday. For the Bulldogs, Ethan Anderson was close behind Campbell at the Half-Noquemanon and Mt. Ashwabay and could medal in either discipline. UMD teammates Emmett Donohue and Soren Dybing will ensure the Bulldogs have plenty to eat at Regionals, and will guarantee the weekend's podium is hotly contested between the University of Minnesota schools.

Full MCSA Nordic results can be found [here](#).

MCSA Regional Championships Preview

The 2021-22 season has two categories of scored competition – a cumulative, World-Cup style racing circuit (the Midwest Collegiate Cup) and the MCSA Regional Championships.

The Midwest Collegiate Cup scores teams against one another at popular citizen races; much like the International Biathlon Union World Cup, the Collegiate Cup includes the MCSA Regional Championships in its cumulative scoring totals. Meanwhile, Regionals is an MCSA-only race which will determine which MCSA Clubs qualify to attend the USCSA National Championships in Lake Placid, NY.

The Midwest Collegiate Cup uses the Mathie-Halvorson Scoring System, which it has since the 2019-20 season. This system uniquely balances the size and variety of regional teams by allowing teams of any size to score, and enabling scoring across multiple disciplines.

The winner of any race receives fifty points. Points back from fifty are determined by the size of the MCSA field at an event (so that, for example, second place in a field of twenty skiers is worth more than second place in a field of two skiers). For a field of thirty or more skiers, a fixed FIS points scale is used. All finishers receive at least one point, incentivizing large team participation.

At a given event, the top five racer scores from each team are added to calculate the Team Score. Teams can score with as few as a single skier. Team Scores from all five Collegiate Cup events are added to determine final standings. The MCSA will provide awards for the top three Men's and Women's teams.

The determining equation of the Mathie-Halvorson Scoring System can be found in Appendix I of the [MCSA Nordic Charter](#). You can see a working example of the system, and use the field size adjuster in the yellow column of the "Mathie-Halvorson System" sheet, [here](#).