



**MCSA Regional Championships**

by Luke Dykowski

2/16/2025

## **MCSA Midwest Collegiate Cup: Regional Championships**

*Saturday Sprint is MCSA's first-ever; SOC Women take third consecutive title; SOC Men win first Championship*



*Above: The start of the Women's 10k Skate on Sunday, February 16<sup>th</sup>. (Photo: Azael Meza)*

RHINELANDER, WI: As the pigeon returns home to roost, so too did the Midwest Collegiate Ski Association return to the trails of the Cedric A. Vig Outdoor Classroom and the welcome arms of the Northwoods Nordic Ski Club—[the site of its inaugural championships in March of 2020](#)—for the 2025 MCSA Regional Championships.

Across two days of racing, the St. Olaf Women and St. Olaf Men claimed the MCSA Regional Championship titles. This was the third consecutive title for the Ole Women, and the first-ever title for the Ole Men. The Men's Individual Champion was Paavo Rova (SOC); the Women's Individual Co-Champions were Lily Ward and Liesl Cope-Schaeffer (SOC).

Dynamic, demanding, and technically-treacherous, races at Rhineland are routinely the shortest and fastest events on the MCSA calendar. For seasoned students, the breakneck kettles and harrowing



climbs of Hodag Country are familiar challenges, not merely from 2020, but also from [the 2022 and 2023 Regional Championships](#). However, entirely new this year was Saturday's Classic Sprint—the first such event for the MCSA. On Sunday, the weekend concluded with a 10-kilometer Mass Start Skate.

Together, these races serve as the MCSA's qualifier for the 2025 USCSA National Championships. Individually, the Sprint and 10k Skate served as the fourth and fifth scored events of the Midwest Collegiate Cup, which will conclude next weekend at the American Birkebeiner.

It is worth emphasizing that, until mere days before the event, a pronounced paucity of snow threatened to force cancellation (or snap relocation) of these Regional Championships. Thanks to some well-timed precipitation—but with even more profound thanks to the hosts, organizers, and volunteers whose persistent planning and immense efforts made the event possible—this was not necessary.

### *MCSA Regional Championships Breakdown*

As a standalone event, the MCSA Regional Championships qualifies teams for the USCSA National Championships. Using a conventional points-by-place scoring system,<sup>1</sup> wherein a team's top three skiers score points equivalent to their placement, with skiers four and five displacing, teams' Classic Sprint scores were added to their 10k Skate scores to determine final standings. The teams with the lowest scores were crowned as the MCSA Regional Champions. Only skiers who had met the MCSA's regular season participation requirements were allowed to score.

### *Day 1: Classic Sprint*

Although a smattering of fresh, dry snow deteriorated the otherwise-diligent grooming of the Northwoods Nordic Ski Club, Saturday's sprinters weathered a full suite of qualifying, heats, semi-finals and finals on the striding-focused 1.5k course. As two athletes per heat advanced, those 'knocked out' remained very much in the day's action—crowding the course to cheer on teammates and competitors alike.

In the **Men's Sprint Championships**, **Henry Fischer** (UST) claimed [his second MCSA win of the season](#) (after the 48k Vasa), and his first



*Above: Heats in the Men's Classic Sprint. (Photo: Azael Meza)*

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<sup>1</sup> Consistent with USCSA Competition and Rules Manual 7.1.2.



Regional Championship title. **Paavo Rova** and **Lance Hastings** (SOC) took silver and bronze, respectively; they were followed by fellow Oles **Daniel Gladkov** and **Tait Myers** in fourth and fifth.

In the **Women's Sprint Championship**, St. Olaf College's **Liesl Cope-Schaeffer** led the day, earning her inaugural MCSA win and the gold medal. Sweeping the podium for the Oles, **Lily Ward** and **Annika Fuhrmann** followed in second and third. **Louisa Lamarre** (SOC) and **Leah Coleman** (CC) rounded out the Women's top five.

As teams turned their thoughts from kick to glide, and counted Hodags for a good night's sleep, **St. Olaf College** led the **Women's Division** with a perfect 6 points. The **University of Minnesota-Duluth** sat in second, with 33 points; the **University of Minnesota-Twin Cities** followed closely in third, with 34 points.

**St. Olaf College** also led the **Men's Division** after the Sprints, with 9 points. In second, the **University of Wisconsin-Madison** and **University of Minnesota-Duluth** Men were tied, with 26 points each.

Sprint results are available [here](#).



*Scenes from the Women's Classic Sprint. (Photos: Azael Meza)*



Commenting on his performance, Men's Sprint Champion Henry Fischer wrote that, while "conditions were tough with a lot of new snow on the course, making striding nearly impossible," the "course itself was very fun with some challenging hills and a fast finish." Fischer's strategy was simply: "Hit the hills hard and win each heat"—and it was a plan that played out perfectly. "I was incredibly happy to get a win, especially in a new racing format for me, and I'm looking forward to some good competition at Nationals!"

Echoing Fischer, Women's Sprint Champion Liesl Cope-Schaeffer described the course as "very hilly, and with all the snow falling the classic tracks were completely gone by the time we started the heats." While Cope-Schaeffer's "strategy for the quarters and semis was to get out in front and then take it easy and conserve energy," she made a move in the finals of which Klæbo would doubtless approve: "I started this race in second place and then pushed as hard as possible up the



last big hill to move into first.” The well-timed surge paid off. “I had so much fun at this race, and I can’t wait for USCSA Nationals,” she concluded.

Although the Saturday’s chilly temperatures made these races “very different from the last two Regionals where we never needed to go inside because of how warm it was,” MCSA Student Coordinator reported that there was ample camaraderie to keep spirits high and hearts full. “By the time the finals got around, skiers were cheering for their friends on opposing teams and the air was electric with how much energy the teams brought. The finish line was so much fun to be around!”

### *Day 2: 10k Mass Start Skate*

In comparison to the MCSA’s usual fare of citizen marathons, it may have seemed to some skiers that this weekend brought not one, but *two* days of sprinting—but, of course, Sunday’s 10k Skate was a different beast entirely from Saturday’s Classic heats.

With two laps of 5-kilometers each, including the breakneck “B’s Hollow” and nearly 300m of total climbing, Sunday’s was a test of redline intensity and technical dexterity. “The 10k distance seems short, but each 5k lap is challenging and exciting. No flat sections!” reported Ted Theyerl, USCSA Vice President of Nordic and ever-eager Midwest volunteer.

In the **Women’s 10k Skate**, fast freshman **Anne Straka** (UWM) took her first MCSA win and Regional Title in 38:35.30. Forget an “Orange Wall”—Straka held off a deluge of Oles, with **Lily Ward** hot on her heels in 38:36.75; **Liesl Cope-Schaeffer** took third in 39:01.06. **Mira Tomten** and **Ava Rothe** (SOC) took fourth and fifth; more Oles followed in sixth (Elizabeth Weider), seventh (Louisa



*Above: Scenes from the Men’s and Women’s 10k Skate.  
(Photo: Azael Meza)*



Lamarre), eight (Grace Chandler), and ninth (Annika Fuhrmann).

In the **Men's 10k Skate**, no team could prevent an St. Olaf sweep of the podium, with **Paavo Rova** winning his second MCSA race of the year (after the 36k Dala) and first Regional Title in 31:01.64. **Daniel Gladkov** (SOC) was



*Above: Anne Straka (UWM) skates to her first MCSA win and the 10k Championship title.  
Below: Skiers Henry Brandt (UMD) and Nick Petersen (MTU) congratulate each other at the finish of the 10k Skate.  
(Photos: Azael Meza)*



in the lead pack," Rova wrote. "Then someone in front of me fell, and slingshot[ted] me into the front where I realized that suddenly I had a small gap and needed to act on it. I pushed the next hill hard and lengthened the gap." From there, it was consistent pushing "to stay in the front and keep the gap until the end. Overall, it was a really hard, fun, and exciting race."

second in 31:10.95; **Tait Myers** (SOC; 2023 5k Classic Regional Champion) secured his first podium of the weekend in 31:25.28. **Benjamin Bauer** (UMD) took fourth; **James Kyes** (UWM) was fifth.

In the **Women's Division**, **St. Olaf College** took 9 points on the day. Led by Straka, the **University of Wisconsin-Madison** took second, with 16 points. The **University of Minnesota-Twin Cities** followed in third, with 34 points.

For the **Men's Division**, it was a perfect score for **St. Olaf College**, with 6 points. The **University of Minnesota-Duluth** was second, with 21 points; the **University of Wisconsin-Madison** was third, with 23 points.

Full results are available [here](#).

Reflecting on her win, Straka wrote that "there was a big group that stuck together through the majority of the first lap and began to slowly break up." On the second lap, and (as a WNSL alumnus!) familiar with the course, she timed her move for the "Two-Minute Hill"—the decisive climb from the base of the CAVOC to its high-point, at just past the 8-kilometer mark—and "just held onto [her] position over the last couple of hills leading to the finish," and to gold!

While Rova's race was similarly-determined by an opportune leap to the front, his was determined by slightly different circumstances. "I started near the front and skied the first part



### *MCSA Regional Champions*

To determine the individual MCSA Individual Regional Champions, skiers' Points-by-Place from their Classic Sprint were added to their 10k Skate points. In both Divisions, St. Olaf proved unshakable—sweeping the Men's and Women's podium.

Second on Saturday and the victor on Sunday, **Paavo Rova** (SOC) has proven himself a formidable skier in both marathon distance (see: the 2025 Dala), collegiate distance, and short-course sprinting. He claimed the **Men's 2025 MCSA Regional Champion Title** with 3 total points. In second was **Daniel Gladkov** (SOC), with 6 total points. Sprint winner **Henry Gladkov** (UST) and **Tait Myers** (SOC) tied for third, with 8 points each. **Benjamin Bauer** (UMD) took fifth overall, with 10 total points.

In the **Women's 2025 Regional Champion** standings, a tie for the title! **Liesl Cope-Schaeffer** (SOC) and **Lily Ward** (SOC) went one-and-two on Saturday, and two-and-three on Sunday, each leaving Rhinelander with 4 total points. In third, **Louisa Lamarre** (SOC) took 11 total points. Teammates **Annika Fuhrmann** (SOC), **Mira Tomten** (SOC), and **Anne Straka** (UWM) tied for fourth, with 12 total points.

To determine the MCSA Team Regional Champions, team scores from Day 1 were added to team scores from Day 2. With consecutive single-day wins totaling just 15 points, the **2025 MCSA Women's Regional Champions** could be none other than **St. Olaf College**, whose skiers have now competed in Rhinelander thrice—and taken home the Championship Title each time.

In second, the **University of Wisconsin Madison**, with 52 points; in third, the **University of Minnesota-Twin Cities** returned to the Regionals podium for the first time since 2022. With 68 points, their tie with UMD was broken by the total points of fourth-place finishers on Saturday and Sunday.

Not to be outdone by their teammates in the Women's Division, the **2025 Men's Regional Champions** were **St. Olaf College**, whose deep bench and technical adaptability secured their first-ever MCSA Title, with 15 total points. In second, the **University of Minnesota-Duluth** received 47 points. Close behind, and finishing with a team Regionals podium for the first time since 2020, the **University of Wisconsin-Madison** was third, with 49 total points.

In each Division, the top five teams have qualified to represent the MCSA at the 2025 USCSA National Championships in Bend, Oregon.

Indeed, this year's Midwest contingent may be our Region's most robust Nationals showing in years—and the most cohesive. “Teams know each other and have fun with each other; that much was evident this weekend,” wrote Reineke. And, as always, it has taken—and will take—a village to get them there. Theyer! well-articulated that “[w]hat really resonates is the professionals and volunteers that run this race for the MCSA Conference. [They are] fantastic volunteers and staff—it's hard to imagine anything better! Proud to have MCSA Regionals associated with Northwoods Nordic!”



2/16/2025				
MCSA Regional Championships: Overall Team Scores				
Overall Team Scores Women				
MCSA Rank:	Team:	Total Score	Sprint Score	10k Score
1	SOC	15	6	9
2	UWM	52	36	16
3	UMNTC	68*	34	34
4	UMD	68*	33	35
5	CC	131	65	66
6	MTU	132	66	66
*Note: Deferring to Fourth Place finishers, UMNTC wins the tiebreaker over UMD.				
Overall Team Scores Men				
MCSA Rank:	Team:	Total Score	Sprint Score	10k Score
1	SOC	15	9	6
2	UMD	47	26	21
3	UWM	49	26	23
4	UMNTC	103	52	51
5	UST	128	63	65
6	CSB/SJU	187	92	95
7	CC	196	100	96
8	MTU	206	114	92
Total Teams: 14				



Left: MCSA Regional Championship Team Scores.  
 Above: Men's Regional Championship Podium.  
 Below: Women's Regional Championship Podium.  
 (Photos: Azael Meza)

### Midwest Collegiate Cup Standings

Separate from the MCSA Regional Championship awards and scoring, *each* of this weekend's races were scored as the third and fourth events on the 2025 Midwest Collegiate Cup. Per the Mathie-Halvorson System, there was no participation threshold towards scoring in the Collegiate Cup, and all skiers received points—with five skiers per team scoring, and infinite displacers.

In the **Women's Division: Classic Sprint**, **St. Olaf College** netted a staggering 211 points. The **University of Minnesota-Duluth** claimed 84; the **University of Minnesota-Twin Cities** scored 72.

In the **Men's Division: Classic Sprint**, **St. Olaf College** scored 184 points. The **University of Wisconsin-Madison** scored 126; the **University of Minnesota-Duluth** scored 96.

In the **Women's Division: 10k Skate**, **St. Olaf College** again led the way, with 200 points. The **University of Wisconsin-Madison** scored 110; the **University of Minnesota-Twin Cities** scored 67.

In the **Men's Division: 10k Skate**, **St. Olaf College** made it a superfecta, with 183 points. The **University of Wisconsin-Madison** scored 120 points—continuing their Silver Season, with four consecutive second-place finishes. The **University of Minnesota-Duluth** followed close behind, with 117 points.





Collegiate Cup Scores: Women						
MCSA Rank:	Team:	Composite Score:	Mt. Ashwabab	Vasaloppet USA	Regionals Sprint	Regionals 10k
1	SOC	784	165	208	211	200
2	UWM	357	74	106	67	110
3	CC	333	120	150	37	26
3	UMNTC	333	77	117	72	67
5	UMD	231	77	3	84	61
6	UWEC	72	35	37	0	0
7	MTU	64	27	0	19	18
8	NC	1	1	0	0	0
9	UST	1	0	1	0	0

Collegiate Cup Scores: Men						
MCSA Rank:	Team:	Composite Score:	Mt. Ashwabab	Vasaloppet USA	Regionals Sprint	Regionals 10k
1	SOC	612	54	191	184	183
2	UWM	578	159	173	126	120
3	UMD	514	167	134	96	117
4	UMNTC	265	64	118	45	38
5	UST	182	41	56	51	34
6	MTU	89	32	0	22	35
7	CSBSIU	31	16	0	14	1
8	CC	26	3	21	1	1
9	NC	14	2	12	0	0
10	NMU	8	0	8	0	0
11	UWEC	1	0	1	0	0

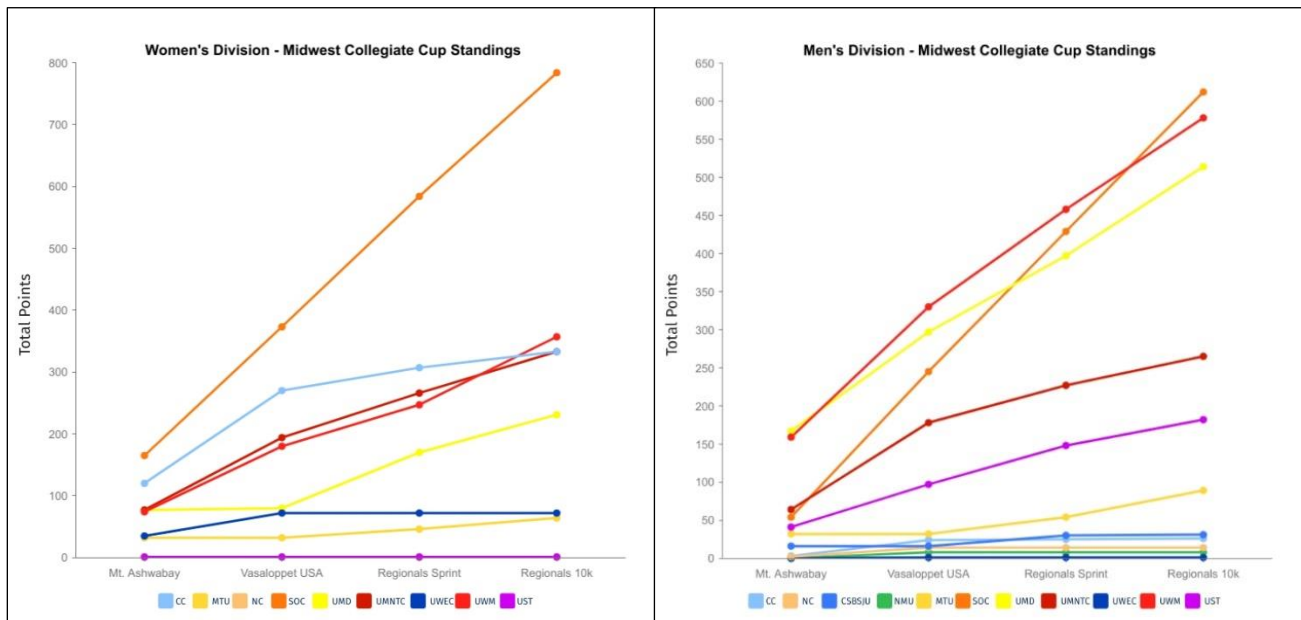
Total Teams: 20

Therefore, in the **Women's Collegiate Cup Standings**, the St. Olaf Women have amassed a truly insurmountable lead, with 784 total points, and will be the 2025 Cup Champions come Birkie Saturday. However, the fight for second and third remains desperately close. The University of Wisconsin-Madison Women have leapt from fourth into second, with 357 points—and they are a mere 24 points ahead of Carleton College and the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, who are now *tied* for third, with 333 total points.

Above: Midwest Collegiate Cup Scores, 2/16/2025. Scores calculated using the Mathie-Halvorson System.

In the **Men's Collegiate Cup Standings**, CAVOC has shaken things up at the very

top. The St. Olaf Men lead have rocketed from Rhinelander into the lead, with 612 points. This would be their first-ever Cup title, but they are now only 34 points ahead of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Men, who—if they hurry to Hayward!—could still claim *their* first ever Collegiate Cup title! In either event, it appears *likely*—although not guaranteed—that Duluth's three-year dynasty will come to a close, and a new team will stand atop the Birkie podium: the Bulldogs sit comfortably in third, with 514 points.



Above: Men's and Women's Midwest Collegiate Cup scores, 2/16/2025. Scores calculated using the Mathie-Halvorson System.





For both Divisions, there are points to win—and glory to secure!—on those fabled trails “East of Seeley Town.” We hope you will join us [at 3:00pm on Hayward’s Main Street](#), where we will crown our 2025 Cup Champions on the most storied podium in skiing!

**The Midwest Collegiate Cup will conclude on Saturday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, at the American Birkebeiner in Hayward, WI.**

**Awards will be announced on the Main Street Podium at 3:00pm.**

**Full MCSA Nordic results from the Midwest Collegiate Cup Circuit are available [here](#).**

*USCSA is the sports federation for collegiate team ski and snowboard competition in America. The organization believes that student-athletes of all levels and abilities should have access to quality and exciting venues of competition. Our athletes agree that our team orientation fosters a collaborative approach across their collegiate athletic and academic careers, and often this mentality proves indispensable in their adult lives and careers. USCSA includes over 175 institutions from coast to coast, fielding over 5,000 female and male alpine, freestyle, Nordic, and snowboarding athletes who participate in more than 300 events annually.*

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*For more information or to schedule an interview, please visit <https://www.uscsa.org>.*