



## GUIDE TO ESSKIA RACES

ESSKIA races are run for the benefit of the racers. They are team races for teams of three or four, with separate categories for boys and girls, and four age groups.

Category 1 – Stubby gates - Pupils in Years 3 – 6

Category 2 – Stubby gates - Pupils in Years 7 and 8

Category 3 – Full gates - Pupils in Years 9 and 10

Category 4 – Full gates - Pupils in Year 11 and above.

There are also date of birth restrictions for each category, as at 1 September in the year of competition.

Mixed sex teams are accepted for the Area Qualifiers but will not be invited to take part in the Finals.

A team must compete in the age group of the oldest skier in the team on the day of the Qualifier. If pupils in Years 7 & 8 race in a team with older skiers in Categories 3 & 4, they will race on full gates.

Pupils in Years 6 and under are not allowed to ski in Categories 3 & 4.

There are six Area Qualifying Races, leading to selection of teams for the National Finals. The results of these races are also used to select members of our national training squads.

The standard and age of competitors at the Qualifying Races is very varied. There will be some very good, experienced racers. There will also be many who are competent snow-ploughers with no race experience – it is an ideal way to start, at team races with a varied standard and friendly atmosphere.

Entries for the Open Championships will be done online in September after the Qualifiers.

### BEFORE THE RACE

#### Entries and Membership

Schools must become members of ESSKIA and Snowsport England.

Schools can register for annual membership and declare the number of teams they wish to enter in each age category online at the ESSKIA website at the end of May.

Team entry fees and the membership fee should be paid by the end of the first week in July. This can be done either with a cheque or by BACS. ESSKIA will then forward a sum of money to Snowsport England to cover the membership fee of each school.

An acknowledgement of receipt will be sent followed by Race Bulletin 2 - which includes a Team Entry Form for names to be submitted to the Area Race Organiser by the end of the first week in September.

**The school must also complete the SSE/ESSKIA membership form online, following the instructions sent with Race Bulletin 2. Schools that do not register will not be allowed to race.**

Late entries may be possible, at an extra fee (waived for 2021), **not later than one week before the Area Qualifiers take place.**

#### Race Officials

It is a condition of entry that each **team** must be prepared to provide a Race Official, to be nominated on the Team Entry Form. Full instructions will be given to those officiating, and novice officials will be helped. It would be helpful if volunteers could work their way through the Level One Officials' Course on the Snowsport England website:

[SnowSport England Level 1 Officials Course](#)

If you are a parent and spend many a day watching your child race, then why not get involved and volunteer at your local club?

Each **school** should have a Team Manager who should be present at the race and may also act as a Race Official. Ideally the Team Manager should be a member of the school staff, but if this is not possible a parent may fill the role. In this case a declaration from the Head will be required, to confirm that checking procedures have been carried out in connection with the school's Child Protection Policy.

### **Bulletin 3**

Prior to the day, usually on receipt of the Team Entry Form, schools will receive Race Bulletin 3 from the Area Organiser, which shows the programme for the day and contains other useful information. This year please note that each slope and race organiser will be doing their best to ensure that the race is as safe as possible for both the racers and the officials. Please assist in any way that you can by following the guidance set out in Bulletin 3.

There may also be a Team Commentary Sheet. This should be printed out, completed and handed into the Timing Office to the Commentator on Race Day.

## **ON RACE DAY**

### **Notice Board**

On arrival, check the Notice Board. This will show the timetable, start list, officials' list, and other information.

### **Managers' Meeting**

The day will start with a meeting of Team Managers.

The Race Organiser will welcome everyone and give out any extra information necessary. S/he will announce the times of Race Officials' briefings and meetings.

Team Managers will be given a bag containing the numbered race bibs for their team/s, Information Sheets, certificates for competitors and the duties required of the nominated official/s.

If this is not sent with Bulletin 3, Managers will need to fill in a Commentary Sheet for each team (names of racers, brief details of them and the school) and hand it in to the Race Office for use by the commentator.

Managers will need to notify the Race Secretary of any team changes due to illness etc. The names and dates of birth of replacements must be supplied.

Race Organisers will try to help Team Managers new to the event as much as they can – do ask!

This meeting is usually followed immediately by the **Officials' Meeting**. One official from each school team should attend. 3 teams = 3 officials, please!

### **Racers**

On arrival, any racers who need to borrow slope equipment should go to the hire area.

Racers who are using their own equipment should make sure it is within the rules, especially regarding bungs on poles.

Racers **MUST** wear long trousers, long sleeves, approved SKI helmets without any additions (camera mountings, stickers, covers,) and gloves **AT ALL TIMES** on the slope. Race bibs must be worn during the practice session, course inspection and during the race; they must be worn on top of all other clothing so that the number (back and front) is clearly visible.

### **Practice**

The practice session is designed for racers to warm up and familiarise themselves with the slope. Less experienced racers are advised to use the whole time available, even if the lift queue seems long! When the practice session is over, on most slopes there is no further opportunity to ski except when racing.

## **Course Setting**

At the end of the practice session the slope will be cleared, and the course setter will start to put the slalom poles in position.

The course setter may use some Forerunners. These are skiers who will ski the course to test it – less experienced racers can learn a lot by watching them during course setting.

The Race Jury will look at the course as it is being set. When the Jury approves the course, it will be opened for inspection by racers - this will be announced.

## **Course Inspection**

Racers will be allowed on to the slope to inspect the course. They must be on two skis (not blades).

Team Managers or Trainers may help skiers with course inspection. More experienced racers may also help younger racers. If your skiers are new to racing please ask for help during the Managers' Meeting.

The method of Course Inspection is decided by the Jury - normally it is done from the top of the slope downwards. Racers must NOT SKI the course. They may side slip or snow plough VERY slowly. Any movements which look as though a racer is skiing through the gates or making shadow turns beside the gates may result in disqualification.

## **End of Course Inspection**

The announcer will call the end of course inspection and the first racers (usually 1 – 20) will be advised to go to the start area.

At Area Qualifying races the start order for teams is drawn, and teams race as a block of four.

## **The start of the race**

The race will be opened by two or three Forerunners, who ski the course to test it and the timing before the racers start.

## **The Start Area**

This is controlled by the Start Marshal. S/he will keep the racers away from the start gate, will call them in order to the start and check their helmets, bibs, gloves etc. Racers must wear the allocated number – failure to do this is a disqualification issue.

Racers should make sure they are at the start in good time. They should be orderly as they get ready to race, in order not to distract those about to start.

Some slopes allow Team Managers to be at the start, others do not, especially if space is limited.

If racers leave jackets etc. in the start area, they should collect them as soon as possible after they have raced.

## **The Start Gate**

The start gate is made up of a wooden post to which is attached the timing mechanism, another post (maybe a slalom pole) and a wand which goes across the space between them. The wand is at about knee height (depending on the size of the racer!) and when the racer pushes it forward the electronic timing starts.

## **The Start**

The Starter will tell the racer when to stand in the start gate, and when to put his/her poles over the wand. N.B. Very young racers are liable to hit the wand when doing this and will be allowed to try again!

The Starter will say "Ready . . . Go". The interval is about 3 seconds. The racer **must not** start before the word "go". The racer has up to 5 seconds to start after the word "go".

## **Passage through the gates**

The course is composed of single pole gates, except for the first and last gates, and combinations, which will have two poles of the same colour. The racer must pass between those two poles. The gates alternate

in colour, red/blue. For teams in Categories 1 and 2 the poles will be stubbies; for teams in Categories 3 and 4 there will be full gates. The course will be the same. The actual poles will be changed between age groups.

Where there is no outside pole, both feet and ski tips must have passed the turning pole on the same side, following the natural race line of the slalom. If the racer has not correctly passed the imaginary line from turning pole to turning pole and does not follow the natural race line, then s/he must climb back up and pass **around** the missed turning pole. The direction taken through an open gate does not matter. If a racer knows s/he has missed a gate s/he is entitled to go back and pass through it before completing the rest of the course.

If a racer falls s/he may still complete the course.

If a racer's ski comes off s/he may put it back on and complete the course.

The racer must pass through the finish line on two skis, unless, when having fallen, the natural momentum takes the racer through the finish line.

### **Obstruction on the Course**

If a racer thinks s/he has been obstructed on the course in any way s/he is entitled to ski out, go to the bottom of the slope and ask the Finish Referee for a provisional re-run.

If a racer has crossed the Finish line s/he may NOT ask for a re-run.

If a racer is offered a re-run for any reason and takes it, the first one is null and void and the second one MUST be accepted.

### **Second run**

At Area Qualifying Races the start order for the second run is exactly the same as for the first – ALL racers have two runs.

There may be a break between runs, or the second run may follow immediately after the first – this will be announced at the Managers' Meeting. In either case there is no change of course.

### **Team Times**

Team times are arrived at by adding the three best times from the first run to the three best times from the second run.

The same three racers' times do not have to count on both runs.

### **Protocol**

A team of officials will be in place to run the race and apply the rules.

At the end of the race the Referee will post a notice which will list which racers have not finished, which have been disqualified, and any other problems. This posting will be announced.

Team Managers should check this Protocol. If they disagree with the official decision about a racer in their team/s they may make a protest, on the official form obtainable on request. Protests will only be accepted if they are made in writing by the nominated Team Manager and accompanied by physical evidence and the fee of £25. A protest must be made within 15 minutes of the posting of Protocol.

### **The Race Jury**

The team of officials is headed by the Race Jury. Jury members will be experienced teachers/Race Officials. They will watch and supervise the conduct of the race. If a protest is received about any decision the Jury will hold a meeting.

The official who disqualified the racer will be questioned and any relevant paperwork examined. The racer, accompanied by his/her Team Manager, will be invited to put their point of view. The Jury will consider the evidence and make a final decision. If a racer's protest is upheld the fee will be returned.

## **Results**

Results will be sent to schools by the Area Organiser as soon as possible after the Area Qualifying Races. PROVIDED there are **at least two teams which finish** in a category at an Area Race, the winners of that category will qualify automatically for the Finals. Further places for the Finals will be offered after an evaluation of results at all the Area Races. The number of places will not necessarily be the same in every category.

## **National Finals**

Schools will be notified by the Race Secretary, by email, which team/s have gained places in the National Finals. It is important that the entry forms and fees are sent to the Race Secretary quickly. If a team/school is unable to attend, it is equally important to turn down the invitation so that another team can be invited to take part.

## **AT THE NATIONAL TEAM FINALS**

### **Finals Weekend**

The National Finals take place over a weekend, with Age Group races on Saturday and an Open Team Championship on Sunday.

### **Age Group Championships**

These are held exactly as at the Area Qualifiers. Normally the Category 1 and 2 teams race in the morning with prize-giving at the end of the race. Teams in Categories 3 and 4 race in the afternoon with prize giving at the end.

### **The Open Championships**

This is held on the Sunday of the Finals' weekend and is only open to Boys' Teams and Girls' Teams that have taken part in the Area Qualifiers.

It acts as the qualifying race for the British Schools' Artificial Slopes Championships. These are held in November, hosted in turn by England, Scotland and Wales. The number of places for English Teams each year depends on English results the previous year.

### **Start Order in the Open Championship**

Conforming to the pattern of the British Championships, the Start Order is as follows: teams are drawn and the first racer from each team races in the drawn order. The second racer from each team races, then the third, then the fourth. The order for the second run is the same as the first.

### **Gates**

The course will be set with FULL gates; therefore, **only** those in Years 7 and above are eligible to race in the Open teams. If taking part, racers in Years 7 & 8 should have trained on FULL gates before the event.