



**AUSBLICK SKI RACING TEAM  
ATHLETE/PARENT HANDBOOK  
2017-2018**

# AUSBLICK SKI RACING TEAM ATHLETE/PARENT HANDBOOK FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Greetings!

On behalf of the coaches and the board of directors of the Ausblick Ski Racing Team, we would like to welcome you. You have made the choice to join a great organization, to improve your skiing skills, and maybe even pursue a dream of achieving greatness through your chosen sport, all while having fun! Whether your goal is to be the best at Ausblick, in Wisconsin, or even the Midwest, we have programs that will help you to achieve your goal.

This handbook has been prepared to give you the information you will need to get started with the team and better acquaint you with the sport of ski racing. Especially for younger children, the main motivation for joining this team is to have fun while improving skills in a sport they can participate in their entire lives. We are happy to have your family involved with the team and look forward to many days of fun with all of you!

Whether you are new to this program or you have been involved in the past, this overview, written by parents and coaches, will help answer many of the common questions that will inevitably arise during the course of the year. Here is a list of our frequently asked questions "FAQ's" that we have answered in this overview:

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**What are the available ski racing programs?** Ausblick offers athletes the opportunity to compete in various programs:

**WJR** – Wisconsin Junior Racing, or WJR, is a local recreational ski racing program involving five SE Wisconsin teams and approximately 400 athletes ages 4-19. The season typically consists of 6 races held on Saturdays in January & February, followed by an inter-league Spring Fling race with the Madison area league WIJARA.

**USSA** –United States Ski & Snowboard, or USSA, is a national ski racing organization which splits the country into geographic sections. Ausblick competes within Region II of the Central Division, which includes Wisconsin, the western UP, eastern Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri. Region II typically hosts 5-6 races each season over weekends in December through February, with most races held in the UP. USSA racing is generally more competitive than WJR, and offers opportunities to participate in post-season competitions against other Regions and Divisions across the nation.

**FIS** – International Ski Federation, or FIS, offers more competitive ski racing opportunities for advanced athletes at least 16 years old by December 31st.

**High School** - Many Ausblick athletes compete on their high school ski teams in addition to the programs listed above and several Ausblick coaches also coach at a high school level. Ausblick does not have a separate program for these athletes; however, athletes in this group are sometimes referred to as the High School program.

**Why is it so important to arrive on time?** The kids need to be ready to ski when training begins (5:30 pm for WJR & High School Athletes/5pm for USSA/FIS athletes). We realize this is a real challenge for everyone but please do your best to get your child to the hill early so he/she can get their gear on and maybe stretch those muscles, and take a free run or two, to be ready for training with the coaches! Arriving late can cause the athlete to miss important introductions to the particular skill set being developed during that practice.



**What is this U8, U10, U12 classification?** We follow the classification of athletes set by the USSA (United States Ski and Snowboard), who group children in age categories for competition purposes. The “U” stands for “under”, and the number is the age of the athlete on December 31<sup>st</sup> of each season. They generally run in two year increments. Thus, for example, a U10 athlete will be all athletes ages 8-9 as of December 31<sup>st</sup> of that season.

Athlete age classes for the upcoming season are as follows:

Class U19: Birth date 1/1/98 thru 12/31/00

Class U16: Birth date 1/1/02 thru 12/31/03

Class U14: Birth date 1/1/04 thru 12/31/05

Class U12: Birth date 1/1/06 thru 12/31/07

Class U10: Birth date 1/1/08 thru 12/31/09

Class U8: Birth date 1/1/10 or later



\*\*\*Athletes must be at least 4 years of age and must be able to board and ride the chair lift on their own, as well as ski down the hill independently on intermediate style (blue) runs, in a controlled, safe manner.\*\*\*

**When do the kids train?** Like any sport, your child’s progress will depend upon the time he/she spends doing it. One of the prime goals of the program is to build within them a passion for the sport. With that passion, we never cancel training when Ausblick is open! We ski in the rain, in the bitter cold, in a strong wind, when it’s snowing or blizzards. We encourage the kids to practice the drills they learn whenever they can make it out to Ausblick to ski.

Ausblick team practice begins with “Christmas camp” which consists of morning practices over a 4-5 day period during the holiday school break. The exact dates for this year’s camp have been posted to the [www.ausblickskiraceteam.com](http://www.ausblickskiraceteam.com) website and/or sent to you via email. For USSA/FIS athletes, there are training opportunities prior to Christmas camp, which you will be notified of by email.

Beginning in January, practices are held Tuesday and Thursday nights 5:30-8:00pm (5-8pm for USSA/FIS Athletes) at Ausblick. In addition to the Tuesday and Thursday night practices, there will be additional practices on Monday evenings. There is no extra charge for these Monday night practices, and the dates for those will be posted to the team calendar as we approach the beginning of the season.

**What do they do in training?** To expand your child’s skiing skills, they work on technique, drills, ski bumps, learn to ski on one ski, ski gates, and free ski. The kids spend a lot of time on fundamental drills that build a base of strength and agility. This prepares them to handle encounters, like a rut or something unexpected at higher speeds on a race course. By the time your child becomes a teenager, they will most likely be an expert skier – something they will have for the rest of their life!

**What do they need at practice?** We will practice in rain, snow, cold and blizzards. Please dress them accordingly. Warm fingers and toes are important! They won’t get much out of training if they are physically miserable. Also, all athletes must wear helmets and goggles. We will not allow them to ski with the group without protective headgear and eyewear.

**What about skis, bindings, and boots?** All sports require the proper equipment. Please ask a coach or another experienced parent before you buy anything for your kids. We may be able to help you avoid buying equipment that's not "right" for the sport and end up saving you money. There may be special team discounts from local stores such as Les Moise. The coaches are current about what is available. Additionally, the annual Ausblick ski swap held each October can be a great place to pick up previously used, and well maintained racing equipment, (but have a plan and know what you are looking for).

**Why does my older child have to ski with younger kids?** All athletes have a wide variety of skill levels. Over the years we've found that it makes the most sense to put athletes into smaller sub-groups based on their current skill levels. The coaches work with small groups on specific skills that are appropriate for their current abilities. Unfortunately, that sometimes puts friends into separate groups. We also have seen some advanced young skiers working with a group of young teenagers. If we were to group the kids for training by age only, they would not progress as quickly as any of us would like. That's not fun, and fun is important.

**Why do some athletes progress faster?** All athletes will be treated fairly. However, there are some athletes who are always at practice, always in the starting gate on the coldest day, always there for the last run, always asking for feedback, always wanting to be faster. A motivated athlete will encourage more feedback. Each team member will be assigned a specific coach on our staff who is responsible to know your child and what his/her goals are for the season. Even if that coach is not working with your daughter or son during a particular training or race day, the coach is expected to keep tabs on their progress and is your daughter's/son's "go-to" coach for input, counsel, advice, feedback.

**Can I watch training sessions?** You are always welcome, and we encourage you to come watch us ski gates, but you must stay clear of the training lanes (i.e. a parent of a football or tennis athlete never watches from the field, or the court). Ski racing is unlike any other sport. In skiing you can watch along the side of the hill and see them move. It's pretty amazing to watch them progress during the season! However, we will say this as tactfully as we can: Don't smother them! Come watch for awhile, and then let them practice on their own, please do not shadow your athlete. And please, never, never criticize or "coach" a coach in front of the kids!

**What about waxing and tuning skis?** For new parents, you need to be aware that your sons and daughters are skiing on all kinds of conditions. The thaw-freeze-thaw-freeze cycle creates a lot of ice. Your kids will ski on solid ice, sometimes in deep "ruts" on steep terrain. Waxed skis help them not only with speed, but also with control. Ski racers require razor sharp edges. If you don't keep your kids skis tuned regularly, they WILL basically be hindered from improvement.

**Can someone help us with tuning?** Yes. The coaches and other parents can help you learn how to do this. Plus, Les Moise in Brookfield will tune ski team member skis. We try to host a tuning clinic each year during the season. We are also available to offer one-on-one instruction for any parents who want to learn. As you

begin the program, make sure you get the skis waxed and have Les Moise tune them for you. As time goes on, you and your child will learn more and be able to do most of the basic servicing of the equipment on your own.

**Will the race schedule ever change?** It is possible, but the WJR dates for races and the central division races for USSA seldom change during the season unless there is a lack of snow which would make a race impossible to hold at a particular venue. But, it's always a good idea to check in with the coaches and to review the calendar on the team website.



**What to expect on your first WJR race day?** Here are some general points to help you through that first race:

- There will be a "Fact Sheet" produced by the hill hosting the race which will be posted to the calendar event on our website, usually the Tuesday or Wednesday before race day. This will have the detailed information and times for the race.
- Arrive at the Hill at least 45 minutes before the posted course inspection time.
- Purchase a discounted lift ticket for your athlete while they are "booting up".
- There are two race courses. One for U12 athletes and younger, and one for U14 athletes and older.
- Have your athlete in the lift line at least 15 minutes before course inspection begins, so they can be at the top and locate the Ausblick coach for the event, at the stated course inspection time.
- Athletes will then inspect the course.
- Once the race is about to start, review the run order (available at the Hill) to determine the approximate time your athlete should be at the top of the course to race in their listed place. There are parent volunteers at the top, lining up the kids to race.
- After the athlete finishes their run, there will be an Ausblick coach at the bottom of the run waiting for them, to briefly review their run.
- After the first run, the athlete should get something to eat and drink.
- After all athletes have completed their first run, the race course will be reset, and the whole routine begins again, with inspection for the second run.
- Awards typically follow within 15 minutes of completion of both runs by all athletes, and are based on the combined results of both runs.

Enjoy the day with your athlete!

**What do I do on race day?** Race days are always filled with anxiety, triumph, and for some, disappointment. How do you best support your child? Give them some room! Your child is learning to become a ski racer. We are teaching them basic disciplines like figuring out where they need to be and how to plan their day. There is always a kid that forgets their boots, or helmet, or gloves. Within reason, let your child figure out how to get to the start at the proper time, with the things they need. You can help them of course, but it's a good idea for them to learn this and become more self-reliant. You really don't help them in the long run by always doing these things for them. Once ready, we will do things as a team. We will prepare as a team, inspect the course as a team, and race as a team.

**Can I inspect the course with my child?** Unless you are a registered coach, **absolutely not**. Rules allow coaches, athletes and officials on the race course, period.

**Where is my kid's coat?** Another important race day lesson. The start of the race course is always a very confusing place. 200 kids, coaches, all furiously preparing for the big event. We teach the kids to support each other by "running" coats and warm-ups to the finish area. (The boys and girls don't race at the same time...if they are being nice to each other, they will run each others' coats down to them...ahh team spirit!) Inevitably, though, there is a kid that forgets about their coat and other gear and then can't remember where it is or where they left it...which is usually followed by a frantic parent desperately trying to find their child's \$400 coat among all the scattered clothing at the top of the run or in the lodge. **MARK YOUR CHILD'S NAME CONSPICUOUSLY IN THE CLOTHES.** There will be **many** identical size 12 black Spyder pants in a pile.

**Can I help on race day?** PLEASE DO!!! We want to help get your kids ready at the start, and also watch their runs to give them feedback. Lugging coats is our last priority. We need your help! There are a lot of jobs at a race, and if you learn how to be a gate keeper, you can watch your daughter or son compete from just a few yards away from the action! We ask that a parent of an athlete volunteer to help out at two races per year.

**Can I get my kid one of those snazzy suits?** For young racers, a GS racing suit probably makes its biggest impact in the athletes mind. They feel faster just by putting it on! You can buy them from a racing supply company online or a local retail race store, or ask around to see if anyone has one their son/daughter has outgrown that they'd like to sell.

**Communications?** Please check the following websites regularly:

Ausblick Ski Race Team: [www.ausblickskiraceteam.com](http://www.ausblickskiraceteam.com)

WJR: [www.wjracing.org](http://www.wjracing.org)

USSA Central Division, Region II: [www.region2cussa.com](http://www.region2cussa.com)

**USSA RESULTS** can be found at: [www.ussalivetimes.com](http://www.ussalivetimes.com)

Also, email is a primary communication channel for the team, so please be sure to check yours regularly, and let us know if you change your email address.

**Fees?** Fees for the 2017-2018 season are as follows:

WJR - \$495

WJR and USSA - \$990

WJR, USSA, & FIS - \$990 (plus \$50/race day)

A late fee of \$25 applies after December 1st, except for first year team members.

**Additional Fees?** Additional fees will be charged for athletes who attend USSA/FIS training projects or post-season races held in the Wisconsin/UP area, at the rate of \$50/day.

Other post-season USSA/FIS event fees include:

U14/U16 Championships at Marquette: \$150

Brule Finale: \$25

U14 Rocky Central Championships: \$460

U16 Rocky Central Championships: \$460

U18 Nationals: \$550

U18/U20 Regional Championships: \$500

FIS Central Championships: \$200



### **U12 & Under USSA Developmental Program (DEVO)?**

Ausblick's USSA Developmental Program is designed to remove that disconnect between the WJR Program and the USSA Program.

The goal of the program is to promote the USSA Program to our younger athletes and their families.

The program will be open to WJR athletes ages who have not been in a USSA Program. The program will be available to U-12, U-10 & U8 athletes. The athletes participating in the Developmental Program will be chosen by the Ausblick USSA Developmental Program committee based upon several factors; such as previous season's race results, the athlete's dedication to the sport, desire to succeed and improve, and perceived potential in higher level competitive ski racing.

The fee is \$690.00 (this replaces the WJR fee, and is not in addition to it) and would include:

- More one on one coaching by the USSA/FIS staff.
- Earlier practice start times
- Coaching at one USSA race (that Ausblick is supporting)
- Additional training opportunities with the USSA/FIS Programs



## **USSA/FIS REGISTRATION information for athletes:**

### **To fully register for USSA/FIS for the upcoming season, you must:**

1. Register for the Ausblick team-requires credit card
2. Register for National & Regional USSA: Obtain a USSA/FIS license (you do this directly with USSA, not thru Ausblick at: [www.my.ussa.org](http://www.my.ussa.org) ) Requires Credit Card and Health Insurance Info.
3. Register with the local USSA Division (Central Division Region II) if you plan to do USSA races (you do this directly with Region II, not thru Ausblick at: [www.region2cussa.com](http://www.region2cussa.com) )

**If you do not complete steps 2 & 3 above on a timely basis, your child will not be allowed to participate when they show up at a USSA race, which we obviously don't want to happen. These are USSA rules, which Ausblick does not control.**

### **USSA Race Registration:**

Go to [www.my.ussa.org](http://www.my.ussa.org)

This website is where you select, register, and pay for the individual races your athlete plans to attend.



## **Additional information for new USSA athletes:**

**Scored** = U16 and older athletes

**Non-Scored** = U14 and younger athletes

Many USSA races are held in the Upper Peninsula and typically start early Saturday mornings and again on Sunday, so most Ausblick athletes typically stay over Friday & Saturday nights. Hotels tend to fill up early in the season so book your rooms early.

Check the Region II website [www.region2cussa.com](http://www.region2cussa.com) regularly. Schedules, race results, parent volunteer sign-ups, and various other information and breaking news can be found here, as well as links to other useful sites.

**What else do I need to know?** Visit the team website often, and watch for email updates throughout the year. If you have any further questions whatsoever, please just ask one of the board members, one of the coaches, and/or a parent who has had an athlete on the team for a few years...we'll get you an answer to your question.

SKI FAST!

