

Overview of the Detroit Lakes High School Nordic Ski Team

Cross Country or Nordic Skiing originated centuries ago as a means of transportation, hunting and survival in the Northern European countries. Skiing has evolved and changed through the years from a necessity to a form of recreation and sport. Today Nordic Skiing is regarded as having the best-conditioned athletes of all sports. Skiing is an excellent form of exercise and is a complete workout including upper and lower body movements. The skiing motion has very little impact on the body making it a lifelong sport that can be enjoyed by people of all ages.

Today there are two basic forms of Nordic Skiing. The first is the traditional style that most people think of when they think of Nordic skiing. The technique is called by several names such as Classic, Traditional, Diagonal, Striding, and so on. For the most part we will use the term Classic Technique. This is when the skis glide along the snow in a set of parallel tracks that have been set by a grooming machine or another skier. The basic motion is an exaggerated walk while sliding your feet on the ground. The arm motion is the same as walking or running, meaning the opposite arm moves forward at the same time as the opposite leg. The legs and the arms work together to move forward down the trail in a straightforward fashion.

The second style of skiing is called either Skating or Freestyle skiing. We will use the term skate skiing most often. Skate skiing uses a motion much like a hockey player uses to move up and down the ice. The skis form a V shape during the skate motion. The skier mostly uses the inside edges of each ski to form the forward motion. The arms in the skate technique work in a parallel motion bringing both arms forward and pushing off at the same time. There are a few different techniques within the skate technique. They are the V-1 the V-2 and the V-2 alternate. The three variations are slightly different and each one is used in a different situation. Hills, flat areas, slight up hills or down hills. Even though there is a sideways motion with the lower body the overall motion is focused down the trail.

Eligibility

All skiers must have a white card and meet all of the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) requirements prior to the first day of practice. No one will be allowed to practice until they have met the required guidelines for participation in this activity. A current list will be on file in the high school and middle school offices. If there are any questions regarding the white card process please see one of the coaches or the Athletic Director.

The rules and guidelines for eligibility set forth by the MSHSL will be enforced throughout the season. All students must be making progress towards graduation. If a student fails to do so they become ineligible. Make sure classroom work is taken care of before ski meets and practice, stay current or work ahead in class. If there are any problems in the classroom let one of the coaches know right away. **Be smart use your heads, and look out for one another.**

Equipment (Please Buy NNN Binding equipment)

Equipment is a very important part of skiing. If you do not know much about skiing or much outside of recreational skiing, **Please see one of the coaches before going out and buying new skis.** Most places around that sell skis do not know anything about skiing or if they do most of them do not know how to fit a skier with a set of skis, especially to race. (Scheels, the Sport Shop, or just any other place that sells more than just skis)

The type of skis and the quality play a huge role in the sport. Like the two different techniques there are two different types of skis, one for each type of skiing. Most people may be familiar with the classic style that is a no wax ski or fish scales. This type of ski does not need any wax to be skied on. This type of ski is adequate for recreational skiing, but is usually too wide and slow for the performance side of the sport. Racing skis for classic require a grip or kick wax placed under the foot to help provide push for the forward motion in classic skiing. Classic skis are usually longer than skate skis. Each ski is selected for the skier's weight, height, and ability.

On top of the ski sits a binding where the ski is attached to the ski boot. There are two different styles of bindings on the market today. They are the SNS style and the NNN style. Each is very good but the two are not compatible with each other. The Detroit Lakes Ski Team uses the NNN style binding for the most part. This is important because most of the kids can then use the school skis or a friend's skis.

Ski boots are sold in many different styles and types. There are specific types for skate and classic skiing. Each is better for each type of skiing. There is a combi boot, which allows a skier to use the same boot for both skate and classic. This may be the best route to take for most people and beginners.

Ski poles have also come a long way over the years. The bamboo poles are not used much anymore. The poles are now made of either fiberglass or carbon fibers or a blend of both. The style of skiing once again dictates the length of poles.

Once again I would like to stress the importance of talking to the coaches prior to buying a set of skis.

Skiing has several different levels of ski equipment and with those levels comes different costs. Remember when buying skiing equipment it can be used for a lifetime and not just thrown in a closet after graduation from high school. In most cases a person gets what they pay for. I do not suggest buying a new high-end pair of skis in your first year of skiing or at least until you know you like the sport and want to continue skiing competitively. Older skiers may want to consider upgrading their equipment as they reach a higher level and grow out of their old equipment.

School Equipment

The ski team does have several sets of ski equipment that can be used by individuals. The team has ski boots in a range of sizes. The team has several sets of skis, both classic and skate skis. This equipment is intended for the use of those that would like to try skiing without making the financial commitment to

skiing right away. The team equipment is there for those that would like to try the other style of skiing prior to investing in a pair of skate skis or classic skis. After a skier has been in the sport and is planning on sticking around for a while it will be expected that they purchase their own equipment to allow others to use team equipment. Ski equipment is expensive and the team's items are to be taken care of as if each skier owned those items themselves. Any damage that occurs to the team's equipment hurts everyone. I know that there may be situations that damage is unavoidable and we can deal with that. But in the cases when intentional disregard for the team's equipment occurs the individual or individuals that caused the damage will be responsible for fixing or the replacement of the damaged items.

School Uniforms

The school colors in Detroit Lakes are Red and White. (Black will also be acceptable.) It will be expected that each skier will try and wear these colors at ski meets as their outerwear for warm-ups. During races it is required that each skier wear a team uniform. The ski team has a race suit that will be issued to each skier prior to the first ski meet. Each skier must wear the uniform provided at all ski meets. The race suits are to be worn during ski meets only. Each skier has the responsibility of maintaining and washing their uniform throughout the season. **Wash only in cold water and hang dry.** The race suits will be collected at the end of the year.

Clothing

Clothing is an important part of skiing. The clothing must allow for unrestricted movement. Heavy clothing is not necessary for skiing. The most important factor is to dress in layers. Jeans and heavy winter coats are not acceptable skiing attire and will not be allowed during practice. Clothing shall consist of a base layer, an intermediate layer (if necessary), and a top layer.

A base layer must be a material that has the ability to wick moisture away from the skin. Moisture close to the skin is cooled and this is what causes the wet cold feeling we all want to avoid. **Do not use cotton as a base layer.** Cotton absorbs moisture and does not allow perspiration to escape. There are many different materials on the market that wick moisture. Polypropylene is an excellent choice of fabrics. Socks are also an important base layer item. Cotton socks should never be worn during skiing. Wool socks are one of the best materials for socks. Wool is one of the best choices for socks. As wool gets wet it does not lose its insulation properties and thus keeps your feet warm when they are wet.

An intermediate layer can be another base layer type material or a fleece of some type. In most cases you will find an intermediate layer is not necessary unless the weather is very cold. Always have something along just in case conditions change. It is always better to have more than you need. Once again stay away from cotton.

A top layer should be a material that is windproof and is able to shed snow and other moisture easily. We all fall and we need to have something that the snow will just fall off of when we stand up out of the snow. Most material designed for activity allows for the moisture out but not back in. In most cases a light windbreaker is all that is necessary, but each person has their own comfort level and has to make that choice.

Hats and gloves must be worn during skiing. It has been proven that when the temperature drops below 32 degrees without a hat or gloves the blood circulation decreases by 25%. Hats should be made of a wicking material. They do not need to be really heavy to be effective. Gloves or mittens should be worn at all times. Heavy winter gloves are not needed (are you seeing a trend here?) Glove or mitten weight should be dependent on the temperature and the comfort level of the individual.

Clothing should allow for movement and activity in the winter. Skiing is not about standing or sitting around. Dress in layers and be prepared for anything. I know that many of you have different tolerances for temperature. The coaching staff will have the final say in determining whether or not clothing is adequate for participation.

Attendance and participation

Skiing is a MSHSL sponsored sport just like any other sport. Attendance is required in order to participate. Each participant must attend all practices unless prior arrangements have been made and approved by the coaching staff. In the event a participant must miss a practice they must notify one of the coaches prior to the absence. In the event of an illness notice may be given upon returning to practice. I know different things come up that are unavoidable but try to schedule appointments and other items accordingly.

At practice the time we have is very precious. The daylight hours are very short during our season and we must take full advantage of every minute. This means practice time is to be used for practice. Skiers need to be prepared with all equipment ready for practice and clothes changed in a timely fashion. Skiing time is not time for homework and or waxing skis. Skiers will be expected to participate in the daily workouts. There is a great deal of alone time and it takes discipline to stay on task. **Skiing is a fun sport that can be done while having a good time.**

Meet Requirements

Skiers will be required to attend and participate in all the ski meets. The ski meets are an important part of the sport and gives each skier a chance to become better through competition. Skiers will be called upon to do their best, to make an effort, and help the team in every ski meet. I know that there are different levels of skiers and all I expect is each skier to give 100%.

Letter and patch requirements

In order to qualify for a Detroit Lakes Letter Award a skier must...

- Participate in practice.
- Attend and ski in at least 7 Varsity races
- Make improvements throughout the season
- Show good sportsmanship
- Have a good attitude towards self and others

In order to qualify for a Detroit Lakes Patch Award a Skier must...

Participate in practice.

Attend and ski in at least 7 Jr. Varsity races

Make improvements throughout the season

Show good sportsmanship

Have a good attitude towards self and others

Extra Skiing Events

Skiing is a lifelong sport, which holds many opportunities for outside events. Events may include citizen ski races overnight ski camps etc. The coaching staff encourages the attendance of such events. It would, in fact, be beneficial to each skier involved to attend outside events such as but not limited to those listed above. The official position that will be taken in these events is outlined as followed. The coaches will help in gathering information and aiding in the sign up process. Based how it directly effects the high school ski team will determine the supervision necessary. For the high school events we will use the school districts official policy. If events occur before or after the season the coaching staff has no obligation to supervising any events. In fact the coaching staff cannot according to the MSHSL hold practices or events after the last official day of the team or individual season. Parent supervision will be required in any or all of these cases.

Ski Website: www.detroitlakesxcski.com