

Philosophy and Objectives

The Wintergreen Race Program (WRP), through its Development (“D”) Team and its Race Team, is designed to give children who love to ski an opportunity to improve their technical and general skiing skills. The emphasis is on having fun while concentrating on all aspects of skiing, including racing. The competitive nature of the program can be as relaxed or as intensive as each individual chooses, but all athletes are expected to work at improving their skiing skills.

The D-Team is open to skiers ages 7-13, and the Race Team accepts skiers ages 9-18. No previous racing experience is required, however, participants *must* be comfortable skiing all types of terrain and they *must* be able to ski independently. We have many skiers who join the program simply to improve their skills and to ski as much as possible. They begin racing on an introductory level. We also have more serious racers who have been competing for a few years and wish to improve their racing skills and opportunities. Even though ski racing is an individual sport in competition, the highest levels are attained through team training activities. Therefore, the team aspect of WRP is paramount in importance as racers train together and learn to support each other.

Skiing is a sport in which these athletes will be able to participate throughout their lives. Our program is designed to provide them with solid basic skills, which will allow them to ski all conditions and terrain. Our goal is to help all skiers reach their full potential. We want them to understand the relationship that dedication and hard work have to the successful accomplishment of their individual and team goals. It is our ultimate objective that all athletes gain a true love of skiing whether their future holds simple recreational enjoyment or medal hopes. After a few years of focused effort in our program, your child will likely become an expert skier who is able to ski any terrain in any conditions. Wherever they ski, for the rest of their lives, your child will be among the best skiers on the mountain. We believe that this is a wonderful gift.

Important Notes For Parents

Communication

Good communication with the parents is a chief concern of the coaching staff and the WRP. If you have something on your mind, we encourage you to let us know about it sooner, rather than later. If your question or concern relates to skiing or coaching, contact the Alpine Race Director or the Development Team Director.

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In addition, the parent's organization, the Wintergreen Race Team Boosters, helps to help to support the program by purchasing safety/training equipment, coordinating events and facilitating communication among the parents. We require that all racer's join the Boosters in order to help fund these objectives. Dues are \$50/child or \$100/family. Please feel free to contact any of the officers from the parent's organization, or any other veteran race team parent with your questions and ideas. Don't hesitate to ask questions. The only questions not asked before are ones that have not already been thought of!

Justine Ix, President, 434-825-5231 justineix@gmail.com
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Sarah Kearney, Secretary 703-757-9161 sarahkearney@cox.net

Our former Booster President is Tom LaHaye and he is currently serving on the SARA Board as the WTG Mountain Representative.

Tom LaHaye 540-836-0007 tlahaye@verizon.net

Parent's Code of Conduct, Training and Race Day Etiquette

All of us want the best for our children and all members of the WRP. We wish to outline and communicate appropriate behavior, so that parents know how to best support the development of their young athlete and also the team.

As in other youth sporting events, there is a need for a buffer between athletes and non-participants during training and competition. We cannot put a fence or a field between the coaches and athletes, and the parents and fans, so we need your cooperation.

The role of parents on training and race days is just that: Parent, not coach. You have entrusted the coaching staff with the job of coaching your children. The coaches are professionals and work hard to help your children reach their goals as ski racers. Your

children and the WRP coaches need your support by way of your confidence. That said if you have an issue that you wish to raise with the coaches, please raise it with them directly and privately.

On hill involvement of parents during training should include supportive comments and encouragement. Parents on the hill watching or skiing are welcome to help with logistics such as course maintenance and breakdown, when appropriate and as directed by the coaching staff. We ask that parents have no technical interaction with children other than their own, and then only with coach direction and involvement. At races, we ask that parental assistance be limited to shuttling clothes, unless a coach requests additional help. Parents are neither welcome nor allowed on the course during inspection and preparation unless they are fulfilling a course worker function. We do not want to see parents pulling their children and conducting course inspection with them, as it is counter to our mission. The coaches and your children are working together in developing a race-day routine and strategy that will serve them for many years to come.

Consistency in coaching techniques, language and priorities can only be achieved if the coaches are allowed to do their job. We need to protect against distractions in the start area and during the race that not only affect not only your child, but other children in the program as well. This is not to say that we do not want parents in the start area with their child. We do ask, however, for discretion and deferral to the coaches' wishes prior to race starts.

Please know that we understand your desire to be helpful. More importantly, you need to understand that the children want to please us all and that the pressure associated with that desire is substantial.

Dos and Don'ts

- Do get your child to the ski area in plenty of time to go up with the coaches for warm-ups and inspection prior to the race.
- Do be supportive of the end result, keeping in mind the difficulty of this demanding individual sport. Every great run has an element of luck in it. Some days we have it. . .some days we do not.
- Do not add to the confusion and stress of race day by trying to coach your child. If you sense that your child needs more attention during the race experience, *bring it to the attention of the coach and let them attend to your child.*
- Do not ski down the race hill while your child is racing. Focusing on the course is tough enough without the added pressure of being followed.
- Do support all racers during the race and especially in post-race ceremonies. Include all team members in photo opportunities, not just the top finishers.
- Do encourage your children to be humble in victory and graceful in defeat.

Finally, it goes without saying that the WRP expects all parents and participants to maintain a positive, can-do attitude. Negative attitudes and derogatory comments will not be permitted. There are clear communication channels in place for providing feedback to coaches and program heads, and participation in the WRP requires that they be used.

The WRP coaching staff and program heads thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Training

- The WRP requires that all first year team members attend the holiday race camp. D-Team members should commit to attending at least half of all scheduled practices and race team members should commit to most practices. The level of participation depends on the desire and commitment of each individual racer. We hope that this desire and commitment increase with each year, and we encourage each racer to attend as many practices as possible. As a courtesy, please let the coaches know, via email, when a practice will be missed.
- Over the holiday camp we ski everyday. This camp is particularly important to attend for many reasons. Most importantly, it is the time when we focus intensely on honing the basic skills that we will build on all year. Additionally, this is when the group starts to come together as a team, which makes it very important socially.
- It is imperative that all athletes arrive on time for all training activities. Morning training sessions begin with warm-ups at 7:45 and on most days, training continues until 11:00 for all age groups.
- Training/race schedules will be listed on the team calendar. These schedules may change due to snow related issues, or to take advantage of a special opportunity. Parents and racers will be notified of schedule changes by e-mail.
- The Race Team and the D-Team ski on weekends and vacations come rain, shine, cold or snow. The WRP does NOT cancel dryland training or weekend practices. If there is inclement weather you can use your own judgment as to whether to attend or not, but your child will always remember the times he/she skied in the rain and in the cold, and they will be stronger for it.
- During training, parents, please provide a nutritious snack for your child to stick in their pockets and eat before training begins. Recommended snacks include dry and fresh fruit, crackers, and granola bars—all much better than setting them loose in the land of cinnamon buns and candy.
- WRP skiers will not be allowed to participate in free skiing, gate training or races without a helmet. Slalom face guards are required when athletes begin to cross block.
- Likewise, functioning goggles must be worn during training. Athletes will NOT be allowed to participate in gate training without them. Sunglasses are not allowed for free skiing, training or racing. Goggles should be the correct size for the athlete, and ideally skiers should have at least two pairs of goggles, one for night and flat light conditions, and one darker for sunny days.

On Hill Activities:

During training days, given appropriate terrain and surface, Wintergreen usually allows us to have gates set up on the trail from 8 to 10am. During this time we have all of the race team members run through the training course as many times as possible. During the 10 -11am free ski period, coaches will lead small groups around the mountain, allowing time to work on individual technique in a fun, low pressure, high interaction situation. The structured elements taught in these sessions can be utilized while free skiing in the later afternoon or while out at other mountains on family outings.

During morning gate training, athletes will be getting specific input to their needs, as identified by the coaches. This will include two-way conversations on the lift and in the course start and finish areas. This interaction will follow a plan set for the athletes based on their particular technical needs, past experience and performance, and the athlete-coach-parent communication loop. The quantity and visibility of this feedback will vary depending on the individual needs, specific situations, logistics and racing preparation/competition schedules.

Typical Wintergreen Training Day:

7:45: Meet at ski school ready to go for warm-ups
8-9:30: training session
9:30-10: Pull and slip course
10:00- 11:00: Directed free skiing with the coaches

Conduct Expectations of Racers

- Be courteous and sportsmanlike at all times. Remember that you wear the “Wintergreen Race Team” jacket and as you travel to other mountains you are representing Wintergreen: Do so with pride!
- Be cooperative with and responsive to coaches, ski area personnel and parent volunteers, and to the other skiers on the hill.
- Encourage and support your teammates and other competitors. Put downs of others are not allowed.
- Respect other’s belongings. Fooling around with another athlete’s equipment or belongings will not be tolerated.
- Profane or abusive language or behavior is not allowed at any time (on the race course, in the lodge, after a race, in training, or any other time we have not specifically indicated).
- Respect the ski areas. Be aware of your behavior, and ski courteously so those skiers who do not race may also enjoy the slopes. Those around you may not have your skills but respect their ability and love of the sport.
- Follow any and all special rules that are put in place to govern conduct on race days, including methods of inspection, and limitations on fast skiing on public trails.
- Take time to thank at least one person who helped make your ski day possible, whether it is a ski area worker, patroller, race volunteer or parent.

YOU ARE NOW A MEMBER OF A TEAM, AND YOUR BEHAVIOR REFLECTS UPON EVERYONE ON THE TEAM!

Race Schedules

At the beginning of the season, the coaches select from the race schedule which races the team will attend. Attendance at these races is not required. Each racer ultimately (with input from coaches and parents) chooses his, or her, own race schedule. As a courtesy, we request that racers let the coaches know if they do not intend to participate in one of the scheduled races.

We do not recommend that racers attend additional races outside the team schedule during December, January and February. These core months of the season are extremely busy, and we feel that extra races during this time are not beneficial. We choose the race schedule carefully based on both our experience and national guidelines for skiers of different ages. We would always rather have the kid's hungry to race more than to get tired of racing. Also, please be aware that if you choose to attend a race that has not been designated by the coaches as a team race, we cannot guarantee coaching for that race.

If you ever have a question about which races your child should attend, please talk to one of the race team coaches.

Race Entries

Throughout the winter your child will have the opportunity to race in several races. In order to participate, a racer must be a member of the Southern Alpine Racing Association (SARA), as well as the United States Ski Association (USSA). Registration for the races is electronic, though the website of SARA. The deadline for race registration is five days before the race and registering early insures that your child will be on the start order. Links to these sites are found at the end of this guide.

The entry fees, \$35/race, will be paid to the race secretary the morning of the race. In addition, lift tickets may also be purchased, usually at a discounted price. Usually these cost are, \$20/racer and \$35/ family member, but the cost of lift tickets may vary slightly depending on the resort.

Championships are by invitation only, and if your child qualifies, they will receive special registration instructions. Please refer to the SARA website for qualifying guidelines.

Typical Race Day

- Parents (or someone designated by the parent) are responsible for transportation to the ski area and back home after the awards at the end of the day. Plan on arriving 1.5 hours before the start of the race. Please refer to the SARA website for race start times.
- Course inspection is always scheduled one hour before the start of the race. Racers should plan to meet their coaches 10 minutes before the course inspection time. Coaches will be responsible for supervision of the racers during course inspections and at that time, the coaches will inform the racers how much time they have before their run.
- Know your start order and be at the start on time. It is the racer's responsibility to be at the start on time! Coaches will be at the start, and when possible along the course and at the finish.
- Once the racer has finished his or her first run, the parent (or designee) is responsible for the racer until the next course inspection. The second run starts roughly an hour after the last racer completes the first run. We will try to get on the lift for inspection at least 45 minutes before the start of the second run. This means that parents will have to make sure that the kids eat lunch soon after their first run and keep an eye on them during this time. Make sure that race bibs stay on!
- At the completion of the second run, the parent is again responsible for the child. This is a great time to go take a few runs and to explore the ski area before the awards, which are typically held one hour after the conclusion of the race. Please remember to turn in your race bib!
- We encourage everyone to attend the awards ceremonies, to show good sportsmanship, as well as support for the team and event organizers.

Races last two minutes of the day. Take advantage of the different mountain and new terrain. . .Enjoy free skiing between runs!

Race Day Thoughts and Issues

A Test Against the Clock

By the numbers, the time actually spent racing is less than 2/10ths of 1% of the time spent skiing and training, yet it is one of the most memorable parts of the season. **The focus of the WRP is on having fun, and developing skiing fundamentals through ski racing.** The races themselves provide challenges, opportunities to test oneself and encouragement to improve.

Relax and Ski

For coaches, the focus on race day is mostly on getting the racers to relax and to transfer the skills they have practiced day after day to a more challenging arena. Almost all kids are nervous on race days. They turn to parents for encouragement and support. Be positive and try to emphasize the effort, not the outcome. By seeing you demonstrate a positive, low anxiety, relaxed approach to ski racing, your child will be encouraged to keep learning and improving. Even though well intentioned, there is nothing more unproductive than having parents coach their child during a race. It is a sure way to distract the racer, and to make him or her more nervous than they already are. **A simple “good luck, go fast and have fun”, proves to be the most effective approach.**

Keeping Track of Clothing

Most racers will shed clothing at the start of the race. Whenever possible coaches and/or parent volunteers will take these coats and warm-ups down to the finish or into the lodge. To make sure your child finishes the day with everything he/she started with, simply write your child's name and phone number on everything (there will be many identical Spyder size 12 pants!), and remind your child to retrieve his or her things.

Scoreboard and Results

If you spend your day standing by the scoreboard, your racer can easily start to think that his or her time and place is all that matters to you. To avoid that, go to the scoreboard once, after all the racers of that group are finished. If your child is with you, **praise the performance not the results.** Coaches always ask the skiers how they skied, not what their time or place was. Understanding that they won't win every race, or even most of them, is one of the most important lessons of ski racing for the kids to learn. They rely on their parents to let them know the world is still okay even if they don't reach their goals for a specific day, and on their coaches to remind them that every race is a new opportunity to succeed. For example, in the 2000/2001 season Bode Miller won 1 of 27 races, and in 1/2 of them, he didn't even finish. His former coach Jess Hunt says of Bode, “He has this way of putting a positive spin on everything, even when there really isn't one.” As Bode says, “I just don't get down on myself.” It was the following season that Bode started winning, and he is currently the skier everyone is trying to catch.

Equipment and Clothing

It is vital that your child is properly dressed and has well-suited equipment that is properly tuned. If you have questions regarding your child's equipment, please ask one of the coaches. It is much better, and cheaper, to ask questions first so your racer can start the season on the right equipment.

- **What clothing does my child need?**

Warm parka, warm-up pants (side zip to take them off at races), gloves or mittens, helmet, neck warmer, one pair of wool or polypro sock, long underwear, turtleneck, sweater or fleece. While it is not required, many racers have a team jacket, the red Spyder Rival jacket, which can be purchased new from Freestyle. At the end of each season, Freestyle organizes a bulk order from Spyder and many items may be purchased for a discount at this time. In addition, we also hold a team swap of good quality, used equipment and clothing at the beginning of the season. *A note or two on keeping warm: While we emphasize the need to wear multiple layers to keep the body core warm, it's also important to make sure that boots and socks start the day warm and dry.*

- **Does my child need a Competition Suit?**

Studies tell us that the aerodynamic benefit of a young racer wearing a comp suit is negligible. The advantage is almost purely psychological. As investments go, buying a comp suit pales in value when compared to dedicating money to keeping your child's skis tuned. If you do buy a comp suit, there is one item that must also be bought: Side zip warm-up pants. Racers will lose exponentially more time if they are cold than they will by wearing a suit. On the positive side, if well taken care of, a comp suit will last many years and can be passed down from kid-to-kid-to-kid.

- **How many pairs of skis should my racer have?**

With the evolution of the shaped ski, there is in fact a significant difference between the Slalom ski and the GS ski. If it is the child's first year on the race team, then one pair of skis is probably sufficient, and it should be a pair of slalom skis. After the first year of racing, there needs to be a discussion between the racer, coach and parent in order to determine the best answer to this question. In some instances, the coaches may recommend that a racer have two pairs of skis even if it is their first year racing.

- **Do my child's skis need to be tuned?**

YES!!! Sharp edges and properly functioning equipment are essential for both training and racing. We will do all we can to give you opportunities to learn tuning skills through clinics and mentoring. However, most kids do not have the strength and/or fine motor skills to take care of their own skis, and we suggest utilizing the expertise of the technicians in the shop at Freestyle.

The Racer's Race/Training Day Checklist

Post this checklist somewhere you will see it before heading out to ski. Remember to bring multiple layers of clothing, so you can add if you are cold, or take off if you are hot.

- Boots
- Skis
- Poles
- Helmet
- Goggles
- Gloves
- Ski Socks (thin wool or polypro)
- Long Underwear
- Fleece or sweater
- Jacket
- Side-zip Warm-up Pants
- Hat
- Neck Gaiter
- Snack, Lunch or Money
- Ski Pass

Optional Stuff:

- Any special race clothing/equipment
- Cookie, brownies and gifts for your coaches

If you still are not sure if you have everything, start with your feet and work your way up.
“Socks, boots, long underwear, etc. . .”

Accommodations at Race Venues

Some races are held within commuting distance of Wintergreen, but others are held at resorts that will require an overnight stay. Very often, WRP families share condos to help defray the costs of accommodations and provide a built-in social network for the children. The following is a list of accommodations at some of the resorts to which we travel.

Bryce Resort

www.bryceresort.com
Super 8 (approx. 12 miles from the resort)
250 Conicville Rd.
Mount Jackson, Va 22842
540-477-2911

Massanutten Resort, VA

www.massresort.com

Canaan/Timberline, WV

www.deerfieldvillage.com
1-800-342-3217
www.timberlinerealty.com
1-800-633-6682

Winterplace Resort, WV

www.winterplace.com

There is a strip of hotels (Comfort Inn, Best Western, etc.) all 25 minutes from the resort in Beckley, WV. We recommend searching hotels/rates in Beckley on the travel websites (Expedia, Travelocity, etc.).

Snowshoe Mountain Resort, WV

www.snowshoemtn.com
www.snowshoevacationrentals.com

Sugar Mountain Ski Resort, Banner Elk, NC

www.skisugar.com
Smoketree Lodge
1-800-422-1880
Holiday Inn, Banner Elk
1-877-877-4553

Beech Mountain, NC

www.skibeech.com

Important Websites

www.wtgraceteam.org

To access the equipment exchange or to view race program information, coaches notes, photos, race results, volunteer assignments, etc.

www.wintergreenresort.com

www.sara.org

For membership registration, regional race schedules, and for race registration

www.ussa.org

www.freestyleonline.com

Our local source for race equipment and ski tuning

www.live-timing.com

For national race results

www.onthesnow.com

Mountain conditions and snow reports

Class Definitions as of Dec. 31

J1 = 17 & 18 yrs

J2 = 15 & 16 yrs

J3 = 13 & 14 yrs

J4 = 11 & 12 yrs

J5 = 9 & 10 yrs

J6 = 7 & 8 yrs

