

TAOS WINTER SPORTS TEAM



Handbook

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Document Purpose

This document has been created for parents and athletes of Taos Winter Sports Team. It contains information regarding Club procedures, policies, expectations and other information useful to everyone involved with TWST. We hope this document answers some common questions that parents and athletes have about TWST and our programs. Parents and coaches of TWST have put this document together to help guide new and returning families through the ins-and-outs of this club and our sports. Competing and training for an outdoor winter sport is a constantly evolving and ever changing endeavor, requiring flexibility and adaptability from the staff, athletes, and parents.

Mission

“Helping athletes achieve Gold in their physical, mental, personal, and social development”

Our primary goal is to help each athlete learn the necessary tools to be successful at any goal they choose. Our philosophies are based on a long-term approach to athletics. Teaching skiing is secondary to the teaching of athletics as a way of life. An athletic lifestyle includes characteristics such as; respect, resiliency, responsibility, honor, self-control, trust, initiative and dedication. TWST maintains that a small, individualized, athlete driven program is a beneficial environment for learning these characteristics. Each individual athlete is allowed to set their own goals and establish a plan to attain them as long as they are consistent with team philosophies and does not detract from other’s goals. TWST strives to help each athlete include skiing and athletics into their way of life and encourages everyone to take personal responsibility in every area of preparation and competition. The coaches and staff are committed to treating each athlete as individuals and helping them to reach their potential in the sport of skiing

The mission of Taos Sports Associates is to give an opportunity for athletes to become great skiers and pursue personal goals. T.S.A. promotes the development of good sportsmanship, healthy competitiveness, sound technical skills, and an appreciation for the spirit of skiing and of the mountains. T.S.A. strives to provide a pathway to success for motivated individuals from all walks of life.

PROGRAMING

All of TWST's ski programs are based on basic skill development, modern technique, free skiing and competition as a way to create a better skier. Younger and less experienced athletes will spend the majority of their time working on skills outside of the competitive environment (free skiing with coaches). As athletes progress, competition and training will become more frequent. All athletes skiing with TWST are encouraged to free ski all over the mountain. Our philosophy is that a better all-around skier leads to a better skier in competitions. We will never be gate training or in the terrain park on a powder day due to safety, of course!

Athletes with TWST must be at the intermediate skill level and be able to ski most runs on the mountain. They must also be able to ride the chairlift without an adult and be able to get from point A to point B on their own. Athletes are not supervised by TWST staff during the lunch break and their parents are expected to handle their kids during this time. Any athlete who does not fit our ability criteria will be refunded and directed toward the ski school. New members, who are 10 years old or younger and decide they are not ready for our program, will be refunded. This request should be mailed or submitted in writing to the Program Director email <director@taoswintersportsteam.com>, must be made within two weeks of the first day of training for all part-time athletes.

Athletes may choose from a variety of programs including Alpine Racing Programs, Freeride and Slopestyle Programs. All program fees are based on the age of the athlete as of December 31st.

ALPINE RACING PROGRAMS

FULL PROGRAM

This is a weekend racing program for athletes. Our Full Time program is designed for the athlete that seeks to achieve results in regional competitions. Athletes will enjoy coaching every Saturday and Sunday, a 5-day xmas camp, coaching at events, dryland training every Tuesday, preseason on snow training, and slalom training from 4-5pm on Thursday for 6-8 weeks. Athletes compete in regional events that are a part of the USSA Junior Championship pipeline. Athletes will be on snow in November (when conditions permit) through mid April. Fall dry land training is included and runs from early October through mid November. For program fees please see the Registration Form located on the forms page of the website.

SATURDAY ONLY PROGRAM

We offer a Saturday Only program that meets every Saturday from Taos Ski Valley's opening day until closing day. This is designed to be an introductory program allowing young athletes the opportunity to develop strong fundamental skills with an emphasis on carving, pole planting, gliding, and jumping. Athletes can compete in a variety of events in New Mexico and southern Colorado. On snow training for this program begins the Saturday after Thanksgiving and runs through March, provided that Taos Ski Valley is open for skiing. Fall dry land

training and Tuesday evening winter dryland is included. For program fees please see the Alpine Registration Form located on the forms page of the website.

LICENSE FOR SKI RACING: Athletes must have a current USSA license to participate in USSA sanctioned events. Athletes U16 or older (14 years old or older on December 31) will need to pay for a 'Competitors License' to both USSA and RMD. Athletes U14 or younger (13 years old or younger on December 31st) need a 'Youth License' for both USSA and RMD. These fees are paid online thru the United States Ski Association website <usskiandsnowboard.org>. If you were a member last season, you should be sent a renewal email reminder for the next season. All USSA members are required to have valid and sufficient medical/accident insurance coverage and accept full responsibility for provision of coverage as a condition of becoming a USSA member and participating in official USSA training and competition. Primary medical/accident insurance must be in effect for the entire term of the membership year. Athletes must carry proof of insurance and this must be available at each event so that prompt medical/hospital care can be authorized, if ever needed. Excess participant accident insurance may be a benefit included with the above USSA memberships. This insurance is in excess ONLY over all other insurance. Please contact USSA for more information. For USSA membership forms go to ussa.org and click on become a member

FREERIDE PROGRAMS

This program is designed for skiers and snowboarders that wish to compete in rail jam, slopestyle, ski/ boarder cross, and Big Mountain competitions. TWST is happy to offer an exciting program that focuses on slopestyle and big mountain skiing. Athletes participating in this program will learn the skills needed to negotiate some of the steepest terrain in North America. Our home in Taos Ski Valley affords our athletes the chance to challenge themselves with narrow chutes, steep lines and ripping fast large peak descents. Athletes will fine tune their fundamental skiing skills, learn avalanche safety, learn and practice aerials in a safe, supervised environment.

FULL TIME PROGRAM

This program is designed for the athlete that seeks to achieve results in national and regional competitions. Athletes will enjoy coaching every Saturday and Sunday, coaching at events, dryland training every Tuesday, preseason on snow training, and slalom training from 4-5pm on Thursday for 6-8 weeks. Athletes compete in regional and national events that are a part of the USASA and IFSA national development pipeline.

Enrollment can be initiated from our website <www.taoswintersportsteam.com>

SATURDAY ONLY PROGRAM

This program meets every Saturday, from Taos Ski Valley's opening day until closing day. This is designed to be an introductory program allowing young athletes the opportunity to develop strong fundamental skills with an emphasis on carving, pole planting, gliding, and jumping. Athletes can compete in a variety of USASA and IFSA regional events in New Mexico and southern Colorado.

FREERIDE COMPETITIONS

Big Mountain/ Freeskiing: Open for skiers and snowboarders 12 years and older. The competitor skis down a venue chosen by the organizers. The judges score the athlete on line choice, control, fluidity, style, technique and style/energy. The IFSA will rank and invite the top athletes to the championships held each spring. Competitions go for 2-4 days with qualifiers from one day to the next. Because of the overwhelming interest, a regional series is being developed and that will be the qualifier for the national series. IFSA is the ruling body and require a membership if you want your scores to count. Please familiarize yourself with www.freeskiers.org

Rail Jam/ Slopestyle/ Ski/Boarder-cross: The USASA (United States of America Snowboard/Skier Association) is a grassroots organization that promotes safe, fair and fun events for snowboarders and skiers while fostering a competitive spirit. Every year riders compete in rail jams, slopestyle and boarder/skier cross events at the regional level. Riders accumulate points to qualify for Nationals. The goal is to promote fun lifelong activities for snowboarders and skier of all ages. The rail jam and slopestyle are judged events and are held in terrain parks. They incorporate different features that have been built in the park. Ski/Boarder-cross is a race with 3-4 competitors going at once, racing down a course which includes gates, jumps and banks. Much like a motor-cross.

LICENSING FOR FREERIDE: If you are going to compete in big mountain then you will need an IFSA membership/ license. \$45-\$65 depending on when you sign up. www.freeskiers.org

LICENSING FOR SLOPESTYLE: If you are going to compete in slopestyle or skiercross you will need a USASA membership/ license. \$75/ \$85
www.usasa.org

Each snow sports discipline has an independent license requirement due to the unique liability insurance coverage requirements of each organization.

Registration and Fees

Please go to www.taoswintersportsteam.com to download the registration form. Pay before the middle of October and receive a discount. Program fees vary depending on the program being selected.

Raffle Deposit All members are required to submit a \$300 raffle deposit. We will then give out raffle tickets for you to sell and you keep the money (up to \$300) from the sale of those tickets. This is an effort to offset your fees.

James Herrera Scholarship Fund TWST is proud to offer scholarships based on financial need for athletes in our community. Applications can be found on our website at www.taoswintersportsteam.com.

Season Passes Taos Ski Valley Ski Pass: The price of your ski pass is **not** included in the fees. While most families buy Season's passes, you may find the other offers to be a prudent choice depending on how many days you ski. Please check the Taos Ski Valley web site, skitaos.com or call 776-2291 for current pass information

TWST Refund Policy

An athlete who is enrolled in TWST but has not found the programs compatible to their interests or goals may request a refund in writing if the following criteria are met:

- Athlete has trained 2 days, anything less or more and refunds will not be given.
- Refund is requested in writing within 1 week of the 2nd day of training for any athlete.
- Refunds requested after December 31st are reviewed independently, no refund is issued solely because the athlete quit training.

In a case of an injury, refunds reviewed independently based these guidelines.

- The injury must be season ending.
- Requests must be submitted in writing within 2 weeks of season ending injury.
- The amount refunded is pro-rated, based on the date of the last day of coaching. For example, an athlete has paid for 20 days of coaching. If the injury takes place on day 10, then TWST will refund 50% of the fees.
- No refund will be given for an injury due to injury after the last training day in January

ATHLETES CODE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Each participant is an ambassador of Taos Winter Sports Team (TWST) both on and off the ski mountain. All participants and parent of athletes are representatives of the organization and also a reflection on team sponsors. Participation in the TWST is a privilege that can be revoked. **Each participant pledges to conduct him or herself at all times in a manner which reflects positively on the team and others, our community and themselves on the mountain, and whenever or wherever they may be identified as a TWST athlete.** Whether a participant is in the lift line, in a lodge, at the community center, in school, in the training arena or free skiing on the mountain, they are expected to behave appropriately. TWST athletes are required to agree to abide by the following requirements in their daily conduct: Specific rules of conduct include, but are not limited to the following: **You hereby agree that you and any family members participating in the TWST training programs have reviewed the Code of Conduct set forth in this document and that each such participant hereby agrees to be bound thereby.**

1. **Positive:** Be a positive role model for the team both in attitude and outlook. Ski well and do your best to encourage your teammates success. Positive behavior is the fundamental and includes but is not limited to, having a good time, skiing safe, obeying area rules, using clean language, expressing good sportsmanship among your teammates and with competitors, and being polite to ski area guests and employees. Contribute to positive team moral by showing respect for coaches and demonstrate responsibility and self discipline. Additional positive behaviors include properly acknowledging ski area staff, property and facilities, which include cleaning up after oneself or teammates while using public lodges or in competition centers. Refraining from fighting, bullying or abuse of any kind. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle free from alcohol, tobacco, controlled substances or other intoxicants. We are a team and a positive atmosphere benefits everyone's progress.

2. **Punctuality:** Arrive early & be ready on time. A team expect its teammates be on time. Athletes are focused on training and maximizing their time with teammates and coaches and will not leave training early. Cell phones and headphones should remain off & inaccessible during training. Making the best use of scheduled time is integral to a successful training program. Some of these concepts may be difficult to grasp, but they are critical for two main reasons. Firstly our our training arenas take everyone's support to set and maintain and are as important for an athlete to be a part of as the training itself. Second is communication, on the first (and last) runs of the day are when coaches review the plan for the day and disseminate information on upcoming training and events. When an athlete misses this information it unfairly takes away time from other athletes training for a one on one update. For those same reasons, we ask that athletes not leave training early. Do not leave training without being excused by a coach.

3.. **Preparedness:** Athletes must show up with the appropriate equipment in good condition. Treat your ski equipment, team equipment and ski area equipment with respect. We ask that athletes be prepared and flexible at all times. Athletes should check for team emails to find out what training discipline they will be skiing as close to the training time as possible. Our training schedules and plans can and will change at a moment's notice based on a number of variables. As an example; if GS training is scheduled and it snows the night before, it is likely that GS training will change to POWDER SKIING. We ask parents to encourage the athlete's to be prepared for changes in training including weather conditions and ski discipline. Dressing appropriately for changing weather is critical.

4. **Safety:** Know & obey rules of the skier safety act and observe all rules and regulations of the ski area and other areas visited where training or competitions take place. ALL TWST athletes are required to wear helmets at all times and agree to participate in Concussion awareness and Baseline testing programs. Ski goggles are required whenever skiing gates - NO EXCEPTIONS! Poles or other equipment shall not be used in a threatening manner or as a weapon. Ski in control and always obey "SLOW SKIING" zones. Be polite and orderly in the lift maze with your ticket visible, the participant is encouraged to share lift rides with other public guests.

5. **Listen:** to your coaches and respect their decisions. Support the TWST staff, coaches and your teammates. Agree to help TWST coaches as requested (e.g. side slipping a course, putting away equipment, etc.) Respect the rules of the sport and refrain from arguing or using foul language when speaking with or about officials or others.

6. **Communicate:** the best of Taos Winter Sports Team by representing you and your teammates with good behavior both on the ski hill and off, whether we are training at home or traveling to an event. Use good manners with courtesy and thoughtfulness (profanity, bullying, fighting or harassment of any kind are not tolerated) It only takes one bad incident to spoil the image of our entire team. Each athlete has agreed with this Code of Conduct & Responsibility and will be held to the highest standards.

7. **Awareness:** Always do your best effort each day. Maintain a high level of conduct at school, including observing rules and maintaining better than 2.8gpa average, with a single "D" & zero "F"s. Athletes and parents should be familiar with the USSA Alpine Competition Guide, the TWST manual, and the rules of Taos Ski Valley. The "Competition Guild" is a valuable source for answers to many questions. Athletes are required to read & understand the code of conduct and rules and regulations sections carefully. Not having understood this is not an excuse for violations. An athlete that violates any of the rules listed by USSA, USASA, IFSA, TSV, or this TWST manual can be sanctioned, including, but not limited to expulsion. Each athlete has signed the code of conduct as a part of

the registration packet and failure to uphold these standards will be cause for dismissal from TWST.

Goal Setting

Each athlete is expected to set a series of goals for skiing, competition and athletics. Of course, other activities and family priorities are a significant part of these goals. Both short term and long term goals are critical to your success. These goals should be achievable, realistic and honest; however they should require hard work and commitment to attain. These goals must also be measurable and constantly evaluated. Some goals may be quickly reached, while others may take years to achieve. Some aspects of success will be out of your direct control. However, the EFFORT you put in to reaching your goal is entirely within your control. FAILURE is not trying or putting proper thought and effort into your goals. NO EXCUSES! Always be honest with yourself, your parents, your coaches and your environment when setting and evaluating your goals. There is no EASY way to success. SUCCESS REQUIRES HARD WORK, COMMITMENT AND SACRIFICES. Understanding these sacrifices and using them to your benefit will be critical to your success. You will get out of any program what you put into it! If you are looking for short cuts or are not honest with your commitment levels and your limitations, you should expect to FAIL. Every decision you make will affect the outcome. Success occurs when you have a discipline commitment to a reasonable plan. You cannot commit to doing some of the work. Over time, hard work with a purpose and your own INTERNAL DRIVE FOR SUCCESS will make you succeed. Not chance or innate abilities.

TRAINING SCHEDULE

This is a typical day's schedule for our programs.

8:45am	Meet coaches by the base of Chair 1.
9:00am	Load first chair.
11:45-12:50	Unsupervised lunch break.
12:50pm	Meet coaches by base of Chair 1.
1:00pm	Load Chair 1 at 1pm.
3:45 pm	Training ends.

Please note that this schedule is subject to change due to weather or other unforeseen obstacles to normal activity.

ATHLETE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

A proficient team effort, in multiple on and off snow environments, is required to ensure that each athlete is able to perform well. For the well being of each team participant, and of the team as a whole, it is imperative that all athletes uphold the following athlete rules of engagement.

- IN GENERAL -

1. Be a teammate. Be aware of others & treat them how you want to be treated.
 - a. Respect the team's time. Take care of personal business on your own time.
*Cell phones are prohibited during team time. Coaches have phones and can be contacted if needed.
 - b. Respect the "athletic space" of others. Cut the horseplay when a teammate needs time and/or space to concentrate.
2. Take responsibility for yourself. Do not rely on others.
 - a. Do not jeopardize your body. Proper diet and proper rest are imperative.
 - b. Pack it in-Pack it out. Take care of your trash and clean up your own messes.
3. Make training a priority. Arrive on time and prepared.
 - a. Schedule appointments and vacation around training.
 - b. Inform a coach ahead of time if you must miss training
4. Document your training and competition. Maintain & review a log and a training tape.

5. COMMUNICATION STARTS BETWEEN ATHLETES AND COACHES

- ON THE HILL TRAINING ENVIRONMENT-
PREPARATION

1. Prepare and check all equipment, especially when borrowing equipment
2. Always carry water. A sport drink is recommended in addition to water.
4. Dress Appropriately
6. Arrive on time with a fresh plan of attack.

GATE TRAINING

1. Help set. Follow a coach's instruction, and/or check the top of the hill for gates and wrenches.
2. Always inspect the course.
3. Always warm up (in and out of skis).
6. Check-in. Never begin without a radio and/or visual clear.
7. Radio Protocol: example - Athlete: Chelsea on course, Lauren in the gate. - Coach: clear for Lauren/ technical info/ hold until clear.
 - a. For safety and video purposes, the last athlete to run needs to check-in AND radio to the coach when they are on course.
8. If you miss a gate or otherwise do not complete a course, always stop, re-focus, and then continue.
9. Never treat the last gate as a stopping point. Continue past the last gate as if the course continues. Then come to a stop in an athletic position. *This rule adds repetitions to training runs, and helps prevent injury at the end of a course.
10. Help during tear-down.
11. Do cool-down and recovery exercises.

Be Flexible/ Be Involved

Skiing is an ever-changing environment. We expect our participants to plan accordingly and be prepared at all times. In order to stay informed, you must be involved. If you miss a day or even a session of training, you will be missing out on important information that you are responsible to know. Whether it is at

*training or at a competition, schedules and plans are changing constantly. Our schedule(s) change frequently to give the athletes every opportunity to reach their goals and the goals of this club. We expect the athletes to be prepared for these changes. Our coaches will react and plan with the athletes best interest in mind at all times. Safety will never be sacrificed. **Check your email and the TWST website regularly for updates on training and competition plans.***

Helping set and tear down on training days

Athletes are expected to help set and tear down the training venue. Athletes should not leave early on a regular basis without helping to tear down the training venue. All athletes must participate in all aspects of skiing. This includes the setup and tear down of our competition and training environments. We expect everyone to be involved in this process every day. Parents are also encouraged to lend a hand with set-up and tear down of any training venue.

Protection/Safety

All athletes are required to attend our skier safety day with the Ski Valley Ski Patrol. This takes about an hour and covers self arrest and other safety concerns. Athletes who do not attend one of these sessions will not be allowed to ski on the ridge. All athletes must become familiar with the New Mexico Skier Safety Code.

1. Always ski in control and in a manner so that you avoid other skiers.
2. Always yield and avoid the skier below you.
3. Stop in a place where you are visible and do not block the trail.
4. All equipment must have retention devices.
5. Obey all closed areas and observe all signs, including "SLOW SKIING" zones.

TWST Concussion Policy

Any TWST athlete suspected of having sustained a concussion/ traumatic brain injury must be removed immediately from participation in sporting events (e.g. training, practice, camps, competitions, tryouts, dryland), by the Technical Delegate or coach overseeing such sporting event. The athlete will be prohibited from further participation until evaluated and cleared in writing to resume participation in ski competitions or any sporting event by a qualified health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussive head injuries. This may only happen after a 10 day rest period, mandated by the State of New Mexico. The health care professional must certify to USSA and TWST in the clearance letter that he/she has successfully completed a continuing education course in the evaluation and management of concussive head injuries within three years of the day on which the written statement is made. Upon removal of an athlete from participation for a suspected concussion/traumatic brain injury, the USSA TD or coach making the removal must inform USSA Competition Services. Athletes who have subsequently been medically cleared to resume

participation must provide such medical clearance (as described above) to USSA Competition Services and to the TWST Program Director in order to be permitted to participate in any TWST sporting event.

About Concussion

[Headsup Program offered by the CDC](#) is a concussion awareness website. A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury (TBI) caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head. Concussions can also occur from a fall or a blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. Doctors may describe a concussion as a “mild” brain injury because concussions are usually not life-threatening. Even so, their effects can be serious.

Risk of Continued Participation

A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first—usually within a short period of time (hours, days, or weeks)—can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems. In rare cases, repeat concussions can result in edema (brain swelling), permanent brain damage, and even death.

TWST requires that participants and parents review concussion awareness information from the Center for Disease Control’s, HeadsUp web link:

[<https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/index.html>](https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/index.html)

Parent Support and Involvement

Communications

It is important that lines of communication between athletes, coaches and parents are open at all times. COMMUNICATION SHOULD START BETWEEN ATHLETES AND COACHES. If an athlete is having difficulty, teaching methods can be altered in order to become more effective. All participants must realize that communication is important for growth, learning, and the success of our team. The coaches, board of directors and the administrator make every effort to provide effective communication. This communication is provided through the TWST web site, emails, and coaches communication directly to the athletes. In order to facilitate effective communications, please assure that you notify the TWST director of any changes to your contact information. Updates should be sent to director@taoswintersportsteam.com. TWST coaches take all family concerns into consideration at each level of our decisions. In our attempt to help your child reach their goals, we understand that it is not always the cheapest, easiest or most convenient plan. We develop all of our programs with all aspects in mind and make the best decision we can with what is available to us. If a skier or parent is having a problem with a coach, please speak directly with the program director. You may also reach the program director by email at director@taoswintersportsteam.com. If this does not solve the problem, please contact a board member.

Parents at Training

Parents are welcome at training with certain restrictions. Safety is the NUMBER ONE concern for our athletes and parents. With this said, parents are asked not to enter the training/competition arena, unless specific arrangements have been made prior to training. Viewing an athlete's training run is usually very easy from outside the arena. All it takes is one miscalculation or one unsuspecting parent or athlete to cause an injury. Our coaches take this issue very seriously and ask that all parents help us keep our training environment safe. Please do not put the coaches in the position of asking you to leave the arena. Exceptions may be made if specifically asked for assistance by the coaching staff. If a parent is assisting coaches in a training or competition environment, it must be understood that you are assisting the entire team, not a specific athlete or other agenda. Please keep safety in mind at all times and keep distractions of ALL athletes to a minimum. THERE IS NEVER ANY FREESKIING IN A TRAINING AREA. IF YOU ARE IN A RACING OR TRAINING ARENA, YOU MUST BE SIDE SLIPPING.

Parents and "Coaching"

TWST coaches ask that all parents be aware of their "technical coaching" comments to their young athletes. Even our highly educated and knowledgeable parents with significant skiing and racing experience must be informed and aware of the approach the coaches are acting on with the athletes. Even if the information given is "correct", it may be at a time and/or a level of importance that is not correct at a given time. It is common for parents to disagree with coaches. Whether talking about specific events, a technical progression or a variety of other issues. The worst approach, however, is to give athletes conflicting information and put the pressure on the athlete as to "WHO?" they should be responding to. "My coach or my parent?"

Be Supportive

The most important thing parents can do for their athlete is to be supportive. Don't put too much pressure on your athletes. Be positive! Encourage the athletes efforts and NOT on the RESULTS. If you have concerns about your athlete's performance, talk to the coaches. Coaches and staff encourage parents to ask questions, be involved, provide constructive criticism when appropriate and most of all be fair and consistent with your athlete and your club. Parents are encouraged to attend races and training.

Volunteering

TWST understands that your time is valuable and it is difficult to commit to volunteer hours. The more community and parent support we have, the lower our fees will be with higher quality programs. We hope that your involvement is fun, educational and adds value to your skiing experience. We do expect that all parents are involved and help our coaches and board create a positive, successful and rewarding experience.

COMPETITION: RESPONSIBILITIES, RULES, AND POLICIES

Competition Overview

In ski racing, only a handful of individuals have a realistic chance of winning. No matter how well racers prepare and perform; only one will emerge in 1st place on any given day. If every athlete enters a race with the single ambition of winning that race, all but one will go home feeling that they have failed if they did not take first place. To maintain a winning attitude for all athletes, we de-emphasize the importance of winning the race and direct the children more towards giving it their best effort. Our definition of winning is that 100% effort is a winning effort, regardless of the outcome. Our focus on competition days is performing to ones best ability and achieving the goal for the race. We do not define success and failure in terms of winning and losing, nor should you! All we ask of parents is to be supportive and be you athlete's best fan. Our job is to coach, your job is to support and encourage! Remember that your child is not his/ her performance. Please love them unconditionally! Fun must be present for peak performance to happen at every level of competition. If you start to see your child not wanting to practice or compete, you need to investigate. What is preventing him/her from having fun? Is it the coaching? The pressure? Investigate. One last important guideline is to avoid comparisons and respect differences! Supportive parents do not use other athletes that their child competes against to compare and thus evaluate their child's progress. Every child progresses at his/her own pace. Comments after a race should be: "How did you feel? Did you have fun? How did the course ski? What did you have for lunch?" A parent's reaction is often reflected in the child and his or her attitude. Please support this philosophy and us by teaching and defining winning to your racer this way.

Each TWST athlete's race calendar is constantly being updated and modified based on a variety of factors. TWST as a team does not attend (or staff) every event. In addition, individual athletes may be attending different events than other TWST athletes in their same age and ability group. It is vital that each athlete stay in communication with the coaches to assure their competition schedule is the most productive, cost effective and is consistent with the goals of the individual.

Event Schedules

Please go to the website for current event schedules.

Ski Races:

<http://www.taoswintersportsteam.com/alpine/alpine-calendar>

Freeride:

<http://www.taoswintersportsteam.com/freeride/freeride-calendar>

Entering a Race

The competition schedule for each group is posted on our website. Your coach will let you know what events you should think about attending. We will be sending in team entries this season. Event fact sheets and waivers for every race will be made available by email approximately 2-4 weeks prior to an event. This sheet should include specific information regarding the event. Fact sheets are also available at the Rocky Mountain Division website, www.rmdussa.org .

Athletes must submit a check for the entry fees payable to the race organizer, **not** TWST, along with a signed waiver and the appropriate coaches expenses for the event.

Entry Refunds

An athlete who notifies the staff at least two days prior to the event should receive a refund from the host club. This is called “Pulling” the athlete.

Where and When to Meet

The lead coach for each event will designate a location to meet athletes the morning of the event. This typically will be near the base of the chairlift or a nearby lodge. The daily schedule and all other appropriate information may be distributed at this time. It is critical to the success of each athlete and this team that athletes show up on time (or early), and be prepared for the day. Arriving late or unprepared will cause not only undue pressure on the athlete, but may also have a negative effect on other athletes, coaches and parents. Coaches will not wait for athletes that arrive late. Athletes that miss this meeting time are responsible for all the information distributed.

Competition Day ‘Game Plan’

On race day it is a good idea to show up early since things can get kind of crazy. You should double check your emails, the TWST Website, or your voice mail for last minute updates and for specific meeting location. Athletes should show up with skis tuned, waxed and scraped. Race skis should be bound together with ski straps and should not be worn until the start of the race. A pair of rock skis may be used for warm up and course inspection.

For youth races with multiple age classes, the younger athletes usually ski first - girls first followed by boys within an age class. On the second run, the start order is reversed within each of the age classes, but the younger age classes go first. At qualifier races and Junior Championships, athletes are ordered based upon seed. The start order may change for each race.

National Point or USSA – races start positions are determined by the athlete’s national points. An athlete begins at age 15 with 990 points and lowers their points throughout their career. The better athletes, lower point holders, start earlier in the race and the athletes with higher points, start farther back.

Athletes must inspect each course before the race. Course inspection is usually available for 30 – 45 minutes before the start of each race. TWST race day procedures are done in a similar way to our daily training. Coaches will be available on the course to discuss all aspects of each run and help each athlete develop a plan for the entire day. Athletes are expected to take on all of the race day responsibilities which include: registration, inspections, scheduling, preparing, starting and checking the disqualification board after each run. Obviously the coaches are there to assist each athlete in developing a race (and training) day plan that is consistent with their goals and their training. Athletes should use the restrooms after inspection and before arriving for their run. You

never know when a race is going to be delayed with a desperate athlete stuck in the starting gate. TWST coaches ask that parents support their athlete in a positive way and encourage responsibility on race days. This is the day athletes have been training for - let them show you what they have accomplished in training. Young athletes have enough pressure and enough to think about without friends and relatives adding to the pressure. Please respect the plan that the athletes and coaches have developed prior to the race. Parents are not allowed inside the race arena unless specifically asked by a coach or course official. When in a training or racing arena, freeskiing is NOT allowed. Side slipping only.

Some Event Rules

(Complete rules are listed in the USSA competition guide available at ussa.org)

An athlete may be pulled from competition by, his/her coach for safety or behavioral reasons

Competitors should expect to be disqualified for infractions of inspection or training procedures and may be sanctioned for serious violations.

If a competitor feels that he or she has suffered from interference on the course, he/she must ski out of the course immediately and request a provisional re-run from any competition jury member.

A binding release (if you lose your ski) more than two gates above the finish in SL, GS, SG, or one gate in DH, shall be considered a clear disqualification. Racers may not continue on the course.

A racer who is clearly disqualified for missing a gate or gates may not continue through further gates on the course or through the finish. Race juries may instigate disciplinary sanction of competitors who violate this rule.

In DH and SG, both in training and competition, a competitor who is abandoning the course (DNF) must exit the closed course confines as soon as possible and according to the race officials &/or jury.

All athletes are required to abide by the USSA rules, regulations and code of conduct at events as well as at home. It is the athlete's responsibility to be familiar with these requirements. For complete Code of Conduct and Rules and Regulations, see USSA Comp Guide. This code of conduct (U.S. Skiing & Taos Winter Sports Team) applies to all athletes, coaches, and officials involved with these programs.

TRAVEL TO EVENTS

Head Parent

Coaches need to spend their time at races going to meetings and coaching athletes. It is not the coaches responsibility to look after the athletes off the hill. In the case of a 1 to 1 ratio then a coach and 1 athlete may travel to an event without a head parent. In any case where the ratio is more than 1 to 1 then a Head Parent must attend every over night event. The HEAD PARENT will be responsible for helping to arrange accommodations, evening supervision, coordinating transportation, meals, and medical concerns. If we do not have a head parent available, then parents can choose to pay a \$100 per day fee to pay for additional staff support to fill the role of head parent on the trip. **If we do not have a head parent or fund to pay someone to be head parent, then some athletes will not be able to take the trip.** Please read this section carefully before accepting this role.

Head Parent Supervision Responsibilities

When the athletes are off of the hill, you are in charge. If they want to go out or go to town, take a Jacuzzi, or hang out with racers from other teams the decision is yours. If the coach has something planned or feels that the athletes need to rest then he or she may structure or restrict some of the off hill time. The coach may not override the Head Parent's decision and allow athletes to go out if they have been told otherwise by the Head Parent. When allowing the athletes time off, keep in mind some of the athletes responsibilities at a event (i.e. home work, ski prep, the standard **9:30 pm curfew, 10:00 lights out**). If athletes act responsibly and get their work done, some freedom is good for them. In order to compete they must maintain good grades, and properly maintain their equipment. If athletes do not act responsibly they will lose their traveling privileges. Remember that as the Head Parent you are an overseer. In some cases there will be other parents from our team at the event you may volunteer/delegate jobs to them as it's always a good idea to have help from other parents. In addition to the Head Parent we are requiring that there be a certain number of parents that travel with the team, depending on the ages and number of athletes traveling. As a minimum we need one parent in every condo or one parent to every two hotel rooms.

U16 and younger: One parent for every six athletes.
U18: One Head Parent per event

Transportation

We are very excited to own a 2010 Chevy Suburban that can transport 8 people and their gear. The following charges will apply for those who will travel in the vehicle.

Within New Mexico: \$5

Within Colorado: \$30

Within Arizona and Utah: \$50

Beyond: \$100. Beyond is subject to the directors discretion of when it is reasonable to drive vs. fly to events.

If a family uses their own vehicle to transport coaches then we will use the following formula to help offset the costs to the family:

****Mapquest miles/ 18 mpg = estimated gallons used X current national average for a gallon of gas= cost of gas + (miles X .15 cents per mile for wear and tear)= allowable reimbursement. ****

Meals and Food

Although it requires a bit more work and preparation, it is significantly less expensive to buy food for the event beforehand and prepare meals in the hotel room or condo. Whenever possible, we will attempt to find accommodations with kitchens. It is the Head Parent's responsibility to organize meals in advance. If your child has a special diet, please contact the Head Parent in advance so that they can try to accommodate your athlete as much as possible. If it is not possible to make all of the meals in the hotel or condo, a basic cash price for

food should be included in the overall cost. Athletes & parents should figure on no less than \$20/day for food when cooking and **\$40/day when subjected to restaurants**. Head parents need to try to keep food costs near \$20/day/athlete, while still providing nutritious meals.

Coaches Expenses

There are many expenses to be dealt with when traveling to a race, including lodging, food, and mileage. Along with the personal costs of sending your athlete, each family is responsible for the coaches expenses. If a group of athletes are travelling to an overnight race in Colorado, New Mexico, or Arizona a \$50 per day charge will be applied for that event to cover coaches expenses. If a coach is going to an event with just one athlete that family is responsible for 100% of the coaches expenses. If staff is travelling outside of the above mentioned states, the athletes are responsible for 100% of the coaches expenses. For 1 day events, a charge of \$10 will be applied to cover coaches expenses.

Medical

If an athlete is injured, it is the head parent's responsibility to be on the hill and available to take the injured athlete to the clinic or back to the condo. The coach's primary responsibility is to stay on the hill with the other racers.

Equipment (FREERIDE)

EQUIPMENT - HELMETS ARE ALWAYS REQUIRED!

A big mountain rider will want a mid-fat to fat ski/ board for better control in different snow conditions and terrain. Avalanche equipment such as a beacon, shovel and probe is highly recommended but not required. A back-pack for extra layers, beacon, snacks and water is always good to bring. For competition, a set of binoculars are always good to have as well as bright, visible clothing.

For rail jams/ slopestyle, the athlete should use a shorter, skinnier twin-tip ski/ board and shorter poles. Ski/ Boarder-cross requires a well waxed, race board/ski. Skiers often use a giant slalom ski, and snowboarders might want a carving board.

Different athletes have different needs. Equipment used by older or higher level athletes may not be necessary for younger athletes. The bottom line is talk to your coaches before you buy any equipment. Make sure that all equipment and clothing is labeled with the athlete's name.

Equipment (ALPINE)

Skis (Alpine)

Ski racing follows strict rules and regulations governing ski lengths. These rules are updated annually. Check the ussa.org website for up to date rule changes.

Here is the link to the current equipment rules matrix from USSA:

<http://alpine.usskiteam.com/>

Please make sure you are informed on what to, or more importantly what not, to use. NOTE: Summer sessions at Mt. Hood provide the best opportunity for experimenting with different ski lengths. When making your selection be sure that the model is a RACE model of skis and not a recreational or 'bump' ski. The brand is usually a skier preference although some brands are more forgiving than others. Talk to coaches for recommendations.

What follows is a chart outlining ski specifications:

U10 alpine athletes should have two pairs of skis; one pair for racing and a pair of freeskis. U10 athletes can usually compete in both slalom and giant slalom races on a single pair of skis. These skis should be sized between the mouth and eyes. With today's shaped skis shorter skis are the name of the game. Younger athletes will not be able to flex skis that are too long and/or too stiff. If cost is a factor one pair of dual purpose racing skis will suffice.

U12 athletes should have GS skis, SL skis and a pair of freeskis. For select few athletes, a longer GS ski will be needed for training SG. This should be a ski that the athlete can grow into for GS use later on. Athletes may choose to purchase two pairs of each discipline ski, one for training and one for racing. This is not mandatory.

U14 athletes will need a pair of SG, GS, SL, and freeskis. Athletes may choose to purchase two pairs of each discipline ski, one for training and one for racing. This is not mandatory.

Ski Bindings

Binding settings – Each binding has two significant binding settings; forward pressure and DIN settings. The forward pressure setting regulates how tight the boot is "Squeezed" together between the heel piece and the toe piece. The tighter you make this setting the more "snug" the boot fits in the binding. The DIN setting regulates how "strong" the binding is set to release. The heavier and more aggressive a skier, the stronger this setting should be. Both of these settings are critical to the safety of each athlete. Initially the bindings will be set according to manufacturers recommendations based on age, ability and size for a recreational skier. Athletes and coaches will work together to find the most appropriate settings for each athlete based on manufactures recommendations and personal experience. It is the sole responsibility of the individual athlete and their parents to designate the appropriate settings at a certified ski shop and maintain these settings. Athletes may use different settings for racing and training. Equipment should be professionally set by ski technicians at a ski shop.

Boots

Boot selection is just as critical as ski selection. A quality junior racing boot made out of a plastic that still flexes when it gets cold is critical. This can be a real challenge when selecting boots for young athletes. Keeping the boot dry is the key to keeping the athlete's foot warm. You will see several athletes with duct tape on the end of the toe of their boots. This is not because the boots are broken, but to help keep the boot dry. Be sure to get the interior of the boot dry before the next use. This is best done by removing the liner each night or using a boot dryer. Do not put boots or the liner in front of a heater or in front of the fireplace – they will melt. Be sure to fully buckle the shell at all times. Shells will lose their shape over time if not buckled, reducing performance. Socks are also an important factor. Surprisingly, thinner socks are actually warmer than thicker socks. Thick socks will cause the foot to sweat and then freeze once outside. We recommend thin wool socks, such as those produced by Smartwool.

Boot Sizing

Sizing is the main concern with regard to boots. Shell sizing is critical. To shell size, remove the liner from the shell and remove the footbed from the liner. The athlete puts their feet in the shell and slides their feet forward so that their toes are barely touching the front of the shell. The athlete must stand and equally weight both feet. Shell sizing should be done on a smooth hard surface. Using a small flashlight, peer into the heel pocket of the shell and determine how much space exists between the athlete's heel and the shell. It is often necessary to ask the athlete to flex their knees forward in order to see behind their lower leg. If there is between one and two adult index finger widths of space, the boots are the appropriate size. One finger width or less is considered a very aggressive "Race Fit". It will possibly be necessary to grind plastic to custom fit the boots. This is normal practice. Under no circumstances should an athlete be using a boot that exceeds two adult index finger widths of space in the heel pocket. Make sure to buckle the boot tightly. Getting the plastic of the boot closer to the foot and leg greatly improves control and performance. A sloppy fitting boot equals sloppy skiing. We realize that there may be motivation to get two seasons out of a pair of boots. This could hinder development of an athlete and is strongly discouraged. Junior boots are relatively inexpensive compared to skis and bindings AND they are the most important piece of equipment.

Boot Flex

Each boot manufacturer provides different flex patterns. It is critical that an athlete is able to flex their boots. Consult with coaches on the appropriate model. At times an athlete will be directed to a boot that is stiffer than what is preferred. In these cases, the boot flex will be modified to provide a softer flex.

Here is a general guide to boot flex for the various ages:

U10 years and younger=Flex Index of 60 or less

U12's=Flex Index of 60-80

U14's=Flex Index of 70-100

U16's and J1's=Flex Index of 80-150 or greater

Footbeds and Alignment

Footbeds are standard equipment for U14's. Younger athletes do not need footbeds but may purchase them if they desire. All U14's and Older MUST be evaluated for Canting/Cuff Alignment. This will be performed by the coaching staff during the first two weekends of the season.

Poles

Athletes competing in the NM Fun Races can use either straight poles or GS curved poles. Athletes competing in the age class races may consider a pair of curved poles for Super G and GS, and a pair of straight poles with hand guards should be used for SL. When selecting poles, make sure that the straps are large enough that a gloved hand can easily be inserted.

Pole guards (Slalom hand guards) are recommended for U12 alpine athletes and higher. For sizing, use the 90 degree rule as a starting point. To size, flip the pole upside down and have the athlete grasp the pole UNDER the basket. There should be approximately a 90 degree bend in the elbow. If between sizes, order big and the poles can be cut to size by coaches. GS poles can be a bit longer than 90 degrees and slalom poles may be a bit shorter than 90.

Helmets

Helmets designed for ski racing are required for all athletes participating in the TWST racing program for all events and training. Athletes may use soft sided helmets for SL, but since you need a chin guard for SL it may be more cost effective to buy one helmet for all disciplines and install the chin guard for SL days and remove the chin guard for all other disciplines. For GS/SG/DH all helmets must be hard sided and conform to FIS standards. These helmets must feature this sticker:



Speed Suits

Speed Suits are a one-piece, tight fitting, Lycra garment that is designed to reduce drag. They come with and without pads sewn into them. Suits are not required for racing or training but are recommended for U12 alpine athletes and older. You might talk to other team families about used suites which athletes usually will out grow before the suit is worn out.

Outer Layers

Athletes skiing in a speed suit should select pants that have full-length zippers down each leg. This will allow the pants to be removed without removing boots.

Backpacks

Athletes should have a backpack to carry extra gear, clothing, water, lunches and healthy snacks to the gate training venue. Since no lockers are available,

athletes must keep their backpacks in an unobtrusive place. TSV asks that all athletes use the downstairs gear check facility and not leave bags in TFK's.

Water and Sunscreen

Water is critical during training and racing. It is very easy to get dehydrated in the alpine environment. If athletes are complaining of headaches after skiing, it is a sure sign that they did not get enough fluid during the day. Athletes should bring a water bottle every day. A water bladder can also be used with a backpack. As you know the sun is very intense in the mountain climate. Make sure that athletes apply sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or greater every day before getting on the first lift.

Accessories

Athletes may also need some of the following accessories.

Mouth Pieces- It has been shown that wearing an impact mouth piece may reduce the severity of head injuries. TWST strongly encourages athletes to use an impact reducing mouth piece!

Shin Guards - For SL, athletes will need a pair of shin guards. These are hard plastic guards that protect the athlete's shins from the SL gate.

Chin Guard - For SL, athletes will need a mouth (chin) guard attachment for their helmet.

Back Protector: These turtle shell back protectors can reduce to severity of back injuries. Many athletes choose to wear them in all disciplines, but especially in GS/SG/DH.

Duct Tape - A roll of duct tape is also a necessity for the backpack. Uses include holding shin guards in place, water proofing the toes of boots, fixing rips in pants, etc.

Gloves – Make sure a quality set of gloves is chosen which will keep the athlete dry and warm and should provide protection from gates in the form of padding.

Neck Gator – A micro fleece neck gator is important to keep athletes warm and improves comfort with the helmet strap. They also protect against frostbite on those very windy days.

Lanyard – Athletes should have a lanyard for their ski passes that can be worn around the neck and tucked away in their jacket or suit. This helps prevent loss and is better than having the pass attached to a jacket or pants that may be removed for training or racing.

Goggles – All athletes should have a pair of goggles that fit over the helmet.

Double lenses are helpful for preventing fogging.

Watches – All athletes should wear a watch to training and on race days so that they know when to meet and do not miss their race start.

Ski Tuning (Alpine)

- As an athlete, you are required to come to training and events with properly tuned equipment. Training on untuned skis is wasting your time.

- If your skis are maintained on a regular basis it is easy to stay on top of the maintenance. If you only tune every so often, it can become time consuming and frustrating.
- You are required to prepare your skis before a event, including waxing, scraping and brushing.

TAKING CARE OF YOUR EQUIPMENT IS A BIG PART OF BEING SUCCESSFUL!

Keeping your skis tuned is critical to skiing well. Athletes should be training on skis that are tuned the same as they will be racing. It is strongly recommended that athletes tune their skis before every training day. This can be done in just a few minutes if the skis are tuned regularly and you have the right equipment. The club hosts a ski-tuning clinic at the beginning of each season. This is a great opportunity to learn, whether you are just starting out or have been at it for a few years. Below is the minimum suggested equipment you will need to safely and effectively tune your skis.

1. Sturdy table or bench
2. Drop cloth
3. Ski vise – get a three point vise to hold modern shaped skis.
4. Iron
5. Flat file
6. Side Bevel Gauge – 2 degree and clamp
7. Plastic Scrapper
8. Rubber Bands or Velcro strap to hold ski brakes down.
9. Diamond Stones - medium and fine
10. Gloves to protect hands from sharp edges
11. Wax
12. Brushes

Wax Selection

This is kind of like politics and religion for some people. We could write a book on this subject alone. The best resource for understanding how to properly wax race skis is to attend the tuning clinic put on by the coaches. The Internet also contains some information on ski tuning theory and technique.

Edge and Base prep

For U10' and U12's 1 degree of base bevel and 1degree of side bevel is adequate. Modern skis are extremely precise. We strongly discourage "overtuning". A "1 and 1" tune is easier to ski and easier to maintain. For U14's we recommend 1 degree of base bevel and 2 degrees of side bevel.