

Survival Guide for Parents & Racers

Nashoba Valley Ski Club

2009 – 2010 Season

1. INTRODUCTION

Club Philosophy

The Nashoba Valley Ski Club's (NVSC) goal is to improve the ski racing skills of our members. While the development of life-long skiing skills and competition is encouraged, the main emphasis is on a fun, safe, and positive experience for all.

NVSC is a volunteer run ski club. With that in mind, all parents/guardians will be required to work at two or more races that their racer participates in. No experience is necessary and it's a great way to see how the races are run.

General Information

The NVSC is a member of the Eastern Massachusetts Buddy Werner League (EMBWL), an entry-level league that is comprised of five teams from the eastern Massachusetts area, and operates under its rules and bylaws. The 2009-2010 membership of EMBWL also includes Bradford, Bogastow, Prospect Hill, and Ski Ward.

NVSC Website and Message Board

The NVSC website, www.nvscracing.com, is the primary way for club members to stay informed about races, results, standings, special events, and other announcements. NVSCZone, the club's message board, is a fun, interactive way for racers and parents to stay connected on and off-season.

Racer Prerequisites

All racers must be able to ride the ski lifts unassisted with other racers and ski the terrain at Nashoba Valley safely and with a degree of comfort.

Membership Refund Policy

ABSOLUTELY NO MEMBERSHIP REFUNDS WILL BE MADE AFTER THE FIRST PRACTICE NIGHT.

2. EMBWL RACE INFORMATION

Age Groups

Children are placed into age groups according to United States Ski and Snowboard Association (USSA) guidelines. Your child's age classification is determined by their birth year or their age as of December 31 of the current ski season.

J6: 8 years old or younger

- J5: 9 and 10 year olds
- J4: 11 and 12 year olds
- J3: 13 and 14 year olds
- J2: 15 and older (up to 18 and in high school)
- J1: Included in J2 requirements and not designated separately

Races

Each EMBWL team will race the other teams at home and away. All EMBWL races are held on Sundays. The ski areas for these races are Nashoba, Bradford, Ski Ward, or Blue Hills. In the past, races have also been held at Wachusett Mountain. When finalized in November, the schedule can be found on the team website along with directions to the various ski areas.

At each race there is a “host” team. The home team is most often, but not always, the host team. The host team is responsible for setting the race courses (whether giant slalom or slalom), providing bibs, timers, and any other required or necessary equipment.

In addition, the host team provides the volunteers necessary for running the race such as registration, gatekeepers, starters, timers, recorders, and awards ceremonies. These mandatory parent assignments are required for families of all racers and parents/guardians will be required to work at two or more races that their racer participates in. When you receive your registration form, you will also receive a description of the work positions and a “mandatory parent work assignment” form. While many of the positions involve support on race day, others do not. Please help out in any way possible.

Race registration begins at 8:00 am for all racers on Sunday morning race days. Check the schedule posted on the NVSC website carefully for confirmation of race dates and locations. Each ski area has an area designated for registration, either in the lodge or a nearby building like the “Race Shack” at Nashoba. Each racer, when registering, is given a bib with a number that corresponds to their starting position. Racers must purchase a lift ticket (unless they have a season’s pass to that particular ski area). Racing bibs are collected at the end of the second run by volunteers in the finish area.

Race day course inspection will begin at 8:30 am – racers should meet their coaches in the finish area at 8:20 am. Racing will begin at 9:00 am. **No racer in the 9 and older groups is allowed to ski through the race course before the race. If this occurs, the result will be disqualification for that race.** J6 (8 & under) racers should also gather at the finish area to be escorted to the start of the J6 course. They are allowed to take a practice run on the course before racing begins.

An awards ceremony will be held at the end of the race after final results are compiled. Listen for an announcement over the PA system. Place ribbons are given to the top ten finishers in each group. All J6 (8 & under) racers receive either a place or participant ribbon at each race.

Racing Format – J6 (8 and under)

J6 racers will ski a separate course from the older racers. Their course is shorter and simpler, consisting of not more than 10-12 gates. A practice run through the race course is given to each J6 racer. The race then consists of two runs. On the first run, the girls go first in bib order, followed by the boys. On the second run, the girls again go first but in reverse bib order. The boys then follow, also in reverse bib order. Parents and others on the side of the J6 race course may assist a fallen J6 racer. Coaches and parent volunteers will assist these racers at the start and finish areas.

Racing Format – J5 and up

The format for the older racers is slightly different. This format applies to J5, J4, J3, and J2 racers. The race course will be set as a giant slalom (wider turns) or as a slalom (tighter turns). The type of course will alternate through the season and may change according to the conditions. Racers inspect the course in groups with their coaches prior to the race. Race day course inspection will begin at 8:30 am – racers should meet their coaches in the finish area at 8:20 am. Sometimes racers may be split between two different courses so it is important to determine which course they are racing on and make sure they inspect the correct course. Note that inspection generally takes place in larger groups and that the coach you inspect with may or may not be your Thursday night coach as all coaches don't attend all races. Usually only 3-4 coaches attend each race.

No practice runs are allowed through the main course. Skiing through the gates on the main course can result in disqualification under EMBWL rules.

All racers will ski in two runs. The race begins with the J5 girls, followed by the J5 boys, J4 girls, J4 boys, J3 girls, J3 boys, J2 girls, and J2 boys. On the first run, all racers ski in bib order. On the second run, racers ski in reverse bib order within their age/gender class. For example, the J5 girls still ski first on the second run but the start order is reversed with the J5 girl with the highest bib number skiing first and the J5 girl with the lowest bib number skiing last. The J5 boys then follow, also in reverse bib order, followed by the J4 girls and so on.

Race Rules (Please review with your child)

1. Bibs must be clearly visible during course inspections and during the race.
2. Racers can inspect the course from the top down, (after it has been approved), either by snowplowing or side slipping along the side, **BUT NOT ON THE COURSE.**
3. **AT NO TIME CAN A RACER OR A COACH SKI THROUGH ANY GATES OR COMBINATION OF GATES BEFORE OR DURING INSPECTION**, unless he is instructed to do so by a member of the jury. A coach may ski through a gate, but may not link turns. **AN INFRACTION SHALL LEAD TO A DSQ FOR THE DAY'S RACE!**
4. Each race will consist of two runs. If weather conditions prevent this from happening, the race should be scored on the basis of a single run race.
5. A racer who has received a DNF or DSQ in the first run will be allowed his or her second run.
6. **Any racer who loses a ski, except in the last three gates, is out of the run and should immediately leave the course so they do not interfere with other racers.**

A racer who loses a ski in the last three gates (the finish line counts as a gate) can continue on one ski through the finish, and the race will be timed and scored as a legal run.

7. **A RACER WHO HAS BEEN INTERFERED WITH ON THE COURSE MUST SKI OFF THE COURSE AT THE POINT OF INTERFERENCE. He or she must ski along the outside of the course and immediately request a provisional run from the Finish Line Referee. IF THE RACER FAILS TO LEAVE THE COURSE OR IF THE RACER DOES NOT GO**

IMMEDIATELY TO THE FINISH LINE REFEREE, NO PROVISIONAL RUN WILL BE GRANTED.

8. Racers who report late at the start and are no longer in seed order will be seeded by the Start Referee at the end of their seed.
9. A racer who commits to a higher level ski league (which does not include any high school team league) shall not ski in any League races. However, if a racer wishes to have the opportunity to evaluate “Tri-State” and/or any upper level ski league, he/she MUST FIRST submit a formal written request to the President of the League by January 1. A racer may have no more than 2 starts in a higher order ski league in any season before he/she has disqualified him/herself in this League for the given race year. EMBWL rules state that a start constitutes a day of racing.
10. To race in the League Championship, a racer must have raced in at least half of the regular season races or a minimum of three races (Trophy/Fun race does count toward the three races, Piche does not).

Rules Variations – J6 (8 and under)

1. A practice run is allowed before racing begins. At the discretion of the race chairmen and coaches, a couple of practice runs may be allowed.
2. There are no disqualifications in J6 racing. Parents are allowed and encouraged to help the younger ones through the course. Youngsters who skip gates will have 60 seconds (one minute) added to their time to prevent winning, but will not be disqualified.
3. All J6 racers qualify to race at the League Championship, whether or not they meet the requirement of participating in half the regular season races.

Points and Scoring

We would like to emphasize to all parents and racers that we race as a team, not individuals. Every racer on the team has the opportunity to score points for the team regardless of their skiing ability. Boys and girls are ranked separately. The times of both runs are added together for each racer’s total time.

1. Points are awarded to the first ten places, with 10 points to first place, nine to second, etc.
2. Places are determined by the combined time of two successful runs.
3. If two racers have the same combined time, the racer with the fastest single run receives the highest place standing. If both racers have identical times on both runs, the racer with the higher bib number (or seeding) receives the higher place standing.
4. If in any age group there are not 10 racers who have had two successful runs, then the racers who have completed one successful run will be awarded the remaining places based on time. To qualify, the racer MUST have started in both runs.
5. For the purpose only of determining club seeding and standings, all racers who do not finish in the top ten but who start both runs will be awarded .10 (one-tenth) points.

An awards ceremony will be held at the end of the race after final results are compiled. Listen for an announcement over the PA system. Place ribbons are given to the top ten finishers in each group. All J6 (8 & under) racers receive either a place or participant ribbon at each race. Racers are encouraged to stay for the awards to cheer on their teammates (and the racers from other teams) whether they placed individually or not.

Piche Qualifier Race

The Francis Piche Trophy Qualifier is a race that offers an opportunity for our strongest racers to compete against skiers from Tri-state and other youth racing teams from eight area states on a higher level of competition. The three age groups that are included in this race are J5, J4, and J3. Typically each team in the EMBWL is invited to send twelve racers to the Qualifier. The Qualifier is held early in February, at Bradford Ski Area, with the top six finishers in each age group (both boys and girls) advancing to the Francis Piche Invitational Race at Gunstock Mountain in Guilford, New Hampshire. This is a two-day event, Friday and Saturday, during the first or second weekend in March. The racers and their families are responsible for all expenses incurred in conjunction with these two races. The Nashoba Valley Ski Club President along with assistance from other board members and coaches will select the final candidates for the Piche Qualifier Race from qualifying racers. The following guidelines are used to assist in the decision:

1. Placement in races prior to entry deadline.
2. Comparison of race times to top racers from other EMBWL teams in the same age groups in the same race.
3. Coaches evaluation of the racer's performance and attitude.

You will be notified in advance if you are invited, but racers who think they may be invited should join the United States Ski Association (USSA). The Piche Invitational is a USSA event and only members may be invited to participate. Piche racers must be members of the USSA at a cost of \$70 - \$140 per racer, depending upon age. To get a USSA number, membership, and application forms use the USSA website at www.ussa.org. Please join as soon as possible as it can take at least two weeks to process the application.

While this race is open to EMBWL racers, it is not an EMBWL race. As such, participation in the Piche Qualifier does not count towards the minimum number of races required in order to be eligible for the League Championship Race.

EMBWL Kathy Bartolini Trophy Race

The Kathy Bartolini Trophy Race (Fun Race) takes place on the same day as the Piche Qualifier in February and is intended for all EMBWL racers not participating in the Piche Qualifier. The top 10 finishers in each age group will receive awards and all J6 (8 and under) racers receive participation ribbons. This race counts towards the minimum of races required in order to be eligible for the League Championship Race. Look for more information on the team website in the weeks prior to the race.

League Championship Race

Always a high point of the season, this is the one day that all the clubs come together at one time to race

for league bragging rights, (and the coveted EMBWL Champions' Trophy). To qualify, a racer must complete at least half of the regular season races (except there is no minimum number of races for J6 8 and under racers). The top 10 finishers in each age group will receive awards and all J6 racers receive participation ribbons. This year, the Championship Race will be held in March. We hope for sunny weather for this daylong event not only for the racers, but to add to the enjoyment of the barbecue picnic we'll set up at the base of the hill. Look for more information on the team website in the weeks prior to the race.

Weather Cancellations

In general, if the hill is open the race is on. In the rare event a race is cancelled by the race chairman due to dangerous conditions, the decision will be made by 7:00 am on race day. If a race is cancelled, a message will be posted on the NVSC website home page and an email sent to the club membership.

Directions

Directions to the locations of the various races are available on the NVSC website. The locations of the majority of races are presently planned for Nashoba Valley (Westford), Ski Bradford (Haverhill), Ski Ward (Shrewsbury), and Blue Hills (Canton).

3. PRACTICES

Practices begin at 6:30 pm on Thursdays. By that time, racers should have tickets purchased, equipment on, and be ready to ski, meeting their coach/group by 6:20 pm at the designated meeting area. Practices end at 8:30 pm except for J6 (8 & under) racers, which end at 8:00 pm. There must be a responsible adult at the ski area for each J6 racer whenever there is participation in a NVSC event. **All racers must be able to ride the ski lifts unassisted.**

The focus will be on skiing techniques during some practices, particularly early in the season, and on racing techniques and tactics at others. The type of course being raced on the upcoming Sunday, whether giant slalom or slalom, will often determine what is focused on in practice during a given week.

If during a practice, an NVSC racer gets separated from his/her practice group and is having trouble relocating the group, please make sure they know to ski down to the designated meeting area and go inside and inform the adults that are inside of the situation.

NVSC always has a parent volunteer at the designated meeting area as well as a parent volunteer skiing to handle this type of event. The volunteers are in radio contact so the indoor volunteer will call the ski volunteer to come on down and escort the child back to the appropriate practice group.

In general, if Nashoba is open then practice is on. If a practice is cancelled, a message will be posted on the NVSC website home page and an email sent to the club membership.

4. REQUIREMENTS

Racer's Commitment

Racers are expected to attend as many practices and races as possible.

A racer who is in good shape and physical condition has a better chance of succeeding and a lesser chance of becoming injured.

All racers should get a good night's sleep before races. It is equally important to maintain a healthy diet. Drinking fluids before and during practices and race days is important for staying hydrated.

Review race rules and race day procedures with parents and/or coaches so racers know what to expect and will be ready to participate.

Always show respect for NVSC coaches and those from other teams. Always show respect for teammates, racers, members of other teams, and their property. Don't forget to show respect for your parents who support your ski racing and other activities.

Equipment and Clothing

Skis – foot skis or snowblades are not allowed in any of the races. All skis must have releasable bindings with ski brakes. Skis should be safety checked by a reputable ski shop before use. Skis should also be tuned. NVSC runs a pre-season ski tune clinic each year for those “do it yourselfers” and has information and links on tuning on the club website. In addition, there are several nearby ski shops who can provide tuning services.

Ski boots – should be well fitted, flexible, front entry buckle boots (no rear entry boots except on very young, small children).

Poles – all racers should use properly sized ski poles as soon as they are able. It is acknowledged that J6 racers may be too young to safely or properly use ski poles.

Guards – older racers may find that pole and shin guards may be necessary in order to protect hands and shins from impact with gates during slalom races.

Helmets – due to concern for the safety of young skiers and league rules, helmets (ASTM F-2040 and/or CE-EN 1077 certified or an equivalent standard that may come into affect) are mandatory for all racers.

Goggles – are strongly recommended for all practices and races. They help protect eyes from gate poles and they keep out the elements. Clear goggles are recommended for evening practices while tinted goggles are beneficial on sunny days.

Clothing – weather appropriate clothing should be worn to all practices and races. Please remember that temperatures on the chairlift and at the top of the hill are usually colder than your back yard. Layering works best. If gloves or socks get wet, having an extra pair of each handy can be helpful to stay comfortable. Please note also that GS (a.k.a. race) suits are NOT a requirement to have in order to race.

5. RACE DAY

For the Racer –

Show up early, no later than 8:00 am.

You and/or your parent(s) should go to the registration area, check in, and get your bib.

Purchase a lift ticket (unless you have a season's pass to that particular ski area). Some areas offer discounted lift tickets for racers. Be sure to ask.

Dress for the race. Stretch and take a couple of easy free runs to warm up. **DO NOT ski through the J5 through J2 race courses before your first run. You will be disqualified!** If you are a J6 racer (8 and under), do not ski through the race course until an adult tells you it is time for taking your practice run.

Be on time for course inspection. Race day course inspection will begin at 8:30 am – racers should meet their coaches in the finish area at 8:20 am. For J5 and up racers, sometimes racers may be split between two different courses so it is important to determine which course you are racing on and make sure you inspect the correct course. Note that inspection generally takes place in larger groups and that the coach you inspect with may or may not be your Thursday night coach as all coaches don't attend all races. Usually only 3-4 coaches attend each race.

Take free runs but keep checking in at the top of your race course so you are on time for your first and second runs. Ski fast, ski safe, have fun, and good luck!

Listen for and/or check on your times and cheer on your teammates!

Attend the awards ceremony that usually takes place about 30 minutes after the last racer finishes.

For the Parents

Make sure your racer has a good breakfast.

Ensure that your child arrives for races on time (no later than 8:00 am).

Make certain they have the necessary equipment and clothing.

Help your child register for the race, purchase lift ticket, and get them to course inspection on time. The coaches will take over from there.

If you have a work assignment this day, find out where you need to be and when. Please note that if a parent is scheduled to work at a given home race, only the parent can pick up their racer's bib at the designated volunteer table in the Race Shack during morning registration to ensure that assignments are kept (i.e.: the racer will not be able to pick up their race bib if the parent/guardian is scheduled to work the race that day so please plan the race morning accordingly).

If you are not working the race, dress warmly and join the crowd at the finish area. Help cheer on your child and all racers (ringing cowbells is optional!).

6. TICKETS/PASSES

Please note that NVSC registration fees do NOT include lift tickets which are required for all practices and races. Racers must purchase a lift ticket (unless they have a season's pass to that particular ski area) for all practices and races.

7. MANDATORY PARENT WORK ASSIGNMENTS

Except for the coaching, NVSC is run entirely by parent volunteers. The assistance of all racer families is essential to race operations. Volunteering is mandatory for families of all racers and parents/guardians will be required to work at a minimum of two races.

First, this is a parent participation program and our children will see and feel your support both on and off the snow. Second, without parent participation, races cannot be run efficiently and safely. Through your participation in running races, you will gain a better understanding of the skill of your child and how the races are run. Working a race is an opportunity for parents to get to know each other better and to view their children (and other racers) in a more competitive setting.

A “mandatory parent work assignment” form with position descriptions is included as part of the registration package and must be completed and returned in order for your registration to be complete. If you do not make a selection on the form, assignments will be made for you. While many of the positions involve support on race day, others do not. Please help out in any way possible. You will be notified as to your assignment when the schedule is complete. If you sign up for certain Coordinator or Assistant positions, it may preclude you from additional race day assignments.

Please note that parents scheduled to work at a given home race will need to pick up their racer’s bib at the designated volunteer table in the Race Shack during morning registration to ensure that assignments are kept (i.e.: the racer will not be able to pick up their race bib if the parent/guardian is scheduled to work the race that day so please plan the race morning accordingly).

Be sure to check the work assignment page on the NVSC website for the latest information and schedules. You can also connect with others through the website if you need to switch assignment dates.

8. NVSC SPECIAL EVENTS, AWARDS, AND OTHER FUN STUFF

Home Race Pot Lucks

At all home races, NVSC provides coffee, hot chocolate, and munchkins in the morning. As race day tends to often extend through lunch, families can feel free to bring things to share whether it be sandwiches, chili, munchies, baked goods, beverages (water, gatorade, soda), etc. for our racers and parents. This is low maintenance, no sign ups or anything, just bring whatever you'd like to share that you think everyone would like and NVSC will provide the tables. You can also coordinate with other team families that you may be friends with and pool efforts. The only rule is no grills.

Race Team Challenge (aka Parent/Child Race)

After one of our home races, we race with the kids. Take each other on, side by side, on a modified giant slalom course with family bragging rights at stake! Awards and refreshments are provided. Look for more information on the team website in the weeks prior to the event.

Championship Cookout

Always a high point of the season, this is the one day that all the clubs come together at one time to race

for league bragging rights, (and the coveted EMBWL Champions' Trophy). Look for more information on the cookout on the team website in the weeks leading up to the League Championship Race.

Expect to find breakfast items like coffee, hot chocolate, juice, fruit, and pastries as well as lunch items like burgers, hot dogs, sausages, veggie dogs/burgers, and beverages. There will be sign ups for things that people would like to bring for sharing like salads, chili, wings, desserts, etc. Volunteers will also be needed to help pitch in shopping, setting up, cooking, and cleaning up after the event. Any help is greatly appreciated, especially those with grilling and tailgating experience!

Feel free to bring your own folding chairs and mini-tables as they're very handy to have during this day-long fun event.

End of Year Banquet

The banquet will be held shortly after the end of the racing season. It will be our last get together before we all go off in different directions until the snow begins to fall once again. Every racer receives an award at the banquet. Look for more information on the team website in the weeks leading up to the event.

Awards

At the annual banquet, trophies will be awarded to the three racers in each division (both girls and boys) who have earned the highest points during the season. All other racers will receive an award for participating.

Standings will be posted weekly on the team website.

NVSC Family Ski Trips

Look for announcements regarding special pre and post race season NVSC family ski trips. Trips will often involve discount lodging rates, group lift ticket rates, and other special activities including NASTAR racing.

NVSC Logowear

NVSC has clothing and logowear available for purchase such as vests, sweatshirts, and hats. Check the team website for items available and ordering information

9. CONTACTS

For club information during the season, visit the team website or:

President

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Vice-President

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