

# **SNSC Handbook**

*Everything you need to know about Nordic/Cross Country skiing and SNSC  
but were afraid to ask  
(the SNSC version of Bridgewaters Principles).*

*"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit" - Aristotle (freely translated from Greek).*

## **Introduction**

We hope this handbook will be helpful to all snsc athletes and families. We recognise that SNSC is a complicated club with lots of moving parts. Use this handbook as a reference guide to cover all the major questions you might encounter. It won't cover everything, but we hope it covers most things. As always, if you have questions about anything that wasn't covered here or if you need further information you can always talk to a coach, a board member or Whitney.

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## **A Message from Olof**

Welcome to SNSC. We couldn't be more happy to have you and your family as a member of one of the fastest growing and highest performing ski clubs in the country. Our club has over the last years exploded in membership and I know it can be overwhelming to join a new club and/or start a new sport. This book will help you navigate the basics of Summit Nordic Ski Club and who we are, to make the transition into SNSC and Nordic skiing easier. I'm not claiming all answers will be in here, or that you won't have any more questions after reading this through, but it can be a start and also serve as a reference guide during the season.

What you won't see in this guidebook (compared to many other club handbooks) is behavior guidelines. This is because all coaches as well as the board believe that the athletes and families themselves know how to behave and what is right and wrong both in life and in athletics. So all I'm going to say is that in SNSC we expect exceptional behavior from athletes and coaches, which will lead to exceptional results.

Instead let's dive into a guidebook that will help you become familiar with the sport of Nordic Skiing in Colorado and the US as well as our club -- Summit Nordic Ski Club. This sport and this club can truly be life changing, and we can't wait to have you be a part of it!

## **Programs:**

### **Program fees and scholarships:**

SNSC is a non-profit organization and relies on the payment of fees to help meet its financial obligations. If paying the fee in full at time of registration is not feasible you can easily set up a payment plan with the club. Do so by contacting Whitney.

**IMPORTANT:** you must be registered with the club to receive our club communications. We rely heavily on email to communicate with members about training schedules and other important information. Our registration system drives our email list. If you are not registered, you will not receive emails.

### **Scholarships:**

SNSC believes that no one should be restricted from participating in SNSC programs for financial reasons. Thanks to the support of generous foundations and individuals, we offer scholarships for all of our programs, both winter and summer. The Scholarship program's application process is anonymous and applicants are selected through a blind process.

### **Program Overview:**

It can be a little confusing with all the different programs SNSC is offering and how it is all structured as we are using national and international age groups, and it is not lined up with school groups. On top of that we are not following age groups strictly, as we want to make sure that each athlete has the opportunity to fulfill their goals and aspirations. This means that you can train with a program that is for older athletes as well as younger athletes depending on what is the most beneficial for you, and your prioritization of skiing. If you feel that another program than your age group is better suited for you – have a talk with Olof (he is the one that will make the ultimate decision on this).

### **Winter Programs**

**Comp:** This is for U16 and older athletes (athletes who are 14 and older). The program starts in the beginning of September and goes to the end of the season (mid March). The comp program uses "training blocks" and doesn't have a set schedule.

**Devo:** Is mainly for middle school aged athletes who are not yet U16 skiers (athletes who are under 14). Devo program starts mid October and goes to end of the season (mid March). Devo trains four times a week, usually Mon, Wed, Thurs + one flex day.

**Prep:** There are two Prep Levels, just to capture the different abilities and dedication levels for younger athletes as they enter our programs. The more introductory level is practicing two times a week (Mon, Thurs) and starts in the beginning of December and goes to the end of the season. The other program, trains three times a week (Mon, Wed, Thurs) and starts in the beginning of November and goes to the end of the season.

Summer and fall programs:

As you might know by now, SNSC's motto is "Skiers are made in the summer". Therefore we have a wide variety of programs during the summer focusing on making athletes ready for when the winter comes. We are full believers that youth athletes should try, test and participate in several different sports so all programs incorporate running, games, optional biking, rollerskiing, orienteering etc. etc.

Comp Summer starts in the beginning of June and goes until school starts. Just as our winter program it has not a set schedule but focuses on training blocks. We usually attend two to three training camps during the program. The program is in two levels with the higher training load focused on U18 and older athletes.

Devo: Our Devo summer program is in two levels and trains two or three days a week. We train one morning and two afternoons. We also have coaches attend both trail running series as well as the local mountain bike series and encourage our athletes to participate in them.

Fall rollerski program: This is an addition to Devo and Prep programs for athletes that want to keep (or just learn) rollerskiing during the fall. The program is two days a week, and focuses on both skate and classic rollerskiing. The athlete doesn't need their own rollerskis and can borrow skis from SNSC. This program starts in the beginning of September and goes 6 weeks. No previous experience with rollerskiing is necessary, and you don't have to commit to ski for SNSC during the winter but can use it just to get ahead for your skiing with middle and high school as well.

### **Transportation and Logistics:**

Unfortunately logistics and transportation isn't easy for Nordic skiers in Summit County but we are trying to make it as convenient for you as possible.

Elementary School:

With the range of elementary schools we unfortunately have no ability to do school pick up. To make transportation easier, we have all training sessions start and end at the Frisco Nordic Center.

Middle School:

For middle school aged athletes, we can pick them up at the Summit Middle school at the end of the day. Athletes are free to bring their equipment in our vans/busses. It is the parents responsibility to pick up at the end of each practice, which most often is at Frisco Nordic Center, but can be anywhere in the county.

Middle school athletes unfortunately cannot bring their ski poles on the school busses (as they are considered a weapon) so parents have to take their equipment to the Nordic center. If the

middle school athletes have somewhere they can store the equipment at school during the day, we can pick it up at the same time we pick up the athlete.

#### High School:

For comp athletes – we have both morning and afternoon practice. For morning practice if we are at FNC, we will meet there. If we are at the gym, SNSC offers van pick up at Summit High School (currently at 6.05 am) or you can meet at the gym (currently 6.15am). SNSC vans will transport comp athletes to their school (both HS and MS) after morning practice. For afternoon practice we will pick athletes up at either high school or middle school. Van's will transport the athletes to wherever practice is held that day (often FNC, but not always). Just like with Devo parents are responsible to pick up athletes at end of practice.

#### **Integrating other sports:**

We offer the opportunity and the platform for athletes to reach their individual skiing goals no matter what level. Only a very small percentage of our athletes have the goal of competing internationally and representing the US, but we make sure that through SNSC, they have the platform to do that. The rest of our athletes have different goals with their skiing and prioritize other things and that is totally ok. Therefore we have no mandatory practices in SNSC. We fully understand that your child might want to focus on other sports, an instrument, theater or speech and debate. So when you ski for us, while we take attendance just to see how many athletes we have at each practice, to better optimize coaching, you as an individual athlete will never see a “report card” or anything like that. We want you to achieve your athletic goals and we will offer you the platform to do so. That being said – if you are a U16 with goals to attend junior nationals, be nationally competitive, and maybe even compete internationally, realize that most of your competition starts their season in May or June.

#### **Red, yellow and green training blocks.**

SNSC's Comp program uses periodized training blocks, which means the training schedule is periodized with green, yellow and red periods. A green block is easier and is focused on rest and recovery. Yellow is a “normal” period with a “normal” training amount for a nationally competitive junior skier. A red block is considered a hard period and is harder than normal training and will require extra rest and recovery at the end as well as very little outside “stress” to complete correctly. During a red training block the athlete needs to focus most of their time on training because if the sessions are fulfilled to their objective the athlete will be so tired the rest of the time not much else can be done.

Training blocks vary in length depending on their focus but are generally between 5 and 10 days. In extreme times, at low altitude or long training camps a block can be up to 14 days in length. As you can see, this doesn't add up to a 7 day week, and therefore doesn't “line up” with the normal work week. Unfortunately this adds logistics and planning inconvenience for both athletes and coaches but research indicates that this will give the highest training effect for the athletes.

**OYO Practices:**

OYO means **On Your Own**. NOT "Optional If You Feel Like It And Its Not Bad Weather And There Is Nothing Good On Netflix", or something else in that fashion. Comp will always have OYO practices. Once you reach U16 age it is important that you have personal accountability for your own athletic performance.

But even more important is it that we are preparing you for your next step - your college career. In college your coach will not watch over you making sure you do what he/she tells you to. If you are not performing he/she will either just pull your scholarship or kick you off the team. Pretty different than high school - and I have seen it happens several times. There will literally be hundreds of athletes who want to take your spot on a college team.

The most common complaint I hear from college coaches is that US athletes are immature and don't perform when they don't have oversight. I will make sure that is NOT the case for SNSC athletes. College coaches should be able to look at our program and be certain that the athletes who are coming out of SNSC are ready for college - and can handle the pressure, can handle the training load and are ready to train independently. OYO practices are a step in your development and will always be a part of preparing you for your college athletic career. If you don't have any interest in college or plan to never set a foot in an academic institution after high school - OYO sessions are still important because they teach you personal accountability!!! So get used to OYO practices - do them with your friend or I personally always found them to be meditative and peaceful to do alone - no matter how you approach them the most important this is that you DO THEM!

**Being sick or injured:**

It's impossible to be healthy your whole life. It's a natural part of life, and it will happen to you as well as your team mates. When it does, follow these easy steps:

- 1) Contact the coaches. Our primary job isn't to go around and check in on people's health. It is your responsibility to communicate with the coaches about how you feel etc.
- 2) Stay away from your team mates. If it is a possibility - isolate yourself. To keep interacting with your team mates is selfish, irresponsible and shows that you have no concern about other people's health. They have worked as hard as you have to be here and they deserve the best possible environment to perform in.
- 3) Take it easy. Relax, drink lots of fluids, and take care of yourself. Rather take one extra day off than one too few.
- 4) When you are ready, and only when you are ready – return to practice and training. Don't let anyone else push you to get back early – neither coaches nor parents. You decide when you are ready to train – and then come back in full force. The first couple of sessions will be hard, but soon you will be back to the same fast self as you were before you got sick.

**Relationships with Nordic Centers:**

A key reason for the success of Summit Nordic Ski Club is the relationship we have with the Nordic centers in Summit County. Their support includes discounted season passes for our athletes, special grooming considerations, complementary passes for our staff, and many donations to assist our fundraising efforts. Above all the Nordic centers provide us with some of the best training facilities in the country. All contact with Nordic center personnel should be positive, friendly and professional. SNSC wouldn't be where it is today without the support of these Nordic centers and our future is closely tied together as well.

**Abbreviations:**

Training schedules and communications contains a lot of abbreviations. Here are the most common ones.

SNSC = Summit Nordic Ski Club

FNC = Frisco Nordic Center

BNC = Breckenridge Nordic Center

GRNC – GoldRun Nordic Center

SHS or HS = Summit High School

MS = Summit Middle School

OYO = On Your Own

RS = Rollerskiing

DP = Double Pole

**Volunteerism and fundraising:**

Our program fees only cover about half of the costs to run the program, and we are heavily dependent on volunteerism and fundraising to cover the rest. SNSC is narrowing down the number and scope of fundraising events that we are involved in and concentrating on a few key events. We depend on your help to accomplish these events. Please take volunteering seriously. If you have any questions, contact Whitney.

## **Rocky Mountain Nordic (rmn)**

### **Rocky Mountain Nordic**

Summit Nordic Ski Club is a part of RMN – Rocky Mountain Nordic, which is the governing body for youth skiing in Colorado. We are part of this organization with other ski clubs in Colorado and the clubs take turn organizing RMN races. These races are NRL and JNQ races. NRL = national ranking list, which means that eligible participants in these races get scored on the national ranking list. JNQ = Junior National Qualifier, which means that this is a deciding race for who is going to be nominated to Junior Nationals.

RMN hosts eight JNQs each year, spread over four weekends that SNSC attends. All sanctioned ski racing, except school, (international, national and local) is determined by year of birth and so will racing RMN races. So racing in RMN you will be grouped dependent on birth year (U8, U10, U12, U14, U16, U18, U20). The “U” means under.

Here is an example to help clarify:

If you are turning 8 in 2018 you will race in the U10 category for the 2017-18 season. This means that technically you will be aged 7 for the first race, but the age categories span the entire season, not individual races.

One of the biggest priorities is to compile the RMN ranking list for each age group. So RMN ranks all active youth skiers in each age group based on their results in the RMN races. The RMN champion in U14 and younger age classes receives a RMN champion jacket at the end of the season. But the RMN ranking is not just for the winner – it is a great tool to see how you are ranked in your age group in the entire Colorado, no matter if it is top 10, top 20 or top 30.

**IMPORTANT: RMN requires all skiers to have both an RMN license and an USSA license to race. SNSC provides RMN licenses for all athletes, but you are responsible for registering for and purchasing your USSA license each season. Visit the USSA website to get your license: <http://my.ussa.org/membership/start>**

## **Equipment**

### **SUMMER/FAIL Equipment:**

#### **Clothes and Bad Weather:**

At SNSC we really strive towards never taking a "bad weather day" (Olof is from Sweden where 1/2 the year would be "bad weather days" if we followed the US standard). The only reason to cancel practice is if we put athletes and coaches in outright danger by being outside. Being cold, wet, or hot doesn't qualify as outright danger. Be prepared to fulfill the outlined training session no matter weather - and we live in the mountains, weather changes, often and quickly.

#### **Ski-walking poles:**

An important part of summer training ski is walking and bounding. For this you need a specific set of poles - shorter than your normal skiing poles. To find the length of your ski walking poles use the following formula. **Pole length = Height in cm x 0.7.**

It is not important that these are nordic poles -- they can be any old poles you have lying around. There are advantages to having nordic poles because they have the right "ski-grip" but we see and accept all types of poles at practice - so whatever works for you.

#### **Classic and Skate poles:**

To get your right height on your ski poles, you need to know your length in cm. Once you know that – the rest is easy. Classic poles should be your length in cm \*0.84. Skate poles should be your length in cm \*0.89.

If you are a beginner and just learning how to ski, the poles should be slightly shorter. We see a lot of athletes missing this and skiing in to long or to short poles. When coming to gear night and ordering poles – please know your length in cm. Any pole brand will then be able to pick the right length poles for you. Also remember, poles can always be cut shorter, but you can never make them longer.

#### **Hydration system:**

Everyone should bring some sort of water carry system to practices. Q: Can this be a hand held bottle? A: For the first couple of practices, yes. After that - NO. It's really hard to hold both a pole and a water bottle in your hand, and it's impossible to do effective training with it. The skiers "drinking belt" is the most common - but camelback, hydration vest or running vests - anything works as long as you can have poles in your hand. "Ill just leave it in the van" is also not a great solution, because you don't know when you will see the van next time.

#### **Snacks and food:**

Please bring a small snack to eat after practice. Practice is hard, you will be tired and especially for comp level athletes - there is not that many hours until next one. Refuel !!!

The issue of food, eating and nutrition (and the science behind it) is extremely debated in the US and many people have very strong opinions - sometimes without having backing of scientific

research. That usually happens when there is easy money to be made and you can find books that support basically any diet you can think of.

I'm not going to argue for some specific diet and say "you must eat so and so" because frankly it is not true. But to improve your performance and recover faster there are some easy rules to follow that basically works for everyone. So here it goes.

- Eat a variety of food in every meal. Including a lot of vegetables.
- Eat all your meals. Don't skip "breakfast because I was tired."
- Try to refuel within 30 min after each practice. Many people talk about a "refuel window of 30 min" this is completely incorrect - as this is not something that "closes like a window." It is much better to eat 35 min after training than not at all - but it is also much better to eat 15 min after training than 30 min. So - just try to eat asap, the sooner the better.
- Keep snacks to "real food" = things with one ingredient. Think Banana, Carrot, Tomato, Apple, Pear.
- If there are a lot of ingredients on the food package that you don't understand - choose something else. You shouldn't eat stuff that you don't know what it is - and it is usually not good for you.
- Most likely you are eating too much processed sugar on a daily basis. US doesn't have a daily value for sugar but the FDA is "in process" to suggest that no more than 10% of your calories should be from sugar. This would roughly translate to 50g. UK's DV is 25g. You are athletes you can eat more - but my guess is that many of you are up to around 300grams a day after observing your nutrition.

### **Running shoes:**

Have running shoes that fit you. Running in skateboard shoes, loafers or bike shoes is definitely possible - but increases your injury risk. You will not be sent home if you don't have the right shoes - it's just unnecessarily risky.

### **Rollerskis:**

And now we come to the most overwhelming (and fun) subject of them all - Rollerskis. Here is the story.

**Devo:** You will need classic rollerskis. You can rent rollerskis from SNSC if you don't want to purchase your own. If you rent rollerskis, you will have to opportunity to purchase them at a discounted price at the end of the season.

**Comp:** You will need both classic and skate. If you haven't gotten your skis yet, you can borrow SNSC skis, if there are any available after the Devo kids have borrowed.

**Helmet !!!** - No Helmet - no skiing!!!! As simple as that. Most people use bike helmets.

**Poles and ferrules** - You can use your winter poles (classic: Height in cm \* ~0.84 and skate height in cm \* ~0.89) for rollerskiing - but they will need special rollerski ferrules as the asphalt is much harder than snow. Ferrules can be ordered from many places (BNS here:

<https://www.bouldernordicsport.com/shop/p-165-v2-roller-ferrules.aspx>) and SNSC will also have a couple for replacement (for \$20) for those who haven't gotten their own.

Heads up - Ferrules will break - especially when you learn to rollerski (as you hit the tip of your pole with the ski).

## **WINTER Equipment:**

### **Racing suits:**

We don't require you to race in an SNSC suit. A race suit is cool, fast and aerodynamic, but we understand that there is a significant cash outflow to just acquire equipment, so a race suit is optional. We encourage our racers to have one - but it is totally ok if you don't.

Race suits are ordered directly from [PodiumWear](#). These orders do NOT go through SNSC even though you can order on a link on our website. You pay directly to PodiumWear and it's shipped directly to you.

### **Skis:**

And now we come to the trickiest subject of them all. There is no coincident that pro-skiers have 10-30 pairs of skis. But a lot of skis can never replace a good set of skis. I raced basically all my races on one of three pairs of skis. I had one set of skate skis and two classic skis (one hard wax and one klister). All my other pairs was training pairs.

In general the skis doesn't know how tall you are - it only knows the pressure you put on them. But as a beginner, it is easier to learn on shorter skis. Secondly - junior skis are not as well cambered tested as adult skis, so for young skiers their height is more important while the older and better you are, the more important weight becomes.

A rule of thumb is that classic skis are about 110-120% of your body length while skate is 105-110%. So that covers the length aspect. For weight - one can use the weight charts distributed by the manufacturers.

Fischer is here: <https://www.nordicskiersports.com/fischer-nordic-ski-sizing-charts.html>

Rossignol is here: <http://www.rossignol.com/US/US/nordic-sizechart.html>

Salomon is here: <https://www.nordicskiersports.com/salomon-xc-ski-sizing-charts.html>

They key is that you find the right ski for you - and having someone knowledgeable helping you with the process is incredible helpful.

Just because you have purchased the right ski for you, this doesn't mean that you now is set for the winter. First of all – your skis should now be marked/labeled according to the SNSC process. We use different colors depending on program as we often have over 100 pairs to wax before races. To get your skis labeled Hannah will organize this at the beginning of each season. Follow her instructions.

Now when your skis are labeled, classic skis needs to be marked with kick zones. We usually use two kick zones – one for hard wax (0.1-0.15mm) and one for klister (0.3mm). For skate – the whole ski should be glide waxed, so you don't need to mark zones there.

Now caring for your skis during the season so they keep being fast is an area where we see a lot of difference between athletes. Your skis are not something that should be waxed once every race. You should aim to glide wax your skis (skate and classic) once every week! The easiest way is to have a wax set up your garage/house/apartment, but we are so lucky in this county that we have two nordic centers with open wax facilities. GoldRun in Breckenridge have waxing

downstairs, and in Frisco you can wax in the weatherport tent. Coaches spend a significant amount of time every race to wax skis, but it is impossible for us to "fix" a pair of skis that hasn't been maintained properly during the season. This is especially important if you don't have a designated set of race skis, but train and race on the same skis. Many athletes basically have "free time" to gain in a race by just caring for their skis.

To properly take care and wax your skis during the season it is helpful to have access to the following assescories: One glide training wax (LF6 or similar), iron, scraper, grove scraper, one brush (combi works), base cleaner and a putty knife.

Take good care of your race skis and you will race faster!

### **Boots:**

Boots come in two kinds - SNS and NNN. These are two different binding systems and both are equally valid as race boots.

If I could make one recommendation it would be to rollerski in your old boots, and have new ski boots for the summer. Rollerskiing is pretty hard on the boots, as you need a lot of force to break on RS in high speed. This tends to make the boot softer so if you have another pair for racing in the winter that is great - especially for comp aged athletes.

If you are buying boots used, you can look at the sole to see what type of boots there are. Here is a picture explaining the different types. You would want NNN or SNS Pilot for winter skiing. SNS profile is also compatible with some of our SNSC rollerskis that we lend out.

## **RACING**

### **How to be successful on race weekend:**

For race weekends, “skis, boots, poles” is a great starting point, but if you are looking to perform at the high level that we are training for, there’s a lot more than bare necessities you’re going to need to be prepared with. My goal here is to outline the details beyond “skis, boots, poles” of what to expect out of a race weekend and it’s entirely possible that it raises more questions than it provides answers for. That’s fine, it’s just an attempt at bridging the gap between things that are firmly planted in the coaches’ routines and what we do a good job communicating. For example, when we ask if everyone is prepared for a morning jog and we get a bunch of blank stares because we have not explicitly stated that all skiers should bring running shoes...without further ado:

**Race skis and waxing:** Race skis need to get raced waxed. Most glide waxing will take place before we leave Summit, generally by age group and sometimes done by coaches. Your race skis will be collected by coaches and glide waxed. They will then be transported to the race with SNSC. Younger athletes might not have a “race pair” and a “training pair” and will warm up on their “race pair. This has to be noted on the ski labels – so we know if you have a warm up pair or not. Currently RMN has a wax protocol, so if you want to wax your own skis, please make sure that you are getting wax from the coaches. All skis have to use the same wax.

On race day, coaches are waxing “kick wax” on the skis as well as testing structures. As temperature changes, different kick wax as well as structures comes into play. Our wax team is lead by Hannah Taylor and we are having a fleet of kick wax testers, structure testers and wax applicators. If you are a parent at a race – please don’t disturb the wax team, they might have a couple of minutes over to talk, but it could also be incredibly hectic with a ton of race pairs to apply wax for. We always strive towards having every athlete have skis perfect for them, but when weather quickly changes there is nothing that frustrates our coaches than missing a pair of skis for an athlete, and we know it happens. If you are interested in being a part of the wax team, please contact Hannah and Olof with a brief description of your waxing resume.

### **Clothes**

This is not just an exercise in having more stuff, there is a good reason behind the suggestions, but (for the most part) know that they are just suggestions. No one wants to be the clothing police, but it’s hard not to point out questionable choices when we see them being made.

**What to wear for the morning jog:** Running shoes & socks (don’t forget the jog may be snowy and the tiniest little socks you have may not be a great choice), base layer & warm up pants on the bottom, long sleeve base layer & puffy on top, plus hat, buff, and warm gloves/mittens.

**Why:** The morning jog is short, easy jog of 10-15 minutes done about 3 hours before your start. You want to dress warmly but you should not get crazy sweaty. It is okay to plan to wear clothes that you will warm up or race in later in the day because they should have time to dry out. Just be sure to lay them out to dry after you're back rather than leaving them in a heap. Even in Colorado and Utah it's hard for things to dry when they're left in a heap.

**What to wear to the race venue:** Bottom: windbriefs (boys)/underwear, base layer (if you like to race in that), race suit bottom, warm up pants, socks, boots (ski boots if you are skiing out, winter boots if you are walking out); Top: nothing that you plan to race in, you'll change all of these layers! Sports bra (girls), base layer, warm up jacket, puffy jacket, hat, buff, warm gloves. If that doesn't seem like enough, throw on a vest or other mid-layer.

**Why:** When you first show up, it will be a little while before you start your warm up. You want to be wearing enough clothing that you can stay warm standing around.

**What to warm up in:** Plan on peeling the top layer of what you show up in before you start your warm up. It's okay to start your warm up a little cold, that'll be an extra incentive to keep moving around!

**Why:** It's okay to start your warm up a little cold, that will be an extra incentive to keep moving around. You want to keep that outermost layer sweat-free and dry for after the race.

**What to race in:** SNSC race suit if you have it, school or other suit if you do not, but not the RMN race suit. If you do not have SNSC race suit, wear something that identifies you as being on the team so everyone will know to cheer for you! The exact layers are not that important and are personal and weather dependent, but change everything on top between your warm up and your race - sports bra, base layer, race top, hat, gloves.

**Why:** You don't want to start the race in wet clothes and you want to get a good sweat going in the warm up, but to change everything top to bottom is impractical so we focus on changing the top layers which are much easier and get sweatier faster (generally speaking). When you come back shortly before your start, you'll change all of your top layers, put on your race suit top and bib, and depending on how you have timed everything, maybe throw the puffy back on top (it should be totally warm and dry because you did not warm up in it!) for a few minutes before your start.

**What to wear after the race:** Dry clothes! Every stitch that you raced in (right on down to your socks and underwear) should be gone after you cool down and replaced with something dry, especially if you will continue to be outside. It's not always feasible to do this, but know that it is the goal. At a bare minimum change everything on top again and as soon as possible change out the bottom as well.

**What to bring to the race venue:** A backpack (or duffle bag, but a backpack is easier to ski out) that can contain (you don't want things shoved in outside pockets leaving a trail behind you)

your boots (winter boots if you've skied out, ski boots if you've walked out), dry socks, race suit top, two dry shirts/hats/sports bras (one for the race, one for after the race), a buff, long underwear and underwear if you think you'll be able to change (plus non-clothing items food and water belt or water bottle). Label your clothes and expect to do push ups if you leave something behind.

**What you are never allowed to complain about:** Being cold if you are not wearing a hat. High school girls, I'm looking at you especially.

## **Pre-Race Timeline**

**Registration/bib pick up:** The team has to submit a list of who will race to the race organizer ahead of time, typically 4-5 days ahead of the first race. You will be given a deadline for race registration in an email from Olof and/or Whitney. Sometimes it is possible to add skiers to the start list after the deadline that we've given you, sometimes it is not (it's always safer to assume that it is not). When it is possible, it will involve a late fee. We do bib pick up and pay for the weekend on the night before the first race. If we don't hear from you that you are a scratch (not racing) before we pick the bibs up, we have paid for you for the weekend and you will be charged (there are no refunds).

**Travel:** With the exception of home or nearly home (Vail) races, the comp team will always travel the day before the first race and stay the night before the first race and the night between the two races. Devo and prep are encouraged to do the same. We try to arrive in time to preview the first day's course the day before the race, since often the course will be closed for warm up on the day of the race, especially for the age classes later in the schedule.

**Team Meetings:** We will always have a team meeting the night before a race. Time and location will generally be in one of the coaches rooms after dinner and all comp skiers are expected to be there. It is not required that devo and prep skiers attend since they may not be staying the same place as the team, but we hope that they are able to be there.

**Morning jog:** All ages! 3 hours before your start, get up and go for a quick jog and do some stretching before you eat breakfast.

**Eating before the race:** Most of the races are morning races and pre-race fueling is easy, you want to eat a good breakfast about 2.5 hours before your start and maybe a little snack closer in. Mid-day and afternoon races get a little trickier, but keep aiming for a good meal 2 to 2.5 hours ahead of time.

**Arrival at the venue:** We will generally ask people to be at the stadium/wax bench 60 to 90 minutes before your start time. At the meeting the night before the race, we will give you the specific time that we want you there. We understand that siblings (and other groupings) will travel together, but please try to be inside or at least off of your feet until the time we have told

you we want you there. The time that we give you is designed to give you enough time to get warmed up and us enough time to get your skis prepared, bibs picked up, and be ready for your age group. The time we give you will differ somewhat race to race based on start order, discipline, and whether it is interval or mass start. If you can't be at the meeting, please be in touch with the coaches AFTER the team meeting about what time you need to be there. Because the race schedule can change right up until the last minute, we can't let you know on Thursday when we need you there on Saturday.

## **Post-Race Timeline**

**Cool down:** Yes, if you stand around in wet clothes in the cold after a race you will "cool down" quite a lot. However, this is not what we mean by cooling down. After you finish your race, take a few minutes to get collected (add/change clothing layers) and then go out for an easy ski. The length of the ski will depend on your age and the length of your race, but everyone should ski continuously for at least 10 minutes.

**Watching/cheering for your teammates:** This is tricky and there is no answer that works all of the time. Yes, we want everyone to have cheerleaders, it's just that some days it is okay for you to stay out a little longer and some days you should not. We'll discuss it on an individual basis for each weekend.

**Getting back to the hotel:** Comp: we will always try to get you back home where you can get warm, shower, and eat as soon as possible. If you leave with parents, just let us know so we aren't looking for you. Devo/Prep: please let us know when you are leaving.

**Race/warm up skis:** Make sure you know where your equipment is and where it should go.

## **Other Important Things**

**Sleep:** Get lots of it. If your teammate is sleeping, leave them alone (as long as they're not sleeping through an alarm).

**Health:** Be smart. Smart skiers don't race sick. There is nothing to be gained by going out and putting in a less than 100% effort. If you aren't healthy enough for a 100% effort, don't race. It will be better in the long run. The second part of this is being respectful of your teammates. We travel and stay in close quarters. Don't be the one who knowingly introduces sickness into that setting, it's not fair to anyone. Talk to the coaches ahead of time about what your options might be before you get in the van feeling less than 100%.

**Eating:** Choose foods to fuel your body. Its important to eat within 30-45 minutes of finishing a race and especially between races!

**Set up/break down of waxing benches:** Yes, we would like help (parents).

**Approaching the coaches on race day (skiers):** We wouldn't be here if it not for you. If you have a question about the race or want to talk to us about how you feel or something else about the race or the day, don't be shy (as long as you are not interrupting another coach/skier conversation). If you want to talk about other things that might be able to wait until we are not ten pairs of skis deep in klister, it's okay to let that sit until later in the day or weekend.

**Approaching the coaches on race day (parents):** We want to be available for the skiers first and foremost. If your skier has a question, encourage them to ask us directly. We're not scary, we're just busily trying to get a lot done in a short time. We will try to post as much information as possible by the wax tent to help address basic questions that everyone has ("what time does X age group start/where is the start-finish/when will the skis be ready/can I see a start list").

**Parents:** Good, bad, or ugly, the best phrase to greet your child with after each race is: "What a great race! I'm so proud of you! Want a hot chocolate?" You be the good cop here, let the coaches do the analyzing and bad cop stuff. We're disposable.

**In summary: Skiers, your job for the weekend is simple.**

1. Be where you are supposed to be, when you are supposed to be there, with what you are supposed to have. If you are unsure of ANY of those components, ask. Do not leave a team meeting if you still have questions, get them answered. Write notes if you need reminders. Set alarms on those smart phones you're so attached to.
2. Ski smart and ski fast!

## **National/international racing**

### **Junior nationals:**

Many of our skiers have a goal to one day attend junior nationals. This is the competition where the best U16 and older juniors in the entire country come together to see where they stack up in the country. If you have ambitions to ski in college this are also races that college coaches pay attention to. College coaches can not only recruit from America but the entire world, so where you stack up in Colorado plays no role in their decision, on how they form their ski teams.

To compete in junior nationals you need to qualify through RMN. There are 8 RMN races that are JNQs and for qualification purposes RMN will count your 4 best results. Each race is scored world cup points style and a list is generated with all RMN skiers. This is basically the “official Colorado ranking”. RMN will then select the top 9 U16 skiers and the top 12 U18 skiers to take to JNs, to bring our maximum of 42 skiers. This is what USSA allows each region to bring as a quota.

If any of the RMN athletes are ranked top 20 in the country they count as “pre-qualified” and does not count against the quota. Each year RMN pre-qualify some athletes. This is done through senior nationals and the results there. Based on those results an overall ranking for all junior athletes comes out and that ranking determines who gets prequalified. Please note – to pre qualify you have to be one of the top 20 athletes in the country, overall – NOT in your age group. By prequalifying athletes, RMN can take more than their allotted quota.

### **Beyond junior nationals – National camps, senior nationals, and representing the US internationally:**

Like discussed earlier, at SNSC we provide the opportunity not only to be among the best in the state, but also the best in the country (or in the world) and we have several athletes striving towards that. In this section we are going to discuss a little about what opportunities there are from everything to elite camps to a path to get onto the US ski team.

**RMN Select teams:** RMN have a RMN select Team and a RMN U16 Select team. To get onto the U16 team you have to be a top 3 RMN athletes at the JN qualification list, or qualify through your JN results. For the RMN select team, you need to be top 6 on the RMN JNs qualification list, or be named to represent US at Scandinavian Cup, or Jr World Championships or qualify for Western REG.

**Elite training camps:** If you are skiing at results at junior nationals (U16) or senior nationals and junior nationals (U18) are nationally competitive you get invited to national training camps. For U16 it is the U16 camp and you have to be ranked a top 20 U16 in the country (or ranked first in RMN). For U18 you qualify for the Western REG (Regional Elite Group) camp. To qualify for the Western REG it is a combined ranking of your JN performance and your overall USSA ranking. You can also prequalify to this camp by qualifying to race for US internationally through senior nationals.

As a U18 you can also qualify for something called NTG, which is the National Training group. This is the step right under the US Ski Team and you qualify to this camp by either having outstanding results at nationals, internationally or through the Western REG.

**Racing internationally:** To represent US internationally is a dream for many and we are happy to have SNSC athletes accomplishing those goals. Each year US send a team to the junior nations cup in Scandinavia (some people call this “Scando cup” or U18 cup). To be selected to this you have to be one of the top U18 skiers in the country based on your results at senior nationals.

US also sends a team to junior world championships. This is the highest level of ski racing in the world as a junior and each year the six top junior skiers in the country gets selected. Again – this selection process is taking place at senior nationals.