



MCSA Midwest Collegiate Cup: 2026 Regional Championships

*St. Olaf wins Men's and Women's titles; defending champs Ward & Rova win it all;
Collegiate Cup standings secure ahead of American Birkebeiner*



Above: Start of the Men's 10k Classic Mass-Start on Sunday, 2/15. Photo: David Zoll

RHINELANDER, WI: For [the sixth time in seven years](#), the Midwest Collegiate Ski Association returned to the Cedric A. Vig Outdoor Classroom and the welcome embrace of its steadfast partners, the Northwoods Nordic Ski Club, for the 2026 Regional Championships. 73 skiers representing 10 teams competed in two days of kettle-plunging, pain-cave plumbing, herringbone-running racing, with a resounding victory for St. Olaf College in both the Men's and Women's divisions. This is the Ole Women's fourth consecutive Regionals title, and the Ole Men's second. In individual standings, St. Olaf's Lily Ward and Paavo Rova, [the 2025 Regional Champions](#), defended their titles to win again in 2026.

Together, Saturday's and Sunday's races serve as the MCSA's qualifier for [the 2026 USCSA National Championships](#), with standalone Regional Championship titles awarded using a conventional points-by-place system.¹ Individually, the Skate Sprints and 10k Classic served as the fifth and sixth events of

¹ Consistent with USCSA Competition and Rules Manual 7.1.2.



the 2026 Midwest Collegiate Cup, with points awarded using the conventional Mathie-Halvorson System. With the exception of [2026's new ABR Team Sprints](#), the Regional Championships are the only collegiate-distance events of the MCSA's season—inviting skiers to test their cardiovascular redlines, and their technical racing-lines, ahead of the American Birkebeiner and, thereafter, the National Championships.



Above: Start of the Women's Skate Sprint Final on Saturday, 2/14.
Below: Start of the Men's Skate Sprint Final on Saturday, 2/14.
Photos: Diego Guevara.



Regional Championships Breakdown

In [Saturday's Skate Sprints](#), rapidly-warming weather took the day from below freezing to the mid-40s, with snow speeds alternating across sun and shade, and adding a new challenge element to the CAVOC's already-demanding terrain. Fresh off of his win [in last weekend's 34k Dala](#), St. Olaf's **Paavo Rova** claimed the Men's title, followed by **James Kyes** (UWM) in second place, and **Daniel Gladkov** (SOC) in third. **Henry Brandt** (UMD) and **AJ Hemink** (UWM) took fourth and fifth.

Perhaps there was something in Mora's blueberry soup, as St. Olaf's **Lily Ward**—second by a toe in the Dala—won the Women's Sprint title, followed by **Liesl Cope-Schaeffer** (SOC; first in the Dala) in second. **Amaeli Kam-Magruder** completed an Ole sweep of the podium, followed by **Annika Fuhrmann** (SOC) in fourth and **Anne Straka** (UWM) in fifth.

With temperatures falling again through the night, our collegiate skiers soldiered into a klister-on-ice day for [Sunday's 10k Mass-Start Classic](#), made possible only through Northwoods Nordic Ski Club's heroic grooming efforts. A frozen deck and two laps of CAVOC's 5.1k course, from which the



*Above: Hayden Zoll (MTU) and AJ Hemink (UWM) in heavy traffic during Sunday's 10k Classic.
Below: UWM skier makes a close save in the icy finish of the 10k Classic.
Photos: David Zoll.*



notorious B's Hollow was mercifully excised, made for a glacially-hard and wickedly-fast day of racing. In the Women's race, **Elizabeth Weider** (SOC) picked a decisive event to record her first-ever win in an MCSA race, taking the 2026 Classic title in 33:57.3. Teammate **Amaeli Kam-Magruder** (SOC) took second in 34:02.7, while **Lily Ward** (SOC) was third in 34:05.9. **Liesl Cope-Schaeffer** (SOC) was fifth in 34:18.1, while **Anna Peikert** (SOC) took fifth in 34:44.9. (It was certainly [an "Orange Wall" day](#) for the Oles, with Annika Fuhrmann taking sixth in 36:08.0).

In the Men's race, it was déjà vu, with **Paavo Rova** (SOC) back in the lead in 29:32.7, with **James Kyes** (UWM) back on his tail for second place, in 29:45.6. **Daniel Gladkov** (SOC) was again third in 30:39.3. Fellow Oles **Jack Aldrich** (30:56.3) and **Lance Hastings** (31:20.8) were fourth and fifth.

In Women's Team Standings, **St. Olaf College** claimed their fourth consecutive MCSA Regional Championship title, with a perfect 12 total points. In an upset, the **University of Minnesota-Duluth** were runners-up, with 51 points; the **University of Wisconsin-Madison** was narrowly third with 53 points.

In the Men's Team Standings, **St. Olaf College** clinched another trophy



for their Northfield cabinet—the Ole Men’s second ever—with 18 total points. The **University of Wisconsin-Madison**, first across all MCSA races until Rhinelander, took second, with 31 points. The **University of Minnesota-Duluth** was third, with 56 points.

In Women’s Individual Standings, a win on Saturday and third-place on Sunday were enough to secure a second overall Women’s Regional Championship title for **Lily Ward** (SOC)’s, with 4 total points (Ward and teammate Liesl-Cope Schaffer tied for the overall title in 2025). Ward’s was an exceptionally-close victory over runner-up **Amaeli Kam-Magruder’s** (SOC; Regional Champion in [2024’s unorthodox schedule](#)) 5 points, and third place **Liesl Cope-Schaeffer** (SOC)’s 6 points.

2/15/2026					
MCSA Regional Championships: Overall Team Scores					
Overall Team Scores Women					
MCSA Rank:	Team:	Total Score	Sprint Score	10k Score	
1	SOC	12	6	6	
2	UMD	51	24	27	
3	UWM	53	26	27	
4	UMNTC	100	49	51	
5	MTU	114	60	54	
Overall Team Scores Men					
MCSA Rank:	Team:	Total Score	Sprint Score	10k Score	
1	SOC	18	10	8	
2	UWM	31	14	17	
3	UMD	56	29	27	
4	UMNTC	89	43	46	
5	MTU	131	68	63	
Total Teams: 10					
Total Skiers: 73					

Above: 2026 MCSA Regional Championship scores. Points calculated following USCSA CAR 7.1.2.

In Men’s Individual Standings, the 2026 Regional Champion could be none other than **Paavo Rova** (SOC)—besting his title last year (where he won with 3 points) with a perfect 2 points in 2026. **James Kyes** (UWM) secured his first overall Regionals podium with 4 points (he was fifth in 2025), while **Daniel Gladkov** (SOC), second in 2025, took third, with 6 points.

Collegiate Cup Breakdown

Turning to Collegiate Cup standings, Saturday and Sunday both saw shakeups—but none significant enough to alter the trajectory of this year’s chase. In the Skate Sprint, **St. Olaf College** dominated with **Women’s Division** with 213 points; the **University of Minnesota-Duluth** beat the Badgers for the first time this season, with 112 points, while the **University of Wisconsin-Madison** was third for the day, with 96 points.

2/14/2026						
Women’s Skate Sprint: Collegiate Cup Scores						
MCSA Rank:	Team:	Composite Score:				
1	SOC	213	Ward (50)	Cope-Schaeffer (46)	Kam-Magruder (43)	Fuhrmann (40)
2	UMD	112	Wolf (28)	Schlichting (26)	Grossman (24)	Mayer (18)
3	UWM	96	Straka (37)	Hokanson (22)	Bennett (20)	Nafstad (12)
4	UMNTC	40	McLaren (13)	A. Jones (9)	Hanson (8)	E. Jones (7)
5	MTU	11	Myhre (11)			Lindaman (3)
						Louisa Lamarre (34)
						Karel (16)
						Thatcher (5)
Men’s Skate Sprint: Collegiate Cup Scores						
MCSA Rank:	Team:	Composite Score:				
1	SOC	183	Rova (50)	Gladkov (43)	Myers (34)	Hastings (30)
2	UWM	155	Kyes (46)	Hemink (37)	Kram (32)	Martin (28)
3	UMD	108	Brandt (40)	Back (22)	Bauer (18)	Urbanowicz (15)
4	UMNTC	58	Taylor (24)	Bargman (16)	Bleakmore (9)	Kolberg (5)
5	MTU	7	Zoll (6)	Oldenburg (1)		Collis (4)

Above: Midwest Collegiate Cup Scores, 2/14/2026. Points calculated using the Mathie-Halvorson System.

In the **Men’s Division**, **St. Olaf College** put an end to the Badger Men’s season-long winning streak, scoring 183 points to the **University of Wisconsin-Madison’s** 155. The **University of Minnesota-Duluth** was third, with 108 points.



2/15/2026						
Women's 10k Mass Start Classic: Collegiate Cup Scores						
MCSA Rank:	Team:	Composite Score:				
1	SOC	184	Welder (50)	Kam-Magruder (46)	Ward (43)	Cope-Schaeffer (40) Peikert (5)
2	UMD	94	Wolf (23)	Martin (21)	Bevis (19)	Bartlett (17) Schlichting (14)
3	UWM	79	Straka (31)	Bennett (25)	Hokanson (13)	Thatcher (7) Nafstad (3)
4	UMNTC	17	A. Jones (9)	McLaren (6)	Hanson (1)	Christensen (1)
5	MTU	15	Myhre (15)			

Men's 10k Mass Start Classic: Collegiate Cup Scores						
MCSA Rank:	Team:	Composite Score:				
1	SOC	200	Rova (50)	Gladkov (43)	Aldrich (40)	Hastings (37) Myers (30)
2	UWM	139	Kyes (46)	Martin (34)	Kram (28)	Finlay (16) Hanhan (15)
3	UMD	103	Brandt (32)	Bauer (26)	Back (20)	Urbanowicz (14) Guiney (11)
4	UMNTC	57	Taylor (22)	Kolberg (12)	Bargman (9)	Kavanagh (8) Bleakmore (6)
5	MTU	14	Zoll (10)	Oldenburg (4)		

Above: Midwest Collegiate Cup Scores, 2/15/2026. Points calculated using the Mathie-Halvorson System.

In the 10k Mass-Start Classic, **St. Olaf College** again led the **Women's Division**, with 184 points, and was again followed by the **University of Minnesota-Duluth** (94 points) and the **University of Wisconsin-Madison** (79 points).

In the **Men's Division**, **St. Olaf College** took home 200 points, followed by the **University of Wisconsin-Madison**, with 139 points, and the **University of Minnesota-Duluth**, with 103 points.

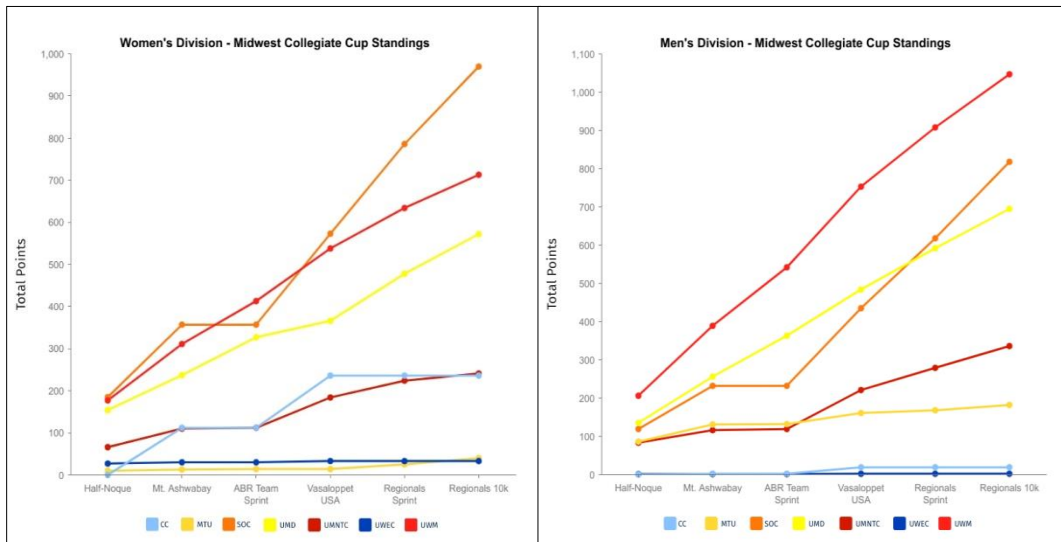
In overall Collegiate Cup Standings, the podium appears positively petrified, with the past weekend widening the gaps between the top three teams in each Division. The University of Wisconsin Men are poised [to defend last-year's hard-fought Collegiate Cup title](#), their first ever, with a substantial margin of victory—they currently lead St. Olaf College by 229 points. The University of Minnesota-Duluth, whose three-year dynasty the Badgers deposed in 2025, appear solidly in third, with 695 points. Meanwhile, the St. Olaf Women have won every race they contested in 2026, and are now mathematically guaranteed to defend their third consecutive Collegiate Cup title. They lead the University of Wisconsin-Madison by 257 points.² In a significant milestone for their team, however, the University of Minnesota-Duluth Women have also mathematically guaranteed their first-ever podium finish for the Collegiate Cup!

Collegiate Cup Score: Women							
MCSA Rank	Composite Score	Noquemanon	Mt. Ashwabay	ABR Sprints	Vasaloppet USA	Regionals Sprint	Regionals 10k
1	SOC	970	185	172	0	216	213 184
2	UWM	713	177	134	102	125	96 79
3	UMD	572	154	83	90	39	112 94
4	UMNTC	241	66	44	2	72	40 17
4	CC	236	0	112	0	124	0 0
6	MTU	40	10	3	1	0	11 15
7	UWEC	33	27	3	0	3	0 0

Collegiate Cup Score: Men							
MCSA Rank	Composite Score	Noquemanon	Mt. Ashwabay	ABR Sprints	Vasaloppet USA	Regionals Sprint	Regionals 10k
1	UWM	1047	206	183	153	211	155 139
2	SOC	818	119	113	0	203	183 200
3	UMD	695	135	121	107	121	108 103
4	UMNTC	336	83	33	3	102	58 57
5	MTU	182	86	45	1	29	7 14
6	CC	19	0	2	0	17	0 0
7	UWEC	2	1	0	0	1	0 0

Above: Midwest Collegiate Cup Standings, 2/15/2026. Points calculated using the Mathie-Halvorson System.

² The maximum possible Collegiate Cup score, in a two-disciplined event, is 235 points.



Above: Midwest Collegiate Cup Standings, 2/15/2026. Points calculated using the Mathie-Halvorson System.



Above, clockwise from left: Start of Sunday's Skate Quarterfinal; UMD's Sophia Herbert rounds the final corner of the 10k Classic; UMD's Henry Brandt celebrates with teammates. Photos: Diego Guevara and David Zoll.



Above, clockwise from left: UWM's Anne Straka finishes the 10k Classic; James Kyes (UWM) leads Lance Hastings and Paavo Rova (SOC) in the 10k Classic; Skate Sprint Heats. Below, from left: Men's and Women's 2026 Regional Championships Team Podiums. Photos: Diego Guevara, Kenna Karel & David Zoll.





While the team finishing order may be a fait accompli on Main Street, individual performances are anything but certain—and our athletes will be ready for a triumphant end to their most rigorous season of racing on record.

We hope you will join us in crowning our **2026 Midwest Collegiate Cup Champions** on the [American Birkebeiner's Main Street Podium](#) at **3:00pm on Saturday, February 21st**. Friends, family, and alumni are welcome to attend. We look forward to celebrating with you.

Full MCSA results are available [here](#).

NOTE: While the MCSA Regional Championships have been generously hosted by Northwoods Nordic Ski Club since 2020, this year marked the first such Championships without Brian Hegge, who passed in July 2025. Brian was instrumental in welcoming the MCSA to Rhinelander—and, consequently, in forming this ski league—and his love for the outdoors was tirelessly manifest in his work to put, and keep, people on skis. He is remembered and appreciated so many athletes, of so many different ages and backgrounds, and will continue to be for so many winters to come. The MCSA is deeply grateful to the Northwoods Nordic Ski Club, to Bob Cook, and to Brian's memory for their continued friendship and generous support for college skiing.

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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Interested in joining or building a USCSA team? [View our 2025-26 Nordic Teams Guide](#).

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