

Parent's Meeting - New Racers

2007-2008 Season

What race group is my child in?

Racer classes are based on age.

J5	Ages 10 and younger	Born after January 1, 1997
J4	Ages 11 & 12	Born in 1995 and 1996
J3	Ages 13 & 14	Born in 1993 and 1994
J2	Ages 15 and 16	Born in 1991 and 21992
J1	Ages 17, 18 and 19	

What kinds of races are there?

YSL - Youth Ski League These are fun, competitive races. YSL races are for J5, J4 and J3's. When they are qualifying races, they "qualify" only J4 and J5 level. For kids who are relatively new to racing and are in the J3 class (ages 13 and 14), the YSL races are a great opportunity to get some experience in a less competitive format and offer a great chance for kids to do well. (The more experienced racers in this age category will be attending the qualifying races classified for J1-J3.)

Qualifying Races - These races toward a racer's standing to participate in the Junior Olympics (JO's) for the Northern Division. This year they will be held in Bogus Basin for J3's and J4's March 21 - 24.

YSL Championships - This is a non -qualifying end of the year race open to all YSL skiers. This year it will be held in Whitefish. It is very fun.

JO's - These are the regional Junior Olympic events for the top racers in the Northern Division. J4 and J3 only. The Northern Division is given a certain number of slots to fill at these races at the beginning of each season. Typically 10 J3 boys, 8 J3 girls, 3 J4 boys and 3 J4 girls are invited to attend based on their standings at the end of the regular season. Obtaining a JO Coat by qualifying for the JO's often becomes a primary goal of the young racers. The top racers at the JO regionals can be invited to race at national JO races.

FIS - This is the level that qualifies for national and international standards. You're a long way away, but you will start to hear the term.

The northern division of the US Ski Association has the race schedule and much more information posted at their web site. To get to the race schedule from the home page, click on the Race Info tab at the top.

<http://www.northernussa.org/>

What are the different types of race events?

SL or Slalom - a shorter course with a lot of gates, spaced closely together. Races navigate alternating red and blue pairs of single poles. Each race includes 2 runs and the times are added together.

GS or Giant Slalom - a longer course with the gates farther apart. Each gate is a pair of panels. Each race includes 2 runs with the times added together.

Super G - The most distance between gates at the YSL level. Showdown hosts the main Super G qualifying race. This is a long course down the face of Big 7. This is the speediest of the races. There is just one run down the hill per race.

How are races scored JO or Regional Qualification?

For YSL races and JO scoring for the J4s, points are awarded for each place finished. First place obtains 100 pts, second 80, and so forth. This is called world cup scoring. Each skier's top two races are added together for points and compared against others for standing. There is a "board" where this is tracked. Selections to JOs typically go across the board where the first place SL finisher is awarded the first slot at the JO, the first place GS is awarded the second slot, and so forth across the disciplines wrapping back around until all the slots are filled. Alternates are often named and given the chance to attend the JO race if skiers selected ahead of them are unable to race.

For J3 and older, the scoring gets more complex. This scoring system is also points based, but in this case the lower the points the better. At these races, the "penalty" is calculated based on the standings of the top racers attending. This penalty is then applied to the first place finisher and those are the points awarded. The relative position of the remaining racers is calculated against the top finisher and points get successively higher. Similar to JO selections for J4s, a "board" is tracked in each discipline and skiers are selected across the board.

How do the races work?

1st sign up - This year there will be 2 YSL race coordinators, Caroline Patterson and Harley Harris. Caroline will send out an email ahead of each race. She will let you know the deadline for sign up and the costs involved. The cost is 1) the race entry and usually, 2) the lift ticket. Racers get a discounted ticket. *Be sure and bring your Great Divide season pass in case you are getting the ticket separately.* It is essential you pay the race coordinator by the morning of the race.

Racers must have a USSA number.

GDST does not charge an additional coaching or waxing fee, as do most other ski teams.

Race day

Show up at the ski hill - usually the main lodge - between 8 and 8:30. It's chaotic. The coaches will have bibs and lift tickets for each racer. Often a lift will open early for racers; the coach will let you know what time to have the racer at the lift.

Parents - get a cup of coffee and enjoy a peaceful moment.

The racers will first inspect the course with the coaches. Generally girls and boys race on the same course. The girls go first, then boys. There will be a break for lunch (for SL and GS) while a new course is set up. Parents of boys need to quickly get racers back on skis for course inspection. Don't lose the bibs!

Start sheets are usually available in the lodge in the morning. This will list all the skiers by bib number and their class.

The YSL racers will race in numerical order the first run and reverse numerical order - by their class - the second run. The younger racers go first, J5 then J4 and finally J3. (So if there are 15 J5 racers, in the afternoon racer 15 goes first.) The number your child is assigned is random, by class. (This will all change when your racer competes in J3 and older races.)

The race

For each Slalom and GS race there will be 2 "starts" of runs. Times are combined to determine total time and standing.

A racer can fall and get back up and keep racing (as long as their skis stay on) or if they realize they miss a gate, s/he can stop and hike back. If a racer misses a gate s/he is disqualified. Racers who lose a ski are also disqualified, and must get off the course quickly.

At most YSL races, all racers get a second run, even if they were DQ'd (disqualified) in the first run. Everyone gets DQ'd sooner or later and some do more than others- it's disappointing, but it's just part of racing....)

A racer may be DQ'd by missing his/her start time.

Parents - Important note about kids hiking up the hill to go through a gate:

The kids will be instructed to listen to the gatekeepers, and **only** the gatekeepers. Spectators should NOT be shouting when to hike and when to start skiing again. This confuses the kids. It is the gatekeeper's call when their skis have "gone through the gate".

Results

Times will be posted at the bottom of the course. You'll be able to find the board, because all the racers and many parents will be crowded around waiting for the times to be posted. After each start is completed, the gatekeepers will submit the numbers of any racers who missed a gate. These will be posted on the board on pink sheets.

Times that are posted are unofficial times. Mistakes can be made when these are written on the board, and sometimes the "timing shack" will need to make corrections. The official times and race results will be printed at the end of the day.

Lodging

The team manager, or Frank Creasia, books blocks of rooms for each race. The list is distributed by email. If you want one of these rooms, you must call the hotel and

reserve one in your name before the release date. It's fun for the kids if we're all staying in the same place, and it is somewhat important because the coaches will be working with the kids on waxing skis each night in preparation for the next day's race. Even if you're not staying at the same hotel, you'll want to show up for waxing.

How can parents get involved?

If you were at the Great Divide race in 2005 or years prior, you will know how much parent help is needed. This is true for all races. Volunteers are needed as gatekeepers, (training usually offered) timers or course workers. This is a good way to get involved, learn more about racing and get a free lift ticket and a lunch. This can help make the weekend more affordable.

This year Great Divide will hold a race February 16 and 17 (Saturday and Sunday of President's weekend). Many, many hands are needed to run a successful race and we will need help from everyone. Besides race day volunteering, help is needed the week before at this hill with gates and fencing, in town with organizing registration, bids, etc and with food.

Fundraising and volunteer effort is needed throughout the program to keep our fees low. As a comparison:

Bridger All Mountain \$225 + \$50 work deposit; YSL and juniors \$750 plus \$500 work deposit

Big Sky \$600 YSL or \$1,250 plus \$200 work deposit

Please keep this in mind when the ski-a-thon (Friday February 8th) and Let it Snow (Friday March 14th) fundraisers come around.

Equipment and gear

Helmets - must have

Ski boots -having properly fitted boots is perhaps the most important item for a racer. You will want to work with someone who will "shell size" your child so the boots are tightly fitting and have the right flex. A common mistake is to get boots that kids can "grow into". This is not a good idea for racers. Boots must fit snugly. This is in obvious conflict with the growth phenomenon at this age. Alas.

Skis - At the YSL level the most important thing is to take care of your skis. Dry them after you bring them inside (so they don't rust) use old skis if you're skiing on rocks, and wax, wax, wax.

Race tune clinic:

It is a really good idea to learn how to wax properly and take care of your race ski edges. Stu McCullough is offering a clinic at his house. This is his email:

The team will be holding a tuning clinic on Tuesday Jan. 8th at 7:00 pm. It will be at my house. The address is 3872 Remington East Helena. I encourage all parents and racers to attend if you are not sure how to tune race skis.

Directions: Take Highway 12 to East Helena. Turn Left at the Conoco town pump go to the tee in the road. Turn right go approx. 1 mile. Turn left on Lake Helena Drive, if you go to far you run back into Highway 12. Go past Eastgate School take the right just past the school. This is Remington. Go three blocks. The house is on the corner of Remington and Colt. Green split level with two-car garage. If you get lost you can call me at 227-8459.

Racing Suits - optional (but if your kid decides s/he likes racing, they'll want one.) You can try to get a used one from other kids in the race program, try e-Bay or try some of the web sites below.

Other optional equipment - This year there was rumor of requiring mouth guards. Our division is not requiring them, but it's not a bad idea. Shin guards and padded tops for slalom may be on future Christmas lists, but aren't necessary until your racer develops the technical skill to hit those gates.

Team jackets and sweatshirts: Jackets can be ordered in the spring. Sweatshirts are available to order until January 16th. These are not required. Parent volunteers make these available

Wednesday Night ski training

The coaching fee includes coaching on Wednesday nights from 5 to 7. This is really valuable time as the kids make many loops and get more snow time.

The team must pay to keep the lifts open, so that cost is spread among those that participate. Parents are welcome to ski as well; you don't even need a lift ticket. Carpooling is helpful (from a parent's point of view.) We expect the additional cost to be about \$110 or \$120. It is a flat fee regardless of how many Wednesdays you make it. The first Wednesday is January 9th.

Speed Training

Several weekends we reserve the hill from 8am to 9am. The racers ski for speed. Check the schedule in the lodge. Racers wear race suits these days.

Dates to Remember

January 12	Ski with Rogers Day 10 am
February 9	Ski-a-thon
February 16, 17	Great Divide YSL Slalom Race
March 14	Let it Snow Fundraiser
March ??	Team Banquet

Helpful websites:

<http://www.greatdivideskiteam.com/>

<http://www.race-werks.com/>

<http://reliableracing.com/>

<http://www.fuxiracingusa.com/>

lots of gear, wax, suits etc

lots of above

racing suits, gloves, poles

Support local business!! However at this time there is no place that is race oriented. Capital Sports is willing to order, as is Bob Wards. Base Camp is digesting their move and may begin to carry waxes, files and other necessities.

Out of town options:

Lone Mountain Sports, Base of Big Sky Resort 406-995-4471 Scott Foster

PhD Skis, Bozeman

Gull Sports, Missoula