



Alpine Handbook

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Welcome to the DWSC Alpine Team. It's an honor to have you and your athlete join the DWSC family. We hope that this handbook will help you understand the Policies and Procedures of the team. Please reference the DWSC Parent Athlete Handbook (a separate document) for general policies regarding parent, athlete and coach conduct. In this handbook, you will find all sorts of useful information on all of our Alpine Programs. These handbooks are for reference. Other resources will be shared throughout the season. If you still can't find the answer to your question, please reach out to your coach, the Team Director, and/or DWSC's Executive Director.

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PRACTICE SCHEDULE AND COMMUNICATIONS

Most communication is through Sports Engine. This allows coaches to communicate training and race day information directly to families in a one-stop shop. Please make sure that you are checking these communications for important information. Please communicate your athletes attendance at practices and events in SportsEngine, as well. Email and Whatsapp will also be used to communicate race information/fact sheets, travel planning, and so forth.

PURGATORY WEEKEND TRAINING

Practice will begin December 6th from 9-3pm.*

***Meeting/Pick Up Location: Bottom of Chair 1 next to zipline tower**

The following weekends are scheduled for weekend training:

- Dec. 6-7, 13-14, 20-21
- Jan. 3-4, (10-11 Purgatory race/no home training), 17-18, 24-25
- Feb. (1/31-2/1 Flagstaff race/no home training), 7-8, 14-15, 21-22, 28
- March 1, 7-8, 14-15, (21-22 Taos race/no home training)
- Sunday Drop Ins for PT athletes- Please email your coach and the Team Director. Drop In Days are available for purchase through the website; they will also be invoiced as needed.

*Start dates may be pushed back due to on hill conditions. Early season training is entirely dependent on the snow conditions and runs available for training. Early season skiing can be dangerous with large crowds and limited run space available, especially when working in groups. We will not start training until the coaches are confident that they can do so safely.

****Practices start at 9am and go until 3pm. Arrive early to find your group.** Older groups may be asked to meet at the top of the mountain at our “race shack” as the season progresses, or meet at the top of Deadspike run where the majority of our training happens.

CHAPMAN WEEKNIGHT TRAINING

Chapman midweek training will start when the hill opens, typically in mid December. We try to train at Chapman as long as conditions permit, usually ending in early-mid March, but there’s never a guarantee. Check the SportsEngine Calendar as it is updated.

FOR PART TIME 1: 6-8pm on Tuesdays OR Thursdays*

FOR FULL TIME 2: 6-8pm on Tuesdays AND Thursdays**

FOR FULL TIME 3: 4:30-6pm on Wednesdays in addition to Tue. and Thur.

*We allow flexibility in choosing midweek practice days for athletes as we realize illness and other commitments challenge our schedules. Please note that coaches are focused on supporting training. Tracking these weeknights and drop ins can be difficult. We ask that you follow the

honor system. *If you intend to train more than your paid tuition indicates, please purchase a drop-in day or package, or discuss options with your coach.* Thank you for supporting your coaches!

**If you're seeking additional midweek training days, please discuss with your coach or director on additional training days and opportunities.

PRACTICE EXPECTATIONS

Please arrive early/on time and with a positive attitude. Be ready for a great day on the hill.

BE PREPARED:

- Eat a good breakfast and arrive early!
- Show up physically, mentally, and emotionally ready to go for the entire day, as this is crucial as a foundation for a good outcome over the course of the season.
- Wear sunscreen
- Dress appropriately for the conditions with layers.
- Bring hand warmers in your pocket, if needed.
- **DO NOT FORGET YOUR HELMET. ATHLETES ARE REQUIRED TO WEAR A HELMET.**

WHAT TO BRING:

Athletes are expected to be prepared with a backpack to drop at the Team Shack or other Lunch spot. Please pack a lunch, snacks, water, and all items needed for a day out in the elements. Sunscreen, base layers, extra gloves and socks are all good things to keep in a training backpack; however, please use your judgment on your child's needs versus carrying a large bag.

EQUIPMENT READY TO GO:

Make sure that all of their equipment is working properly, tuned and ready for all conditions. Athletes should have the correct skis and equipment necessary for the discipline that they will be training that day (see SportsEngine schedule).

COMPETITION INFORMATION

HELMET REQUIREMENT

Helmets are mandatory for all athletes for on hill training sessions, as well as, all of the events in which we participate. No athlete will be allowed on the hill without a helmet. No exceptions.

Alpine racers must have a hard-eared helmet for competitions. U14 and up must meet USSS/FIS standards for racing.

USSS (United States Ski and Snowboard) Membership and Licensing

All DWSC Members who wish to participate in USSS sanctioned races must have a current USSS membership. Membership ranges from single day access to yearlong membership. All Southern Series, championship qualifiers, and championship races are all USSS sanctioned events. USSS is the governing body of most competitive ski racing in the United States and is the pipeline for the U.S. Ski Team.

Alpine Membership categories can be found [here](#). U10s and U12s register as an Alpine Competitor, while U14 and up can select Competitor (scored) or non-scored memberships. Please make sure you register with USSS for your intended race category (scored vs. non-scored), as a U14 and up athlete. Single day memberships are available for \$40, while full memberships start at \$100.

If you're new to USSS, you will need to follow the instructions here to create a membership account and add your athletes to that account.

[Become Member Online | my.us skiandsnowboard.org](#)

Additional membership options are available here - [Member Categories and Benefits | my.us skiandsnowboard.org](#), and low-cost general memberships exist for those not seeking to race, but still interested in some USSS benefits. Excess accident insurance during U.S. Ski & Snowboard sanctioned events is one of the benefits of this membership; primary health insurance is required.

TARGETED RACE CALENDAR

Southern Series Races

- January 7-11 Ian Mcknight Memorial Classic at Purgatory Super G and Giant Slalom
 - Wednesday: Flight School, U12 and up, or by invitation
 - Thursday: Super G Training: U12 and older only
 - Friday: Super G: U12 and older only
 - Saturday and Sunday: GS: all ages

- January 31-February 2 Flagstaff - Slalom
 - Friday Jan. 30th in afternoon: Additional Training @ Flagstaff Snowbowl
 - Saturday and Sunday: Slalom: all ages

- March 21-22 Taos Southern Series Championships

- Saturday: Slalom: all ages
- Sunday: GS: all ages

U-10 Championships

- March 7-8 Aspen (All U8 and U10 athletes eligible, no qualifying necessary)

U-12 Championships

- March 14-15 Powderhorn (All U12 athletes eligible, no qualifying necessary)

U-14 Qualifiers and Championships

- January 24-26 Breckenridge Super G
- February 21-22 Powderhorn Slalom and Giant Slalom
- March 9-13 Rocky/Central Championships Vail (Must Qualify)
- March 1-3 Rocky/Central U14/U16 Showdown Winterpark (Non-qualifying U14/U16 athletes eligible)

U-16 and up

- Please talk with your coaches about a race schedule that fits your athletes needs. All sync races will be considered as qualifier races.

Points/Penalty Explanation

It is important to recognize and remember that DWSC is NOT a “points” driven club because a racer that gets caught up on worrying about points has an increased chance to lose focus of our long term core values and personal performance. However, as our racers advance to higher competitions, it is still important to understand how the system works.

When Junior Racers enter the U14 level, they become eligible to 'score' USSA points. To be eligible, they must have joined the USSS as a scored 'Competitor'. Each new U14 will start the season with 990 points in each discipline (SL, GS, SG, DH, and SC). As they finish races, their points will be reduced.

The competitors 'points will be used to determine their race start position. The lower the points, the earlier the start (except for the 15 competitors with the lowest points).

Competitors with 990 points will have their start position determined by a 'random draw', and will start after all the other competitors. The first 15 starts will go to the 'top 15' competitors (with the lowest points), who will also have their start position determined by a 'random draw'. The aim of this system is to give the best competitors a chance to run the race course early, before it gets too beaten up. Every time a competitor finishes a race, their finish time is compared to the finish time of the winner, and multiplied by a factor (published by USSS - different for each discipline), to determine their 'race points'. The race winner automatically gets ZERO

This system would allow a competitor to lower their points considerably by finishing well in a race with a mediocre field; while the same competitor racing against Daron Rahlves, or Kristina Koznick would end up with very high points. To make the system fair, a 'race penalty' is added to

each competitors 'race points'. This 'race penalty' is a complex calculation based on the starting and finishing points of the best competitors in the race. When racing against Daron Rahlves, the 'penalty' would be very low. The 'penalty' will be high when racing against mediocre competitors. The aim is to make the total of the 'race points' and 'penalty points' become the same, no matter whom the competitor is racing against. Details of the calculation methods for both 'race' points and 'penalty' points is explained in chapter three of the 'USSS Competition Guide - Alpine'.

The USSS publishes a point list several times a year. Each competitor's 'points' are calculated by taking the average of their two best results (for each discipline). This means that a competitor will have different points for SL, GS, SG, and DH.

A competitor's race start position is determined by the points listed in the LAST USSS published list (NOT by the average of the latest best results). After each race, the points for all finishers are sent to the USSS. The USSS has a 'Closing' date a few days before each new list is published. They will take the points for all the races that all athletes have finished, up to the 'Closing' date, and use the best two results in each discipline to calculate an athlete's points for the new list. The new list will be published on the 'Valid' date. The 'Closing' and 'Valid' dates for each list can be found near the front of the USSS Competition Guide.

At the end of each race season, the USSS adjusts the points of every racer in the US. This is because it is possible for the best in the US to get negative points, and the best in the US is supposed to have zero points. The adjustment is different for each discipline. Don't be surprised if the hard-won point's reductions for this season are adjusted upward.

A new U14 racer can get their points for a specific discipline (SL for example) off the 990 base, by competing in, and FINISHING at least one race before the 'Second Points List' closes - usually just after the New Year. This will get them a fair start position in all races of that discipline after the 'Second Points List' is valid. If only one race is finished, the list will contain the points earned in that race, plus an adjustment because only one

The first season for a new U14 will be spent trying to COMPLETE two races in each discipline so that they will get fair starts in their later races. The points generally reduce rapidly at the start of a U14's racing career, but it becomes harder and harder to reduce points as the competitor's career progresses.

New U18 racers start this process again with FIS (International Ski Federation) points starting at 990. There are several FIS lists published each year, with the points of every racer in the world. FIS has different dates to the USSA - with the FIS list usually valid just before the USSS list closes.

For FIS races taking place within the United States, races are "dual scored". This means competitors in FIS races earn both FIS and USSS points. Each is calculated separately based on their own points list. The calculation of race points is the same, however, the FIS penalty and USSS penalty will almost always be different.

Full details of the 'points' system as well as all other applicable rules can be found in the [USSS Competition Guide – Alpine.](#) We encourage athletes and parents of all ages to be familiar with the Rule book in general.

Scored Versus Non-Scored as a U14

There will be a few times throughout the season where U14's have the option to enter a "scored" race. There is no right or wrong answer to whether the athlete should be in the scored or non-scored race, however if you and your athlete are trying to make that decision, please do so with a coach as there are many factors to consider and the coach will help determine the best choice in relation to the athletes current mental/emotional state and long term goals.

Here is a good example of a response from a coach when asked by a concerned parent as to what race to register their U14- scored or non-scored:

"That seems to be a tricky question, not just for us in the south but a lot of clubs are trying to figure out which kids should be chasing points as a 1st year U14 and which as a 2nd year U14. The benefit in the end of chasing points is for those athletes going into their U16 year with a better start position as they have already dropped from the 990s. But, here is my opinion as I saw us struggle last year. For the competitive kids in the North Rockies it is advantageous for them to "chase points". For the kids that are not super competitive I saw it as detrimental to their desire to race and compete and it did not improve their start order over a whole year running in the 90's vs 110's not much different given the cost and travel. We had a few girls end up back of the pack a few times and they just got down on themselves.

In the Southern Series though, it is a low key way to drop your points from the 990's for the next year. Our field sizes are smaller and it isn't as intimidating and they can drop their points in a big way. For some of the first years traveling to the low point races they may still not drop points a lot if they are far behind the 1st place for the penalty. Just my 2 cents, but I think it's better as a first year U14 to build confidence and get some points at the same time on a smaller field to start."

Team Travel and Travel Fees

Team travel will be limited to a select schedule of USSS sanctioned events. Coaches will make the appropriate call as to which events athletes will go to. In other words, parents do not dictate the race schedule.

The coaches will accompany the team to these events. For most "away" events, accommodations will be secured for athletes by parents and athletes will travel with their parents or car pool with fellow team members. Most races will offer discounts for group lodging at select locations and we prefer everyone to stay at or near the same lodging venue.

Each athlete will be responsible for the tuning and care of his or her equipment. It is expected that your competition equipment be prepared and travel waxed for the next day's event(s) before leaving for the competition(s).

During team travel, parents, coaches and athletes will obey our codes of conduct, discipline policy and drug and alcohol policy.

VOLUNTEERING

DWSC needs family involvement to run a successful program and quality events. The races and social events are fun, you get to know other families in the program, and if you pick the right position to volunteer for, you'll have the best seat on the mountain to watch your athlete compete.

Volunteer Requirements

Many clubs require a "work deposit" that is refunded to the family after so many hours of volunteer time is completed. DWSC Alpine adopted this work deposit program to incentivize volunteers in our programs. There are many volunteer positions including prepping for events, running events, cleaning up after events, helping with admin duties, coordinating team travel and lodging, selling team apparel, and much more. Please see the SportsEngine Dibs sign up for volunteer opportunities throughout the season, or reach out to your team director if you're interested in being more involved.

Alpine Officials Needed:

Alpine/Competition Officials are needed on race day. The commitment to become a CO is not a big one, but the position is critical. Some positions on the hill require certified AO/CO's and events can't happen without them. If you're interested in becoming an AO/CO, contact the Program Director to find out more - <http://rmsro.org/clinics/>

ALPINE OFFICIAL- long term commitment options: Race Admin/start finish refs/timing assistance

Sign up for an Alpine Official's License from USSS. Commit to a 1-day USSS Referee/Jury Officials course. Pass the test. You will then be qualified to work as a Start Referee, Finish Referee, Head Gatekeeper and other certified Race Worker jobs.

RACE DAY JOBS

MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW

Ian Mcknight Memorial Classic at Purgatory SG and GS January 7-11, 2026

REGISTRATION: Greet racers, hand out bibs, assist the race administrator, etc. Indoors

BIB COLLECTOR: Collect bibs in the finish area. Outdoors

BIB SORTER: Sort bibs into their appropriate order post-race. Indoors

SCOREBOARD: Post times on the outdoor scoreboard. Report to timing building. Outdoors.

SCOREBOARD PREP: Prepare the scoreboard for the race. Write names and clubs of participants on board. Can be done the day/night before the event at home.

GATE JUDGES (GATEKEEPERS): Record any missed gates by racers and help keep the course in good shape. You get to be at the best place to watch a race. Outdoors. On skis

COURSE MAINTENANCE: Best job on the hill. Be on the lift early to help with hill set up, fencing, and general race prep before the event. Help with gate repair, slipping, and course maintenance during the race. Take down supplies, gates, and equipment after the race. Outdoors. On skis. See the race close up.

TIMING-Learning: For those interested in learning about the timing of an event and want to be a part of the crew in the future. Sit in on the events and learn how it's done. Inside/Timing jobs include computer assistance, back-up timer assistant, and announcer. Inside.

HAND TIMING: Record racers back-up stopwatch times at the Start or Finish area. Outdoors.

STARTER: The job requires you to be at the start and communicate with the timing crew and then signal the start for each individual athlete. Outdoors.

ASSISTANT STARTER: The job requires you to organize the athletes in the correct start order at the start area. Outdoors.

HILL STEWARD: Bring coffee, hot chocolate, water, donuts, candy and hand-warmers to the on-hill workers (course crew, gate keepers, starters, etc.) during the race. Outdoors. On skis.

RACE MEAL DELIVERY: Pick up lunches and deliver to the finish timing building and start area. Collect and dispose of trash post-lunch. Outdoors. On skis.

AWARDS: Organize awards pre-race and distribute post-race.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Groups will be based on the USSS Age Class structure. Your birth year determines your age class, not the time of registration. An athlete turning 10 in January, would be classified as 9 year old age class- or U10 athlete, as they were 9 in the start year of the season. An athlete turning 10 before December 31st of the season is in the 10 year age class, or a U12 athlete. Tuitions will be based on part time and full time commitment. The training groups are then defined as so:

U10/U12 — U14/U16 — U18/U21

Each age class is very specific. What the athletes learn and when they learn is crucial in their development as athletes and will help their progress as ski racers. Fun, free skiing, technical free skiing, drill courses, and full training courses are all pieces used at various ages.

Around age 10 and up, things either start to pick up for a ski racer who has had some years of racing experience or can also be an age where athletes might decide they want to start racing. We provide coaching for all situations and like to make everyone feel like part of the team regardless of their skill level.

Please trust your professional coaches to make decisions for the good of our whole team with a specific purpose in mind. If you have questions or concerns with anything to do with our team please bring this to the attention of one of our staff members. The director and coaches are available before/after practice to talk and arrangements can be made outside of training to discuss expectations, goals or issues throughout the year.

U10/U12: Age 8-11 PART TIME **Saturdays at Purgatory + 1 Night at Chapman/week**



With a strong focus on skill building in all types of terrain, coaches will also develop the athlete's introductory knowledge of racing skills, techniques and tactics. Athletes are required to ski at a strong intermediate level- this is parallel turns on any easy black while maintaining speed and control. Graduating from another DWSC program is helpful but not required before starting this program.

This is a good age to expand the athlete's knowledge of the race arena so the athlete can determine if they want to pursue racing more seriously in the future or explore other avenues of skiing. We focus on more drills while also incorporating fun and challenging free skiing opportunities. Gate training is about 30-40% of the training.

Racing is not required and coaching will be provided on weekends when some of the team is traveling. Opportunities for local and club races are available as well as participation in USSS sanctioned races for higher competition. For those choosing to participate in USSS races, we offer the Southern Series races which consist of three events located usually at Purgatory, Flagstaff and Taos. Racers do not have to attend all events to participate in the Southern Series. U10s are welcome to participate at the U10 Championships in Aspen with no need to qualify and the U12's are welcome to attend the U12 Championships in Powderhorn with no need to qualify.

U10/U12 Age 8-11 FT and U14/U16 Age 12-15 PT/FT

Although this program is designed for the serious ski racer who is dedicated to learning technical and tactical skills and wants to compete against the best in their age group through the USSS Rocky Mountain Division (RMD) and/or the local Purg Cup series, it is not limited to those who want to start racing around age 12 or up. The part time/full time tuition will reflect more training time for those that are committed to more competition.

Depending on age group, the team trains about 40-60% of the time in gates to focus on tactics and techniques important to ski racing. However, an emphasis on free skiing is also incorporated into training, keeping in mind that to build a strong racer, you must first have a strong skier. There are multiple levels of commitment for this age group including additional mid-week training opportunities at Purg for those whose academic schedules are flexible.

The part-time program focuses on weekend training on Saturdays plus 1 or 2 days a week of mid-week training at Chapman Hill.

This schedule allows for increased skill retention, more time on snow, appropriate gate training in slalom, giant slalom and entry level speed elements.

The goal is to increase the fundamental mileage necessary for upper level skiing, competition and future development. Part Time U14 athletes will participate in the USSS Southern Series events as well as special USSS events and local events. Speed elements for U14 available. Part Time U16 will participate in the USSS Ability Class events, special events and speed element opportunities. U14/16 will have the opportunity to qualify for the Rocky/Central Junior Championships.

The full-time program focuses on weekend training, Saturdays and Sundays plus 2-3 days a week of mid-week training at Chapman Hill.

Racers will be encouraged to participate in early season conditioning and early season skiing opportunities leading up to the season. Full-time athletes will focus on individual goal setting, training/competition objectives and health and wellness practices. This will help determine the individual's strengths, areas of improvement, skill set and overall goals for the program.

Full-time athletes must commit to mid-week training (some exceptions may apply). Full-time athletes also must maintain a B/3.0 average in school by properly managing their training, travel, competition and academics.

The goal is to increase the commitment and intensity for upper level skiing, competition and development to create the necessary foundation for future success in FIS or collegiate level skiing.

Optional Mid-week Training at Purgatory

This is a tailored option that may not always be available depending on staff.

For those who have adjusted their academic schedules to allow for more training opportunities, there will be coaches available based on a set schedule that fits the majority of the group.

Athletes that are not regularly scheduled to attend such sessions are welcome to participate when their schedules allow for the drop-in day rate.

U18/U21 Program Age 16-18

At the U18/21 level we are looking for athletes to be fully responsible for their own training. This means communicating with the coach, knowing what your training schedule is, asking your coach if you don't know, and knowing how to find out information by checking DWSC resources and emails. The coaches are looking for the athlete to be punctual to training and to communicate if they are not going to be there.

We are looking for the athlete to be self-sufficient and to take the initiative, both from experience and by following others' good examples. We are looking at this age group to be positive role models and set the standard for the rest of the team to follow.

A U18/21 athlete should have the confidence to travel without their coach and attend projects at other mountains where they may not know the coaching staff, while being able to represent their home team in a fitting manner.

As athletes move up into the older age groups, the sport becomes more equipment demanding and is somewhat dictated by your personal goals. IE: US Ski Team, Collegiate, local races or recreational.

If your path is to become an all-round 4 event skier with aspirations of the US Ski Team, you will eventually need 2 pair of skis for each discipline, one being a trainer and one for racing, training skis and race skis should be the same, so the transition from train to race is seamless. (Please contact coaches as to recommendations when it comes to this)

If you are on a Collegiate path, the speed skis no longer play a role because Collegiate racing is only SL and GS. However, SG is recommended as a training tool but not mandatory.

If you are doing this for social reasons and primarily fun, you can get away with one pair of skis per discipline.

There are rules & requirements as to ski lengths and radiuses so please refer to the current equipment rules page of the comp guide. www.ussa.org Go to Alpine-Coaches-Rules-2023 Alpine Comp Guide-Equipment Rules (this will also give boot regulations).

ATHLETE CONDITIONING AND DRYLAND

Conditioning has become a major factor in athletic success as well as injury prevention. It is imperative to train year round whether you are on snow or not. The training components listed below are guidelines as to what should be incorporated into your "Dryland" training. Organized team dryland practice will be offered for free starting in mid-Sept and run until mid Nov. Some training groups will continue with an in-season dryland during the ski season.

Here is what we strive for with dryland:

- Strength: how much one can push or lift (weight training-U16 and older)
- Power: how quickly one can push or lift
- Quickness: rapid response
- Agility: the ability to move quickly in multiple planes
- Plyometric: Explosive power (jumping, leaping, bounding)
- Core: abdominal muscles, upper, lower, oblique's, transverse abdominals (palates)
- Flexibility: stretching, Yoga
- Endurance: ability to sustain a prolonged stressful effort

- Body awareness: knowing where all parts of your body are at a given moment and being in control while static or in motion
- Balance: both static and dynamic (while in motion)
- Rest & recovery: being rested allows one to perform at ones highest level: flushing of lactic acid build up from excessive workload

RMD TEAM AND SPECIAL CAMPS

RMD TEAM selections from the Rocky Mountain Division U16 and U14 are invited to attend a special dryland training camp in the fall. RMD selections from U12 and up are also invited to attend a spring on snow camp.

The criteria for the RMD TEAM in general is based on age-eligible athletes that are selected based on International Team Selection (ITS) method of the Rocky/Central U16 Junior Championship results, the Rocky/Central U14 Junior Championship results and RMD U12 Championship results. (U12's may make the RMD team but are not eligible for the OTC camp)

The team size may be expanded to include every athlete that appears on the same line of the ITS that the eighth athlete is selected.

The USSS breakdown of the RMD selection criteria is as follows:

- U16 Team: Top 8 men and 8 women from Rocky/Central U16 Junior Championships and top 8 men and 8 women from Rocky/Central U14 Junior Championships.
- U14 Team: Top 8 men and 8 women from Rocky/Central U14 Junior Championships and top 8 men and 8 women from RMD U12 Championships.
- U12 Team Top 8 men and 8 women from the RMD U12 Championships.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The DWSC Handbook covers a lot but certainly not everything and is always changing. Coaches and staff will send and post informational articles, websites and recommended readings throughout the season via emails, Sports Engine, newsletters and social media. If there are any questions at any point or something is unclear, please ask.

