

WOODS VALLEY SKI TEAM

2023-2024 PARENT HANDBOOK



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INTRODUCTION

The Woods Valley Ski Team (WVST) views ski racing not only as a competitive sport, but as a medium through which children can augment their overall development (physical, mental, emotional, social), and learn a variety of life-skills that will serve them well and help them meet their overall life goals. Racing is a family sport requiring a time commitment by parents which ultimately helps their child's growth.

This handbook is intended to be a reference for families of ski racers in the WVST program to help them understand the background organization in ski racing as well as to get through the day-to-day tasks of ski racing from the beginning to the end of the season.

This handbook as well as other useful information is available on the WVST website. We encourage you to check it out at WWW.WOODSVALLEYSKITEAM.COM

SKI RACING ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

FIS (www.fis-ski.com) Worldwide events - World Cup, Olympics

USSS (www.usskiandsnowboard.org) U.S. regional, National Championships

NYSSRA (www.nyssra.org) New York State Ski Racing

NEW YORK IS DIVIDED INTO 6 DIFFERENT COUNCILS

WESTERN

Niagara Council
Genesee Council
Central Council

EASTERN

Mountain Council
Rip Van Winkle Council
Adirondack Council (Our Council)

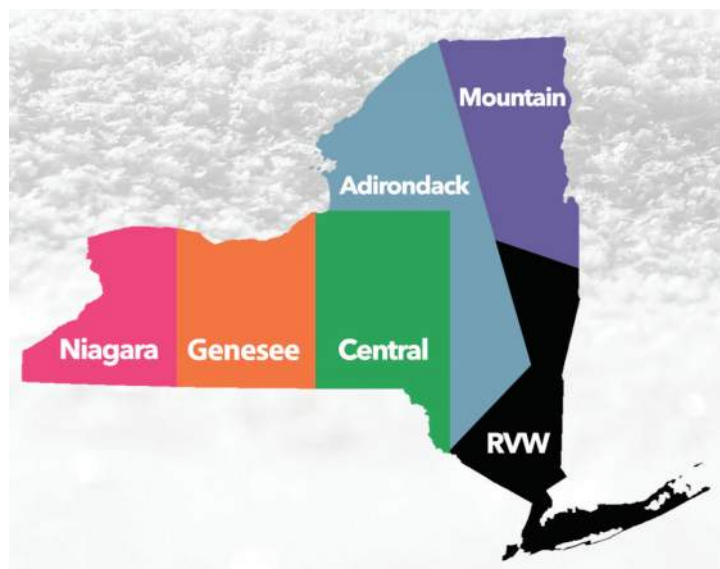
WOODS VALLEY SKI TEAM

SNOW RIDGE SKI TEAM

POLAR BEAR SKI TEAM

DRY HILL SKI TEAM

OAK MOUNTAIN



DEFINITIONS

FIS (Federation Internationale de Ski) 110 National Ski Associations comprise the membership of the FIS. Worldwide events including World Cup races and the Olympics are run by FIS.

USSS (United States Ski and Snowboard Association) is a member of FIS and is the overseeing organization of ski racing in the United States. All races that WVST participates in come under the organization of USSS and all members of the WVST must become a member of USSS. The membership is good for a year and must be renewed annually. A USSS membership number is assigned when a skier first joins the organization and does not change as long as the skier retains the membership.

NYSSRA (New York State Ski Racing Association) is the official governing body for competition in New York for the Eastern Region of the USSS. All members of WVST must become a member of NYSSRA. Membership in NYSSRA is good for one year and must be renewed annually.

RACING AGE LEVELS AND GROUPINGS

Racers are divided into age groups based on their birth year. **U8, U10, & U12** racers participate together in regular season NYSSRA Council races. **Newer to ski racing U14** athletes may choose to race in the council series where as U14 athletes who have been competing for a few years are encouraged to participate in the Mud, Sweat n' Gears Series (MSG). U14 athletes who race in council races may not also compete in the Mud, Sweat, n' Gears Series or U14 State Championships. The **U14 MSG** Series is a much larger and more competitive series compared to in council. There they will compete against all of the NY State Eastern Region U14's and race at bigger venues. At this level families should be prepared for increased commitment to travel and finances. U14 MSG families will need to invest in discipline specific race skis and equipment: SL - Skis, poles & blocking equipment, GS - Skis, poles and back brace, Super G skis can be rented from a select few shops in NY or purchased. The MSG Series can be challenging for our young racers but also highly rewarding. Athletes competing at this level will be expected to practice more often. **U16+ Athletes** will race a very similar series as the U14 MSG's with the addition of a midseason qualifying event; The Empire State Winter Games at Whiteface. End of season championship events are split. **U16's** and **U18's** have separate State Championships at different venues. At this level families should be prepared for the increased commitment to travel and finances. Athletes competing at this level will be expected to practice more often.

RACING LEVELS BASED ON AGE ARE AS FOLLOWS|

U8 – 2016 or Later	U10 – 2015, 2014	U12 – 2013, 2012
U14 – 2011, 2010	U16 – 2009, 2008	U18 – 2007, 2006

TYPES OF RACES

In all types of races, the racer must pass through multiple “gates” down the length of the hill. Each gate consists of two poles (slalom) or two paneled poles (giant slalom and super G) of the same color. Gates can be oriented in a variety of patterns including horizontally across the hill (most common) or vertically.

Slalom (SL) – gates are close together forcing racers to make tight fast turns.

Stubby – Soft rubber gates that are shorter/knee high. Used at Council level.

Panel – (2) tall poles gates connected with a fabric panel.

Parallel - (2) courses of panel slalom are set identically next to each other and (2) racers race at the same time.

Tall Pole – Hinged plastic gates about 5 feet tall.

Giant Slalom (GS) – Gates are placed further apart than slalom and challenge racers to make accurate turns while holding as much speed as possible. Panel gates are used for GS.

Super G (SG) – Considered a speed event. Gates are placed further apart than giant slalom. Completion of “Flight Camps” are required to compete in this race. This type of race is only at the Mud, Sweat n’ Gears level.

Kombi – race course is a blend of stubby slalom and GS in one course.

Flight and Skills events – special clinics focusing on free skiing terrain. Flight camps are a required training for Super G events at the U14 level.



PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Please do not be afraid to volunteer for or ask about volunteer positions regardless of your experience. We need people to learn and take on new roles, to become Alpine Officials, and to fill voids of experience as families move up and out of the program. Contact any club officer and we will work with you regarding training, clinics, or whatever is necessary to make you feel comfortable as a volunteer.

Volunteers may be required to register with USSS and NYSSRA.

TYPES OF VOLUNTEER POSITIONS |

Gate keeper – on the hill from about 30 minutes before the start of the race until the last racer for that run (approximately 9:00-11:30 1st run, 1:00- 3:30 2nd run). Their job is to observe and record that all racers go between the gates properly and assist racers when they fall or miss a gate. Gate keeper training will be provided prior to the race by the head gatekeeper.

Course maintenance – on the hill usually at 7:00 am until 4:00 pm with breakfast and lunch breaks. Responsibilities include setting up the course, maintaining the course through both the first and second runs, and taking down the course at the end of the race. This includes setting up and taking down netting around the perimeter of the course which can be physically demanding and strong skiing skills are helpful.

Hand timer – on the hill during the races. Use stopwatches for each racer as a backup to the electronic timing.

Starter – line racers up at the start and coordinate them starting on time.

Scoreboard – record racer times on the scoreboard at the bottom of the race hill.

Race Administrator –see below

Registration – start in lodge at 7:00 am until 9:00 am to sign in racers/coaches, handout bibs.

Announcer – announce racer times from the timing building at the bottom of the race hill.

Timing – we look for a couple parent volunteers each season to assist with timing at WV & High School Races. Training will be provided. Please let a coach or club officer know if you are interested.

Race Administrator (RA):

RA's are the key role and foundation of the Race Organizing Committee (ROC) for every race. They can be a USSS Alpine Official and require certification by taking a course every other Fall. The RA is the liaison between the club, NYSSRA, volunteer staff, coaches, athletes, and the Woods Valley Ski Area management.

PREPARING FOR THE RACE SEASON

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER

Assess equipment needs and start shopping.

OCTOBER

Pre-Season Registration Requirements:

ALL RACERS MUST:

1. Have a Woods Valley ski pass
2. Join USSS – this can be done online at www.usskiandsnowboard.org
Sport: ALPINE Membership: ALPINE COMPETITOR
3. Join NYSSRA – this can be done online at www.nyssra.org
4. Register with Woods Valley Ski Team - this can be done at www.familyid.com
(Search for Woods Valley Ski Team)

NOVEMBER

Finalize equipment ordering/purchasing

Dryland training starts

DECEMBER

On snow practice begins.

Wednesday Nights 6-8.

Saturday Mornings 9-12.

Additional training days may be announced during School Breaks.

**CONSISTENT PARTICIPATION IN TRAINING IS VITAL TO THE
ATHLETES SUCCESS AND SAFETY ON RACE DAY!
COACH HAS FULL DISCRETION OF WHETHER AN ATHLETE HAS
PARTICIPATED IN ENOUGH PRACTICES TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR RACES.**

WINTER WEATHER & PRACTICE CANCELLATIONS

Skiing is a winter weather sport. Our priority is to emphasize cold weather safety and education, anticipating that many practice & race days will be cold.

Please have athletes prepared with multiple clothing layers and back up pairs of gloves, neck warmers, socks, etc. It's better to be overprepared! As our on-hill practice time is limited, we do not take breaks unless necessary due to extreme weather. Please have athletes dressed appropriately for the weather conditions prior to practice. It is advised for Parents of new/young athletes to remain on the property during practice for any equipment/wardrobe issues that might arise.

On colder practice days the Coaches will tailor practice accordingly. Cold weather procedures often include practicing on Easy Acres to minimize time sitting on the lift in the cold, more aerobic based ski drills that get the blood moving like hop turns, and warm up breaks in the lodge.

We will consult with the National Weather Service and cancel practice when appropriate. Cancellations will be communicated via email and the GroupMe app.



RACE SEASON

As racers get older they should be given increasingly more responsibility to independently prepare for and participate in races. By the time they are U16s (14+ years old) they should be able to prep their skis and get all their equipment ready on their own.

RACE REGISTRATION |

Registration for races is completed online at www.adminkiracing.com. The deadline for weekend races is typically the Wednesday before the race. For large championship races, there might be a cap to the amount of racers. Please look ahead and plan accordingly.

TYPICAL RACE ROUTINE |

NIGHT BEFORE

Prep skis if necessary

Check that all equipment is ready including USSS card Get a good night sleep.

RACE DAY

7:30 am- arrive at ski area, register (racer turns in USSS card and gets race bib and lift ticket).

Parents can sometimes get discounted tickets as well.

8:00 am – dressed and ready to go.

8:15 am – meet with coaches and head up the hill for race course inspection.

9:00 am – after race course inspection racers should take at least 2 runs to warm up.

9:30 am – First run starts. It is critical that racers be at the top of the race course ready to go when it is their turn. While the race starts at 9:30, the last racer may not go until 11:30. The last racer does not have to wait 2 hours at the top of the hill but needs to keep a close eye on how the race is running so he/she is ready to go when his/her time comes.

12:00-12:30 racers get lunch while race course is reset for second run.

12:30 – 1:00 meet with coaches for second run course inspection.

1:00 – 1:30 second run starts.

3:30 – awards ceremony starts after race hill is cleaned up (the more people that help with clean up the sooner awards ceremony can begin).

TIPS |

Pack a nutritious lunch

Check in with coaches to see if there is a course reset between runs.

RACE COURSE SPECTATING RULES |

On the day of a race there are strict rules about who can and cannot ski on the designated race hill. Racers are only allowed on the hill with a coach to inspect the course prior to the start of each run. Typically course inspection starts about one hour before the start of the race. After that the race hill, including the start and finish areas, is closed to all skiers except coaches and course maintenance workers. Spectators can sometimes have a difficult time watching the race due to inaccessibility of the race hill.

Many races are best observed by standing at the finish line or by walking up the hill (ski poles and snowshoes can make this easier). Spectators must stay outside of fenced off areas and well clear of the course. Spectators should avoid activities that may distract racers as they go down the course.

EQUIPMENT

Equipping ski racers can be a daunting and very expensive task. It is very important, however, that racers are properly equipped to maximize their comfort and performance. Cutting corners by buying cheap equipment often doesn't payoff but, with careful planning and shopping, the cost of equipment can be made more manageable. Multiple sources of equipment exist and each offers pros and cons. These include:

1. Local ski shops - they can offer off-the-shelf in stock new equipment and in September/October they can facilitate purchasing the most up to date equipment directly from suppliers at racer discount pricing ("Pro-forms"). Discounts at ski shops, however, are often comparable to preform prices. Local ski shops may not always have what you need in stock as the season progresses so it is wise to stock up early. Local ski shops can also have a generous supply of used skis and boots which, if bought carefully, can work fine at a substantial savings. The big advantage of buying from local ski shops is that you get the benefit of their experienced and professional knowledge in helping you purchase equipment right for you. Local ski shops often provide sponsorship support to racing events so returning business to them is appreciated by them.

2. Friends, family, fellow ski club members. Be sure to check out the WVST Facebook page.

3. Internet

- a. Reliable Racing - www.reliableracing.com.
- b. Race Werks - www.race-werks.com
- c. The Race Place - www.the-raceplace.com
- d. Ski Yard - www.skiyard.com (Mud, Sweat n' Gears discount site)

SKIS AND BINDINGS |

Skis are rapidly evolving and anything older than 4-5 years may be obsolete. Race skis are expensive, and appropriate skis can have a definite impact on racer performance. U12 and U10 racers, or racers just starting out, will do fine with one pair of “all around” junior race skis. As racers progress they will benefit from having skis designed specifically for different racing disciplines (slalom and GS). Choosing ski length is often difficult and you may get conflicting advice on what length is best for your racer. There is no “right answer” for choosing a ski length. Coaches, followed by ski shop personnel familiar with race equipment are probably your best resources in choosing a ski length. Factors to consider for ski length are:

1. Discipline (SL,GS or SG) they will be used for.
2. Height of racer.
3. Weight and strength of racer.
4. Skill of racer.

Choosing a ski length in reference to the racer’s height is the most common starting point. For starting U12 and U10 racers looking for all-purpose multi-event race skis, skis at approximately nose height are a good starting point. Slalom skis typically are at chin to nose height, GS skis about equal to top of head.

The other major difference between skis for each discipline is there shape. Slalom skis have more shape with narrow waists and wide tips and tails. SG skis are nearly straight, while GS skis are in between SG and SL skis. The shape of the ski is often described by its turning radius with SL skis around 12 m, GS 14-27 m, and SG greater than 27 m. FIS/USSS regulations give specific minimum ski radius rules.

Bindings are sized according to their DIN setting range: lower DIN for smaller skiers (3-10 range), higher DIN (6-18 range) for larger more advanced racers. It is very important that anything purchased outside of a professional ski shop be properly adjusted for the individual racer. This is especially important in regard to bindings.

WVST COACHES ARE PROHIBITED FROM ADJUSTING ANY RACERS EQUIPMENT

BOOTS |

Boots are probably the most important item for both performance and, more importantly, racer comfort. It is imperative that boots fit properly and comfortably since racers spend many hours a week in their boots. Since kids grow rapidly, buying boots to last 2 years is probably unrealistic. In fact, sometimes boots bought in August or September may not fit in January. Sometimes used boots in good condition can be found but new boots may be worth the extra cost. In addition to size (which is typically based on foot length in centimeters) boots designed for racing with appropriate stiffness is also important. Boot stiffness is measured by the “Flex” rating of the boot– younger lighter racers should be in the 60-90 range, older stronger racers can go over 100. Coaches or your local ski shop can help with flex recommendations. Proper fit is often done best by a fitter in a ski shop. Shop bootfitters can also sometimes “tweak” the boot for a customized fit if necessary. With experience, however, individuals may be able to find proper fitting boots on their own by following these steps:

1. Take the liner out of the boot shell. Wearing the same thickness of socks that will be worn while skiing, put your foot in the liner and make sure the toes are touching the end of the liner. The toes should not be bent back, nor should there be extra room. Liners do pack out (become looser) after some use.
2. If the foot fits well in the liner, put the foot in the shell without the liner. Slide the foot to the front of the shell so the toes touch the front. For proper fit, there should be room for 1 to 2 fingers behind the heel in the shell. A two-finger fit will allow for some growing room. A tight fit is important for performance.
3. For proper flex, it is important that the skier can smoothly flex the boot forward while keeping the boot flat on the ground (if the heel of your foot comes up in the boot when flexing you do not have an acceptable fit). The boot should not bulge irregularly when flexing. Remember, the boot will flex much less on the ski hill in cold weather, so the ability to flex the boot in the shop is key. For “difficult to fit feet”, either off-the-shelf or custom made footbeds may help. Footbeds are not necessary for everyone, however.

POLES/POLE GUARDS |

Proper length poles ensure proper posture and set up for the racer. Starting at the MSG U14 level, racers begin skiing slalom courses with tall gates and they need to consider adding pole guards to their poles to protect their hands when hitting the gates. Though it is more expensive, it is easiest to have a dedicated pair of poles for slalom fitted with pole guards and a separate pair of curved poles for giant slalom and SG.

HELMETS, CHIN BAR, GOGGLES |

All racers are required to wear **HARD EAR** helmets. Helmets need to fit properly to offer proper protection. U14 racers and older need a protective chin bar for slalom so it is necessary to buy a helmet that can be fitted with a chin bar. Chin bars are easily secured to and removed from the helmet with 2-4 screws so separate helmets for slalom and GS are not necessary. **ALL U14 RACERS MUST HAVE FIS APPROVED HELMETS. FIS APPROVAL IS CERTIFIED BY A STICKER ON THE BACK OF THE HELMET.** Race officials will be checking this at the start line and will not allow a U14 racer to proceed without the proper helmet. Goggles should fit flush within the helmet and comfortably on the face. Lighter colored lenses are a more universal shade since a lot of training is done at night. Some goggles come with interchangeable different colored lenses which add versatility but changing lenses may be too much of a task for young racers to do.

RACE SUIT |

A good race suit is tight-fitting with built in padding designed to improve aerodynamics. For U10 and first year U12 racers they are not necessary but you will find that nearly everyone wears one. Given that children grow so quickly and speed suits are expensive, there is a brisk market in used race suits. Check out facebook marketplace, E-bay, and the WVST Facebook Page.

TRAINING PANTS |

Outer ski pants with full length zippers are essential if the racer plans on wearing a speed suit. These pants are designed to be easily zipped off the last minute prior to racing so racers can stay warm as long as possible. Pants without full length zippers would require the racer to uncomfortably remove his boots on the hill at the start. Some pants also have the ability to be zipped off at the knees so they can be worn as shorts on warmer days.

COATS/PARKAS |

Comfortable fit and warmth are key. On race day racers can spend a lot of time standing/sitting on top of the hill. Warm parkas are important on race days, but on training days a lighter coat may be better. The ability to wear different layers of clothing under the coat is helpful to adjust for different weather conditions. WVST members are encouraged but not required to wear a ski team jacket that can be purchased at a discount from the supplier or local ski shop. The jacket is selected by WVST based on its quality and durability. Pricing information for team jackets will be available in December and order forms will be available. Used ski team jackets are also usually widely available at significant savings.

GLOVES/MITTENS |

Mittens are generally warmer. Good waterproof gloves are important since the hands are often the first things to get cold. Hand warmers can be bought in bulk at BJ's and it's not a bad idea to have your kids keep a supply in their boot bag to use as needed. Some gloves/mittens have a built in pocket to place the hand warmer.

BOOT/GEAR BAG |

Racers have lots of gear that they need to carry from race to race. A good gear bag that can carry boots, helmet, shin guards, extra clothing, and lunch is very useful.

SKI TUNING EQUIPMENT |

It is a good idea to have at a minimum some edge sharpening tools, an iron for waxing, and a selection of wax for different snow conditions, and a wax scraper.

MAKE SURE YOU HAVE YOUR NAME ON EVERYTHING

THE ART OF SKI TUNING

For a racer to perform at his/her highest potential, the race skis need to be properly tuned and waxed before each race. Experienced ski tuners will take more than 30 minutes on a pair of skis to repair bases, sharpen edges, and wax and texture the base. Specialized equipment can be purchased which makes the job easier and more precise. A full description of ski tuning is beyond the scope of this handbook but all parents and racers should become familiar with tuning techniques. Since the condition of their skis can impact their results, racers need to be involved in tuning their skis.

By the time they are a U16s they should be able to handle simple ski tuning tasks. Ski tuning clinics are sometimes offered in the Fall by manufacturer reps (Swix) and they can be very informative. Depending on interest, WVST will hold a demonstration on ski tuning basics for parents and racers. Swix also has an excellent series of online videos - http://swixschool.com/web_tysk/index2.html

WOODS VALLEY ALPINE SKI RACE FOUNDATION, INC. (WVST)

The Woods Valley Ski Racing Team is sponsored by the Woods Valley Alpine Ski Racing Foundation, Inc., a non-profit foundation dedicated to educating our youth in the joy of ski racing.

RELATIONSHIP WITH WOODS VALLEY SKI AREA |

While there has been longstanding cooperative relationship between WVST and Woods Valley Ski Area, WVST has no ownership relationship with Woods Valley. WVST utilizes hill space at Woods Valley and has to work with Woods Valley in attaining the hill space it needs. WVST coaches are not Woods Valley employees or part of the Woods Valley Ski School; they are paid by the WVST. The manpower used to run races at Woods Valley is primarily volunteers and coaches from WVST, with assistance from members of other clubs, Woods Valley Ski Area, and the public. WVST is not part of the Woods Valley Ski School program.

CLUB OFFICERS |

A number of dedicated parents volunteer for Officer positions for the Woods Valley Alpine Ski Race Foundation, Inc..

CURRENT OFFICERS

Christian Giardino - President
Betsy Bernabe - Vice President
Tricia Stemkoski - Secretary
Chip Clark - Treasurer
Meghan Dote

WVST COACHES |

Al Farrell
Tyson Brooks
Jim Tolbert
Mike Burline
Jessica Perry
Cliff Wood
Kevin Barry
Clayton Reynolds
Jim Vaccaro

ROLE OF WVST COACHES |

The coaches' responsibility in the race program is to raise the racers' technical skiing ability and mentor the racers on the mental aspects of the sport. They are responsible for the racers during training sessions and races. They are not responsible for off hill activities (lunch, break time, after skiing, etc.). The coaches make themselves available to parents for questions, updates, and reassurance before or after practice (but not during). Coaches most likely will seek out parents only for equipment needs or behavioral issues. They are focused on the racers, not the parents. After all races, the coaches are "off" and parents will have responsibility for their children.

Questions or problems concerning coaching should be directed to any one of the officers listed above.

WVST FUND RAISING |

Fundraising is vital to WVST to help provide quality coaching, coaching education, necessary new equipment, etc, etc...while controlling membership costs. We need everyone's help and support to properly network amongst friends, family and employers to garner support. If you would like to help the WVST in this area or become a sponsor please contact a club officer.

WVST ALPINE TRAINING PROGRAM |

WVST utilizes the guidelines established by the USSS in conjunction with our own personal resources, experience and philosophies, to design and implement our Alpine Training Program. The guiding USSS document is known as the Alpine Training System (ATS). Developed and implemented by USSS, this document has become the cornerstone for alpine athletic development and coaching in the United States. NYSSRA and WVST have the authority and mission to adopt and modify these guidelines to best fit our own unique and individual program.