

TEAM GILBOA **ALPINE SKI RACING**



Welcome Packet 2025-26

Team Gilboa Alpine Ski Club



WELCOME! We are thrilled to have you and your family as part of our club!

This packet is designed for new families with USSS athletes. (Jr Race families: please refer to the Jr Race specific Welcome Packet.) Compiled by returning families, it represents “things we wish we’d known” when we were new to the club. Along with key dates for the upcoming season, it contains “Tips & Tricks” for the various ski resorts at which races are held (including lists of hotels frequented by Gilboa families); some basic information about how the sport is organized at the youth level; and resources to learn more.

This packet is not exhaustive. Additional sources of information include your age group parent captains (see “Key Contacts” below), other parents, and coaches. Consider bookmarking the following links:

- the [Team Gilboa](#) website
- the [US Ski and Snowboard](#) website
- the [Central Division Region One](#) website
- the [US Ski and Snowboard Alpine Competition Guide](#)

Team Gilboa Basics

- Team Gilboa Alpine Ski Club has been around for 40 years!
- It is a non-profit 501-c3 organization.
- There are three managing directors and a board of directors (currently 11 serving members). Board members and parents serve on six standing committees.
- Team Gilboa serves approximately 425+ athletes, made up of 175+ US Ski athletes and 250+ Junior Race athletes.
- We have three core values: Constant Improvement, Strong Community, and Passion for Skiing.
- Team Gilboa offers need-based [financial assistance](#). If you have questions about whether you qualify, please contact Scully@teamgilboa.com.

Key Dates for the Upcoming (Pre)Season

- **Pierce Equipment Week**, Sept. 15-21
<https://www.pierceskateandski.com/> Appointments recommended
- **Volunteer Training Day** at Hyland Hills - Sat, Oct 12, 10am
- **40th Anniversary Party**, Sept. 21, 5pm, McNamara Center at U of MN
- **Gilboa Ski Swap** - Oct. 24-26, <https://www.teamgilboa.com/swap>

Suitable to obtain gear for newer athletes and U10/12s. Make sure to know your athletes' sizing requirements. Buck Hill and Afton also host Ski Swaps for additional selection of gear.

Key Contacts

★ Lead Coaches by Age Group

- U10/12/14 - Trevor Davis
- U16 - Scott Skavanger
- U18/FIS - Torey Greenwood

★ Parent Captains by Age Group

- U10 - TBD
- U12 - Craig Westman
- U14 - Ashley Biorn
- U16 - Angela Brown and Megan Feeney
- U18/FIS - TBD

Team Gilboa Communications

Closer to the season, and during it, you will receive **weekly emails** from the coaching staff. In the meanwhile, be sure to download **the DISCORD app**, and join our private server “Team Gilboa Ski Racing.” An email will be sent pre-season with more details on how to use TG’s Discord server most effectively (e.g., customizing push notifications for each channel).

Social media: Please follow Team Gilboa Ski Racing on Instagram.

Club leadership welcomes club members to **share feedback, submit questions, or express concerns confidentially** at any time. Please contact your lead coach by email, using [firstname]@teamgilboa.org. Or, contact Gilboa’s board president Ricky Brown (president@teamgilboa.org) or the board’s HR Committee chair Jinah Chernivec (HRChair@teamgilboa.com).

Practice at Hyland Hills

Further details about practices are forthcoming, but here are some basics for new parents to know:

Prep your racers with **gloves/mittens or guards** that can withstand the rope tow. (Families sometimes get inexpensive “Chopper Mitts.”) Provide **clear google lenses** for practicing at night. For younger athletes, it’s best to have them **dress/boot up prior** to arrival. Allow extra time for your racer to pick up a lift ticket daily at the ticket office (using their season pass). Racers dropped off early are accountable for themselves until practice starts.

Drop-off and pick-up can be tricky. Please be patient and kind to our partners at Hyland Hills, who manage this challenge with us. We recommend **carpooling** to help reduce congestion!

Label all equipment: Put your athlete's name on *everything*: skis, poles, goggles, helmet, coat, pants, training shorts, mittens, etc. There is a designated Lost & Found area in the Comp Center (the club's building at Hyland Hills, bottom of "North"). You can also reach out via Discord if your racer has lost something.

Tuning Skis

Tuning skis is a critical part of ski racing. Doing this often and correctly can make a world of difference in your racer's performance. Unfortunately, it can also be intimidating for new families, who might not be attuned (ha, ha) to the intricacies of edge angles and wax temperatures. Thankfully, there are opportunities to learn and local companies here to help you. Look for local tuning clinics offered by Pierce Skate and Ski, as well as instructional sessions offered by the club or other parents. If you're looking for someone to tune for you, occasionally or regularly, here is a list of local ski shops that you can reach out to for a la carte options and season long tuning:

- Pierce Skate and Ski <https://pierceskateandski.com/>
- Gear West Alpine <https://www.gearwest.com/>
- Tonka Cycle and Ski <https://www.tonkacycleandski.com/>

Alpine Racing 101

1) Team Gilboa athletes compete in **three primary racing "systems"**:

Jr Races: Home races for younger athletes, organized and run by Team Gilboa at Hyland Hills. This is where most racers begin racing.

USSS Races: As athletes gain skills and confidence, many choose to progress to races administered under the umbrella of the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association, the national governing body for competitive skiing and snowboarding. The Alpine Ski Racing Division of the U.S. Ski and Snowboard team is often referred to as "USSA" (a reference to the name of the prior national ski racing organization - United States Ski Association), although the proper name is now just "US Ski" or USSS. US Ski races are more challenging than Jr. Race races with longer courses, more difficult sets, and stricter regulations. Most US Ski races that Team Gilboa athletes participate in are in Central Division Region 1 (CR1), which hosts races in the Midwest (MN, WI, MI). There are opportunities for races in other states based on interest and qualification. **Your racer will need to have a US Ski and Snowboard Association membership, and a CR1 membership, in order to compete.**

International Ski and Snowboard Federation (FIS): As the name implies, this is the international system for ski racing. Competitors in FIS ski races must be at least 16 years old, be a current US Ski and Snowboard member, *and* hold a FIS license. These are the most

competitive and challenging races. There are a very limited number of FIS races in the midwest. Team Gilboa's FIS program is called North Star FIS.

2) Disciplines:

Alpine ski racing has four primary methods of racing, or disciplines: Slalom (SL), Giant Slalom (GS), Super G and Downhill. In the Midwest, slalom is the predominant discipline (and the only one Minnesota State High School League athletes participate in). Most races at the US Ski level and above also participate in GS and, to a lesser extent, Super G races. Limited opportunities to compete in Downhill exist, but these races require qualification, are uncommon, and do not take place in the Midwest.

3) Ski Racing Rules

The [*US Ski and Snowboard Alpine Competition Guide*](#) is a valuable resource. In addition to the "Alpine Competition Regulations" section, which begins on p. 71 and covers important details like gear specifications and disqualifications rules, it sheds more light on:

- **Scored vs Non-Scored Races:**

U14 racers and younger participate in **non-scored races**, i.e. their results are not "scored" against their competitors across the season's many races. While racers are timed and results are posted at each one of these "non-scored" races, the goal for these younger kids is to develop a love of skiing and racing and not to compare themselves to other skiers. When athletes matriculate to the U16 age group, they begin to receive "points" for each race they finish in what are known as **scored races**. These points are used to determine the start order at races and to rank racers against one another. Every U16 racer starts with 990 points, with the goal to lower these points over the season(s).

Registering for Races

You will need to register your athlete prior to each US Ski race on the schedule. This can be done at the beginning of the year or can be done on a week-to-week basis depending on your availability as a family. **DON'T FORGET:** Register before the deadline (determined by CR1) on the week of every race to ensure your athlete can participate and to avoid a late fee.

Volunteering at Races

Each CR1 race is put on entirely through the efforts of parent and staff volunteers from the participating ski clubs. There are 50+ positions that need to be filled in order for the race to take place. Volunteerism is an important part of Team Gilboa's Strong Community, and the club aims for 100% participation, requiring you to sign a pledge to participate upon registration. But volunteering isn't a hardship; it's a great way to get closer to the race day action and to meet other families.

This year, as noted during registration, Gilboa is implementing a \$450 fee for those families unable to meet a minimum requirement for volunteering. The details of this requirement are laid out in a club email. Please note that volunteer credits can be fulfilled throughout the season (on race days) and even off-season (e.g., by attending Volunteer Training Day; at the Ski Swap; board or committee service; and Hill Clean-Up Day).

Many of the race day volunteer positions require no prior training, while others require pre-season training and certification. Every race day, volunteers include “newbies” and grizzled veterans. Please look for communications from our club’s Volunteer Coordinator, Jessica Scherer. And reach out to her with questions at volunteercoordinator@teamgilboa.com.

Volunteer sign-up is done through “dibs; see https://www.skifast.com/dib_sessions

Race Days

Race Day Schedules and Info will all be on the [CR1 Website](#).

Updates/changes to this schedule will be communicated through Discord.

1) **Lift tickets at races**

- Your athlete will need a lift ticket for each race. The various resorts often offer “racer rates” and two day passes for races (this will be communicated in the weekly email). It is often possible to purchase the lift ticket in advance, so that you do not have to wait in the ticket line on an early and busy morning.
- If your racer is in 4th grade, he/she is able to purchase the [4th Grade Ski Passport](#). This is helpful for races at ski areas within Minnesota. Passport is \$34.95 to purchase, and most (but not all) ski areas in Minnesota honor these passes on race days.

2) **Developing a healthy mindset in your athlete on race day:**

Ski Racing is a challenging sport, both physically and mentally. The competition field can be very large, and the margin of difference between the top 50 athletes can be under a second or two. It is easy for athletes and parents to get discouraged and struggle to see improvement. Have regular conversations with your racer and their coach about setting goals and micro-goals for improvement. I.e., focus on something specific to work on at a race and celebrate progress toward that instead of the overall results.

Also track progress throughout the whole season rather than getting caught up in each individual race. As a Team Gilboa athlete, your racer will become a phenomenal skier no matter what and develop a lifelong Passion for Skiing (one of our core values).

Race day mornings can be especially stressful and hectic! They are early, dark and COLD. Come prepared! The day's schedule comes out the night before the race, after the coaches' meeting. Schedules are posted on Discord and/or emailed. Please note the time that "Inspection" begins. Use this time as your benchmark for being in place for both your racer and you, if you are volunteering. Being organized the night before helps to minimize stress in the morning. Have your athlete lay out their gear the night before, and arrange for a good breakfast. There are often food opportunities at each location, but they are not always healthy or best for optimal athletic performance.

Resort Specific Tips & Tricks

- **Afton Alps** (Afton, MN) *50 minute drive from Twin Cities*
 - Afton is owned by Vail Resorts, and is included in the Epic Pass. Otherwise, we recommend purchasing tickets ahead of time online.
 - Check ahead of time if Gilboa Tent can be set up.
- **Giants Ridge** (Biwabik, MN) *3hr 15 minute drive from Twin Cities*
 - Lodging on-site is limited to The Lodge at Giants Ridge and Villas at Giants Ridge. Many lodge rooms have suites, including kitchen options.
 - Lodging off-site is 20-30 minutes drive from the resort, so on-site lodging tends to sell-out quickly. This is a good one to book early if you want to avoid a commute.
 - The resort's breakfast options do not open until after inspection starts in the morning, so consider bringing breakfast or snacks with you.
 - New(er) cafeteria-style restaurant on-site has many lunch options. Restaurant in the lodge and Burnt Onion Bar (also on-site) serve dinner.
 - This race tends to be COLD, so pack (and wax) accordingly.
 - Gilboa Tent can be set up.
- **Granite Peak** (Wausau, MN) *3 hour drive from Twin Cities*
 - Hotels are typically 5 to 10 minutes away from the mountain. Purchase tickets in a multi-day pass to avoid long lines outside the outdoor ticket window early in the am.
 - Consider making reservations for dinner ahead of time as the local restaurants get very busy on the weekends.
 - Check ahead of time if Gilboa Tent can be set up.
- **Lutsen Mountain** (Lutsen, MN) *4 hour drive from Twin Cities* [fewer races here recently]
 - This race can be COLD, so pack (and wax) accordingly.
 - Typically, the GS race is in an area that cannot be accessed by spectators without skis. The SL race is usually held in an area accessible by foot. Depending on where the race is, you may want to purchase a lift ticket to ski over to the race hill. Otherwise, it is

possible to ride the gondola and walk to the GS venue.

- **Mount La Crosse** (La Crosse, WI) *2 hour drive from Twin Cities*
 - Hotels are in town. Hill is about a 10-15 minute drive. Plan accordingly in the a.m. Consider arriving with athlete's ski boots on.
 - Lodge is very small, and crowded given the size of the race.
 - Lodge's lunch offerings are limited to snack bar, pub, or outdoor grill, weather permitting.
 - Consider bringing food to avoid crowds. There are fast food options on drive from town.
 - Many restaurant options in town for dinners.

- **Snowriver Resort** (Wakefield, MI) (formerly Indianhead/Blackjack) *5 hour drive from Twin Cities - recommend driving through Superior, WI.*
 - The resort changed ownership, and names, three years ago.
 - This is another race where lodging off-site is 20-30 minutes drive from the resort, so on-site lodging tends to be popular and sell-out quickly. This is a good one to book early if you want to avoid a commute.
 - The resort is comprised of "Jackson Creek Summit" and "Black River Basin", which are approximately 10 minutes apart by car. There is lodging at both areas, but the main part of the resort (including pool, restaurant, and bar) is at Jackson Creek. There is a convenience factor in choosing lodging in the area your athlete's age group is racing. There is a bar/restaurant in the Black River Chalet.
 - Other food options are available but generally a 10-25 minute drive. Skiers may wish to also bring snacks or breakfast options.
 - Gilboa Tent can be set up.

- **Spirit Mountain** (Duluth, MN) *2 hour 15 minute drive from Twin Cities*
 - Sleep Inn (has changed ownership 3x in past 4 years) is just off 35W and right next to the hill, and therefore convenient for races. But there's not much around it beyond gas stations and convenience stores.
 - Hotels in Duluth are 15-20 minutes away but surrounded by restaurants & sights.
 - Gilboa families tend to split between these two choices.
 - Keep in mind that Spirit Mountain's parking fills quickly, so it's best to arrive as early as possible.
 - Small cafeteria style restaurant at lodge. Lodge itself is very spacious. Can bring food in for lunch.
 - Lodge is at the top of the ski hill; the race is on the hill below and cannot be seen without walking/skiing to it. While skis are not required to watch the race (particularly the start), it may make it easier to view.

- **Welch Mountain** (Welch, MN) *50 minutes drive from Twin Cities*
 - Cafeteria style and bar type food options available.

- **Wild Mountain** (Taylors Falls, MN) *1 hr drive from Twin Cities*

- Patchy cell reception; we recommend downloading tickets in advance if you buy on-line.
- Food offerings renovated in '23-'24 season; still busy.
- Gilboa Tent can be set up.

Specific Hotel Recommendations

Book hotels as far in advance as possible, keeping room cancellation policies in mind. Many hotels book up by the time the race season starts.

Giants Ridge (Biwabik, MN)

- [The Lodge at Giants Ridge](#) - BOOK EARLY
- [The Villas at Giants Ridge](#) - BOOK EARLY
- [AmericInn by Wyndham, in Virginia](#)
- [Super 8 by Wyndham, in Eveleth](#)

Lutsen Mountain (Lutsen, MN)

- [Caribou Highlands Resort](#) - Lodge or condos are both ski in/ski out
- [Eagle Ridge Resort](#) - Hotel rooms or condos are both ski in/ski out

Mount LaCrosse (Lacrosse, WI)

- [Fairfield Inn and Suites](#)
- [Holiday Inn La Crosse](#)
- [The Charmant Hotel](#)

Spirit Mountain (Duluth, MN)

- [Sleep Inn](#) - Quality deteriorated upon ownership change previously, but the proximity to the hill keeps Gilboa families coming back.
- There are various Canal Park hotels in downtown Duluth (15-20 minute ride from Spirit Mountain). For example, [Canal Park Lodge](#)

Granite Peak (Wausau, MN)

- [Hilton Garden Inn](#)
- [Courtyard by Marriott Wausau](#)
- [Hampton Inn Wausau](#)

Snowriver Resort (Wakefield, MI) (formerly Indianhead/Blackjack)

- <https://www.snowriver.com/> - BOOK EARLY

FAQs

How many races should I sign my racer up for? This is entirely up to your family. You can decide to only register for local races within an hour of the Twin Cities so that hotel stays will not be required. Alternatively, you can pick one out-of-town race to attend and give your athlete a chance to be with friends at the same hotel for a fun weekend away. Some families choose to attend as many races as they can throughout the season.

What do the age groups (U10/12, U14, etc..) mean? The “U” stands for “under.” Age groups are determined by the age of the athlete (birth year) by the calendar year. When you registered your athlete, their age group was determined by their birth date.

What is the difference between scored vs. non-scored? Scored vs non-scored was addressed more fully above but, basically, the difference is that non-scored (U10/12/14) racers use a race-by-race finish instead of accumulating points over the season. Once an athlete ages to U16, all races are “scored,” meaning they accumulate a point standing down from 990 over the length of their race career.

Does my racer need to be a member of US Ski [USSS]?

Yes, your racer will need to join U.S. Ski and Snowboard in order to participate in races. Additionally, you will need to pay a membership fee for Central Div. Region 1. See Alpine Racing 101 above.

What is a speed camp?

Speed camps are offered to athletes (usually U14 and up) in an effort to give them practice in the faster disciplines, with other coaches from other clubs (along with TG coaches). They focus on GS and Super G, as these are typically held on venues with longer courses which enable those particular course sets.

Camps

All Camps and Fact Sheets can be found [here](#) on Team Gilboa Website

- ★ Non-Local Camp Offerings - please note these can vary by year based on interest, snow conditions and age of your racer
 - Austria Camp, MEA week
 - Early Fall Camp
 - Thanksgiving Camp - Aspen

- May Camp - Winter Park

★ Local Camp Offerings

- Thanksgiving Camp - Wild Mountain (snow permitting)
- Christmas Camp - Hyland Hills & Wild Mountain
- Various Speed Camps - Snowriver, MI; and LaCrosse, WI

In 2023, the Stratton family established the Nate Stratton Memorial Scholarship to honor their son's passion for skiing, and for his special love of Gilboa training camps. See [here](#) for more details.

Why We Offer Camps

As a value-added service to our members, Team Gilboa offers training camps in addition to our regularly scheduled programming at Hyland Hills. These camps are not included in the annual Team Gilboa registration fee – and they are optional. Camps have separate registration processes. They are not designed to make a profit for the club; they are budgeted to break-even (registration revenue = camp expenses).

Our daily training at Hyland is great because of the proximity to home, quick laps, and high volume. It's a great place to work on and solidify the fundamentals of skiing and ski racing. However, the terrain at Hyland is limited in respect to length, pitch, and variability.

That's where training camps come in. We plan and operate in-state and out-state camps at venues that challenge our athletes more than Hyland can. If your athlete wants to improve at a faster rate or compete at the Rocky/Central regional level (U12 Rocky champs, U14/U16 Junior Champs, and FIS races), they must be exposed to more challenging terrain and longer courses. Camps are also great because we can take advantage of full-days (for more hours of skiing plus video sessions, ski tuning, and team building) without the “distractions” of school and home. There are both “team travel” (for U16 and older athletes to attend *without* their parents) and “on-snow only” (for any age athlete to attend *with* their parents) options throughout the season.

More info on “Why We Offer Camps” can be found [here](#) on Team Gilboa's website.

Financial assistance for camp tuition is available as part of [Team Gilboa's need-based financial assistance program](#). If interested, please contact Scully@teamgilboa.com.