



# Junior Programs Handbook

10/20/2012

# NSCF Junior Programs Handbook

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## 1. Overview

The Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks' junior programs are designed as a series of skiing opportunities meant not only to teach skiers the sport of cross-country skiing, but to challenge and engage them in the sport as they grow and develop. All of our programs aim to teach the sport in a manner that allows for skiers to attain the greatest level of proficiency, improved fitness, and a passion for the sport as an active lifelong pursuit.

Each program has specific objectives tied into the developmental needs of its target audience. Skiers are placed into groups based on a variety of factors including age, skill and fitness level, physical, emotional and cognitive maturity, as well as social dynamics. The idea is that each skier should be placed in an optimal situation that engages them and provides an appropriate challenge for their ability level. At times this means that skiers might be best served by a group slightly older or younger than our listed age guidelines.

The NSCF's youth programs are divided into two categories: Lessons programs (NSCF Junior Nordics) and racing programs (NSCF-FXC Jr Devo, Prep and Comp Teams). **Junior Nordics** is the club's beginning lessons program aimed at skiers age 5 to 13 and is focused on progressively building a full repertoire of skiing skills. **Jr. Devo Team** is an introductory race team for skiers age 9 to 14 which focuses on shoring up technical skills, while introducing basic training concepts and the social aspect of being part of a team. **Prep Team** is the next step, a team geared toward middle school students (age 11 to 15) with the goal of refining technique and building fitness in preparation for a smooth transition to high school, regional and/or national level junior racing. **Comp Team** is a full-service junior ski program for high school and post-graduate athletes whose goals range from making the varsity at their high school to success on the world stage. For more details on each program, see sections 2 through 5.

### 1.1 Sign-up

Sign-up forms are available online, through the mail, or in person. One Saturday in mid-October (October 20 in 2012), the club hosts a sign-up day where parents can come and sign-up themselves and their children for the various winter programs, renew their NSCF membership, and have their questions answered in person. Sign-up forms are also available on the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks website at [www.nscfairbanks.org](http://www.nscfairbanks.org) under 'downloads', and links are also available from the website to the Nordic Ski Club's online registration. Sign-up forms for Junior Nordics are also available at Goldstream Sports, Beaver Sports and Raven Cross Country.

### 1.2 Organizational Meetings

Each of the programs has an organizational meeting at the beginning of the winter. During the first 15 minutes of the first day of lessons for Junior Nordics, all of the groups meet inside on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the main building with parents and skiers for basic information and instructions before heading outdoors for a ski. Similarly the Jr. Devo Team coaches meet with parents and skiers on the first day of practice to layout plans and go over expectations for the program. The Prep and Comp Team have a parents meeting in the first couple weeks of November to organize for the coming winter.

### 1.3 Questions

Questions on Junior Nordics should be directed to the Junior Nordics Coordinator, Erica Carroll at [irnordics@nscfairbanks.org](mailto:irnordics@nscfairbanks.org). Additional questions on racing programs or skier placement should be directed to NSCF Director of Skier Development, Pete Leonard at [pete@peterleonard.net](mailto:pete@peterleonard.net).

### 1.4 Junior Programs Oversight

The Junior Programs Oversight Committee is responsible for most subjects associated with the NSCF's junior programs and reports to the NSCF board of directors. There is a representative of each of the various junior programs, as well as liaisons with key partners in the community. Parents or individuals with questions or concerns are encouraged to contact the committee. Current members of the Junior Programs Oversight Committee include:

Helena Reuter (Jr. Devo Team)  
Rebecca Levey (Prep Team)  
Cathy Donaldson (Comp Team)  
Sue Faulkner (At-large representative)  
Kathy Bue (Home School/Lathrop HS Liaison)  
Kristan Kelly (Home School Liaison)  
Eric Troyer (West Valley HS Liaison, Chairman)

Vacant Seats: NSCF board representative

## 2. NSCF Junior Nordics

A skier's path most often begins with the Junior Nordics program. Within Junior Nordics a skier progresses through different color-coded groups as they learn progressively more complex skills, with the eventual goal that by the age of ten, skiers have been exposed to and acquired a level of proficiency in a full slate of skiing skills in both classic and skate techniques. Skills are learned through a variety of play-like drills as well as activities and games that are designed to put the skier in a situation which reinforces a given skill or skills. Fun is paramount in these activities, and fitness and athleticism are developed through the pursuit of technical proficiency.

The progression of groups begins with the Stripes group for 5-6 year-olds, and moves through the Green (age 6-7), Yellow (age 7-8), Orange (age 8-9), Purple (age 9-11) and Red Groups (age 11-14). The Stripes through Yellow Groups focus on learning basic skiing skills and classic technique and gradually progress to more complex skills and skate technique in the Orange and Purple Groups. The Red Group is for older skiers who aren't interested in the Jr. Devo Team and sometimes includes a subset of older beginners.

### 2.1 Orientation

The first day, everyone meets inside the main building on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor for the first 10-15 minutes of class. This will give the coaches a chance to meet the parents and kids and explain some rules and answer questions.

## 2.2 Time and Location

The winter is divided into three different sessions. The early winter session (Session I) runs from November 8 to December 20, the mid-winter session (Session II) runs from January 13 – February 28, and the spring session (Session III) runs from March 19 – April 4. Each session includes 6-7 lessons, subject to weather.

During sessions I and II, lessons are held on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays. Skiers can take lessons 1, 2 or 3 days a week. During session III, skiers take lessons on both Tuesdays and Thursdays. Lessons are held Tuesday and Thursday from 6:30 to 7:30 PM and Sunday from 2 to 3 PM.

All lessons take place at Birch Hill Cross Country Ski Center, and - with the exception of the orientation meeting on the first day inside the main building on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor – skiers meet by their group’s color-coded sign outside in the ski stadium.

## 2.3 Weather Cancellations

Lessons will be cancelled when it is colder than 5 below at Birch Hill. Cancellations will be announced on the Junior Nordic Hotline (457-4437) two hours prior to lessons. Be sure to call the hotline - Birch Hill is often much warmer than town.

## 2.4 Coaches and Ratios

Each Junior Nordics group is run by a volunteer coach, typically with the help of a parent helper. The NSCF hosts multiple opportunities for training for our coaches throughout the winter and covers a variety of subjects such as skiing technique, teaching technique, developmental physiology, lesson planning and more. We strive to keep the groups at around 10-12 skiers with 1-2 volunteer coaches, or a ratio of 1 coach to 5 or 6 skiers.

WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR COACHES!! Club activities and benefits are accomplished through the time and energy of a dedicated and active group of volunteers. Please consider lending a hand to make Junior Nordics awesome! You do not have to be an expert skier to be a great coach and foster a young skier’s passion for this magical winter activity. Training and support is provided.

## 2.5 Expectations

- **Be on Time** Plan to be a Birch Hill 15 minutes early to allow for parking and getting skis on. Children are expected to be at their meeting spots (outside on the snow with equipment on) at the start time. The groups leave promptly. We don’t want kids to be standing around getting cold. IT IS THE PARENTS RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE SURE THEIR CHILD HAS MET UP WITH HIS/HER GROUP!! IF YOU CAN’T BE THERE ON TIME, PLEASE COME ONLY IF YOU PLAN TO SKI WITH YOUR CHILD UNTIL YOU FIND THEIR GROUP.
- Skiers are expected to stay with their group and participate in group activities.

## 2.6 Equipment

NSCF does not provide equipment. A number of local ski stores including Beaver Sports, Goldstream Sports and Raven Cross Country have ski packages for sale. The sales staff at these stores are quite knowledgeable.

Additionally, a number of local groups hold ski swaps in the fall – these can be great opportunities to get second-hand equipment and save some money on equipment for growing children.

REMEMBER TO PUT YOUR CHILD’S NAME ON ALL EQUIPMENT!!! This includes skis, poles, both boots, and clothing.

**Skis:** Skiers should have one pair of waxable skis (i.e. skis without fish scales - skis with fish-scales do not work well in normal Fairbanks skiing conditions). For beginning skiers, the skis should come to between the nose and forehead when stood on end.

**Boots:** Skiers should use warm boots that allow for natural ankle movement. It is important that boots fit well – boots that are too tight may limit circulation and cause cold feet. Boots that are too big make it difficult to control and balance on skis. For reasonably priced used boots, check out the ski swaps that are organized each fall by various groups around town. Be sure your boots fit your bindings! (There are two types of bindings for XC skis: NNN with two ridges and SNS with one. A boot from one system will NOT work with a binding from the other!)

**Poles:** Skiers should have one pair of poles that come up to the upper arm or shoulder. Younger skiers will often ski without poles to keep hands warm and to develop balance and basic skiing skills before adding poles later.

**Clothing:** Skiers will be skiing at a range of temperatures, please dress your child for success. All skiers should dress in layers. For the youngest skiers, snowsuits are the best way to stay warm and happy in the Fairbanks winter. Mittens keep hands warmer than gloves, and hats, ear muffs, neck warmers, balaclavas and wool or synthetic base layers and socks are a must. Older skiers might opt for an insulating mid-layer and wind-resistant outer layer on top and ski pants over long underwear on the bottom – see local shop offerings for an idea.

### 2.6.1 Junior Nordic Hats

All children receive a Junior Nordic hat the first time only when they sign up for lessons. You may purchase additional hats for \$15.

## 2.7 Special Events and Activities

The NSCF organizes a variety of special events throughout the winter that cater to Jr. Nordic skiers.

For skiers interested in trying their hand at racing, the Flint Hills Town Race Series is composed of 4 races throughout the winter with special distances for young skiers. 2011-12’s dates are Nov. 17, Dec. 1, Jan. 12 and Jan. 26. Entries are free(!) for all school-age racers and entry forms are available online and at local ski shops. See [www.nscfairbanks.org](http://www.nscfairbanks.org) under ‘competition’ for more details.

The Candy Cane Ski is an afternoon of family fun in December. There is a non-timed event which starts at 2pm– FREE to children pre-school through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Santa is there to ski with the children and there are plenty of candy canes for the skiers to pick up along the course. After the fun, warm up with free hot chocolate and cookies! This year’s event will be held on Sunday December 16 at 2 PM, in conjunction with the Sunday Jr. Nordics session (Tuesday and Thursday skiers are welcome too!).

Each year on the day after Christmas (Dec 26), the NSCF hosts the Ski Your Age in Kilometers, where the goal is just as it sounds – to ski your age in kilometers at Birch Hill! This is a great community event that brings many families to Birch Hill to participate in this non-competitive event. Various achievement levels are available for skiers of all ages and ability levels! Stay tuned to the NSCF listserve for details.

On February 10, in conjunction with regularly scheduled Junior Nordics, the ski club will host the 7<sup>th</sup> annual NSCF Winter Carnival. The afternoon features an hour and a half of various games lead by the athletes of the NSCF-FXC Comp and Prep Teams, and is capped off with a scavenger hunt.

On March 30, the NSCF-FXC program will be hosting the Interior Youth Championships for skiers 16 years of age and younger. The day features multiple skiing events with a kid-centric flavor, including favorites like the 100m classic sprint and the freestyle ski cross. A special awards ceremony is held at the end of the day to recognize the youngsters’ achievements. This is a great event for both first timers and seasoned racers!

## **2.8 How Can Parents Help?**

NSCF Junior Nordics is a volunteer organization. One of the best ways to help is by being a coach or substitute coach. The ski club provides multiple coaches education opportunities focused on our youth coaches throughout the year. The goal of these clinics is to help coaches be confident and successful leading a group of young skiers and teaching them appropriate technique in a fun environment.

If leading a group seems like too much, consider being a coach’s assistant and skiing with a group. No need to be an expert skier! We often encourage parents to help with another group than their child’s to create a better dynamic for both the child and group.

If you do not want to ski yet still want to contribute, there are plenty of administration and logistics that need volunteer help throughout the ski season. Please contact the Jr Nordics Coordinator, Erica Carroll if interested ([jrnordics@nscfairbanks.org](mailto:jrnordics@nscfairbanks.org) or call (907) 457-4435.

Another great way to help out is by providing snacks. See below for more details.

### **2.8.1 Snacks**

Junior Nordics does not provide the after-skiing snack. Snacks are organized and provided by Jr. Nordic families. Please sign-up for the day you would like to bring snacks (sign-up sheet is at

registration day in the fall and upstairs during all lessons). Please sign-up for either drinks or food and bring enough for 20-30 children!

\*\*A Reminder that we are teaching these young skier how to be active and enjoy a healthy lifestyle. This includes eating healthy foods.\*\*

## 2.9 Cost and Refund Policy

2012-2013 Jr Nordic Sessions:

<b>Sessions 1 and 2</b>		
<b>Involvement</b> (number of sessions and days per week for session 1 and 2)	<b>Cost</b> (NSCF member/non-member)	<b><u>With Session 3</u></b> (Session 3 is 3 weeks, 2 days/wk) (NSCF member/non-member cost)
1 session, 1 day per week	\$55/95	\$95/\$175
1 session, 2 days per week	\$95/175	\$135/\$220
<b>Or</b>		
2 sessions, 1 day per week		
2 sessions, 2 days per week	\$155/245	\$195/\$295

Refunds will not be issued after October 31, 2012.

If you need a receipt for the lessons, please email [jrnordics@nscfairbanks.org](mailto:jrnordics@nscfairbanks.org). Please request by email and you can pick it up when you come to class. Receipts will not be available after the last day of class.

## 3. NSCF-FXC Junior Development Team (Jr. Devo)

The NSCF-FXC Junior Development Team (formerly Junior Nordics Comp) is the ski club's introductory racing team for skiers age 9 to 13. Skiers should be proficient in both skate and classic technique before joining the Jr. Devo Team – as such the Jr. Nordics lessons program is a natural precursor to the Jr. Devo Team. The full slate of basic skiing skills that was learned in Junior Nordics is further refined and any gaps that remain are filled in. More complex skills may also be introduced. Skills are learned through drills, games and group skiing activities. The Jr. Devo Team also serves to introduce skiers to some basic concepts of ski training, ski waxing, and the social aspects of skiing as part of a team. Participation in races is encouraged and viewed as an opportunity to apply the skills that a skier learns during practice.

### 3.1 Orientation

During the first practice, there will be a brief informational meeting for parents and skiers for 15 to 30 minutes.

### **3.2 Training Times and Locations**

The Jr. Devo Team meets three times a week for training from November 1 – April 15, including during school vacations. Practices are held Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6:15-7:30 PM and on Sunday afternoons from 1:45-3 PM. Training typically takes place at Birch Hill, although practice is sometimes moved to other locations for tours or just a change of scenery. Such changes will be announced in weekly email updates. In the case of consistent cold weather, practices are sometimes shifted to an indoor facility such as the UAF Student Recreation Center (SRC).

### **3.3 Weather Guidelines**

Only in exceptional circumstances such as extended cold snaps or ice storms does the Jr. Devo Team cancel practice. When it is colder than 10 below, practices are moved indoors and the group participates in various exercises and activities. During extended cold snaps, the group will often move practice to the Student Recreation Center at UAF.

### **3.4 Attendance**

It is no secret that consistent practice is essential to improving technique, fitness and knowledge in skiing. However, we recognize the value in maintaining balance in life and that skiers will have to miss practice at times due to school work, music lessons, family commitments, etc. We believe it is up to each skier and their family to decide what is the right amount of skiing. As such, the NSCF-FXC race teams do not have a required attendance policy.

### **3.5 Coaches**

The Junior Devo Team training is run by a group of committed volunteers coaches. Often coaches are also parents of one or more skiers in the group. Frequently these coaches have years of experience as both racers and Junior Nordics coaches prior to coaching the Jr. Devo Team. Like Jr. Nordics coaches, these coaches have multiple opportunities throughout the year to brush up on their coaching skills and learn the latest technique concepts during coach training sessions hosted by the NSCF.

### **3.6 Expectations**

- Skiers should be proficient at both skate and classic technique before joining the Jr. Devo Team
- Be on Time
- Have a positive attitude – remember your positive attitude is contagious!
- Be ready to put in the effort toward getting better.
- Be willing to take feedback from coaches and your fellow skiers.

### **3.7 Equipment**

Proper gear is essential for making practice fun and productive instead of frustrating. It doesn't have to be new, but it must fit, and skiers need both skate and classic gear to take advantage of all workouts.

**Skis:** Skiers should have both classic and skate skis. Skis should be in good condition and of a durable construction (kids race skis are usually of adequate durability, as are mid-range adult 'racing skis). We advise holding off on purchasing top-of-the-line (lightweight) skis until the skier is fully capable of taking proper care of their equipment.

Skis should be properly waxed by the athlete and coach or parent for each day's practice. Waxing advice will be posted on the team whiteboard prior to practice each day.

**Boots:** Skiers should use warm boots that allow for natural ankle movement. Bring both sets of boots (skate and classic) to each session. A good pair of combi boots may be passable, but for optimal ease in learning technique, two pairs is encouraged by the end of the Jr. Devo age.

**Poles:** Skiers might begin their time on the Jr. Devo Team with only one pair of poles that comes up to the shoulder, but by the end of their tenure they should be using separate classic and skate poles. Skate poles should come up to between the chin and lips, while classic poles should come up to the middle of the shoulder. Poles outside of this range – particularly poles that are too long for classic skiing – make it extremely difficult and frustrating to learn good technique.

**Clothing:** Skiers should come to practice with appropriate clothing for training in cold weather. This includes mittens, warm gloves or split mitts (aka lobster gloves), hats, ear muffs, neck warmers, buffs, balaclavas or other means of covering the skiers face and head. Skiers should dress in layers which should include a synthetic or wool base layer, potentially an insulating mid-layer, as well as a wind-resistant outer layer. Depending on conditions, more clothes may be needed.

### 3.8 Racing

The NSCF's junior racing programs view competition as an opportunity to apply the skills one learns during training, much like a test in school or a recital for a dance class or a concert for a music group. As such, skiers are strongly encouraged, but not required to take part in local races. We recognize that the actual results at this age have little bearing on the eventual ability of a skier, and try to keep the focus firmly on the application of skiing skills and racing tactics, and challenging ones abilities.

We feel strongly that skiers should race age appropriate distances as these allow a skier to ski at high speed for the entire distance (1-3 km for J4 and younger skiers). This allows the skier to reinforce good technical skills, instead of getting tired and developing sloppy habits. In Fairbanks, the Town Race Series, Turkey Day Relays, Besh Cups and Interior Youth Championships all feature age appropriate distances. Longer spring events such as the Tour of Anchorage and Sonot Kkaazoot should be viewed more as endurance challenges, and we encourage an emphasis on completing the distance, not racing as hard and as fast as possible.

At this level, we feel 5-15 races are a good amount over the course of a season.

### 3.9 Waxing

Jr. Devo provides waxing support for both local races and Besh Cups. For local races, an opportunity will be provided for skiers to glide wax their skis in the lead-up to the race, and for classic races the

Jr. Devo coaches will organize kick waxing for the day's event. For Besh Cups, waxing support will be provided by either one of the Jr. Devo coaches and/or in conjunction with the Prep and Comp Team coaches.

A waxing clinic is provided for parents on the basics of wax application at the beginning of the season.

### **3.10 Special Events and Activities**

Kilometer Chart – the Jr. Devo keep a kilometer chart throughout the season to log the distance they've skied over the course of the season. At the year-end banquet, they are given an award recognizing their achievement.

Tour of Anchorage Trip – Sometimes in March the Jr. Devo Team organizes a trip to the Tour of Anchorage ski race. This is a popular trip among kids and families. Parent help is essential for this to happen.

Spring Trip – A season-culminating ski tour (often times overnight) is one of the highlights for the Jr. Devo Team. Parent help is essential in pulling this trip off. Look for details to be emailed as spring approaches.

### **3.11 How Can Parents Help?**

There are many ways a parent can help out. The most essential is getting kids to practice and picked up on time. Parents can also help a lot in providing an opportunity for "team building." Hosting a post-tour get together, or a pre-race wax night and/or potluck/pasta feed are just a couple of ways to enhance the social side of Jr. Devo. There will be various tasks to help with during the season too, such as race entries and helping with the spring trip. Stay tuned to emails from the Team Leader for announcements.

### **3.12 Cost and Refund Policy**

The cost for a winter on the Jr. Devo Team is \$400. Refunds will not be issued after October 31, 2011.

If you need a receipt for the program, please email [jrnordics@nscfairbanks.org](mailto:jrnordics@nscfairbanks.org). Receipts will not be available after the end of the season.

## **4. NSCF-FXC Prep Team**

The NSCF-FXC Prep Team (formerly FXC Devo Team) is aimed at middle school skiers (born from 1999 to 2001) looking to take their skiing to a higher level. As the 'Prep' name suggests, this program is designed to prepare skiers for an easy and effective transition to high school competition, as well as regional and national level junior racing if the skier so chooses. Further refinement of skiing technique, including the introduction of special applications and modifications, is applied through creative and challenging physical training where close attention is paid to key

periods for the development of speed, strength and stamina which occur around the growth spurt. Further instruction in ski waxing and basic training theory, also occur throughout the season.

#### **4.1 Orientation**

There is an organizational meeting for parents at the beginning of each winter season. This year's meeting is tentatively scheduled for November 11, pending completion of improvements to the Birch Hill Cross Country Ski Center.

#### **4.2 Training Times and Locations**

During winter, the Prep Team has practices up to 5 times a week, although most weeks have only 3 or 4 training sessions. We try to practice at set times throughout the winter, but sometimes take a day off for a special event, because of travel, or just for some added rest. Practices occur on Tuesdays from 6 to 7:30 PM, Wednesdays and Fridays from 5:30 to 7 PM, and on Saturdays and Sundays either in the form of a race, a tour, or an afternoon training session.

Most practices are at Birch Hill, although we do try to vary our location when the weather cooperates.

#### **4.3 Weather Guidelines**

The Prep Team skis until it is colder than 10 below. When it is between 10 and 20 below we will often go for a run and then finish with some indoor activities such as strength or flexibility training, technique drills, stairs or even watching a World Cup race video.

#### **4.4 Attendance**

It is no secret that consistent practice is essential to improving technique, fitness and knowledge in skiing. However, we recognize the value in maintaining balance in life and that skiers will have to miss practice at times due to school work, music lessons, family commitments, etc. We believe it is up to each skier and their family to decide what is the right amount of skiing. As such, the NSCF-FXC race teams do not have a required attendance policy.

#### **4.5 Coaches**

The Prep Team is coached by the NSCF's certified professional coaches.

**Pete Leonard** is the Head Coach of NSCF-FXC and the Director of Skier Development for the NSCF. He has been in Fairbanks since the program's inception and is entering his sixth winter here. Prior to that he spent two years coaching in Lake Placid, NY after graduating from Williams College where he was captain of the ski team. He has been a member of the Junior National coaching staff for Alaska since 2007, head serviceman for the US J1 Scandinavian Cup Trip in 2011, and a coach for the US Ski Team at the 2011 National Elite Group Camp, and the 2012 World Junior and Under-23 World Championships in Turkey. He is a USSA L100 technique instructor, a member of the Cross Country Alaska Competition Committee, a board member of the Alaska Ski Education Foundation, and serves on the USSA Junior Committee.

**Chris Sanville** is the Assistant Coach of NSCF-FXC, working with the Prep and Comp Teams. A 2012 Graduate from Bowdoin College in Maine, Chris competed collegiately and has coached at various times for clubs in his native Minnesota, and at the world famous Snow Farm in New Zealand in the summer of 2011.

## 4.6 Expectations

- Skiers are expected to abide by the Prep Team code of conduct which is signed by both the skier and parent before training with the team.
- Skiers are expected to work hard and have a positive attitude.
- Skiers must have the skiing skills, physical fitness and desire to keep up with the group or a subgroup at training in order to assure safety of all members.

## 4.7 Equipment

**Skis:** Skiers should have one to two pairs of skis for each technique (classic and skate). If a skier has only one pair for a given technique, they should be of a quality and durability that is appropriate for playing games or using in the terrain garden, so the skier can participate fully in practice. Only once a skier has learned to take proper care of their equipment do we recommend purchasing a pair of lightweight race skis. The athlete should be responsible for waxing and maintaining their skis, and the best way to do this is to begin collecting a waxing set-up at home.

**Boots:** Skiers should use either a combi boot that allows for natural movement of the foot and ankle, or have one pair of classic and one pair of skate boots.

**Poles:** Skiers should have one pair of poles for classic and one pair of poles for skate technique. Skate poles should come up to the lips, and classic poles should come up to the tip of the shoulder. Poles that are too tall or too short make it difficult and frustrating for a skier in developing proper technique.

**Clothing:** Skiers should come to practice with appropriate clothing for training in cold weather. This includes gloves or split mitts (aka lobster gloves), hats, ear muffs, neck warmers, buffs, balaclavas or other means of covering the skiers face and head. Skiers should dress in layers which should include a synthetic or wool base layer, potentially an insulating mid-layer, as well as a wind-resistant outer layer. Depending on conditions, more clothes may be needed.

**Other:** Skiers should bring a training bag with them to practice which should include running shoes for indoor training and practices that involve running (both happen once a week or when it is cold), a change of clothing for after practice to stay dry, warm and healthy, water (an insulated drink belt is a nice option for on snow), and a snack to begin the recovery process. Good training and recovery habits start now!

## 4.8 Racing

The NSCF's junior racing programs view competition as an opportunity to apply the skills one has learned during training, much like a test in school or a recital for a dance class or a concert for a music group. As such, skiers are strongly encouraged, but not required to take part in local races.

We recognize that the actual results at this age have little bearing on the eventual ability of a skier, and try to keep the focus firmly on the application of skiing skills and racing tactics, and challenging ones abilities.

We feel strongly that skiers should race age appropriate distances as these allow a skier to ski at high speed for the entire distance (up to 5 km for J3s, and up to 7.5 km for J2s). This allows the skier to reinforce good technical skills, instead of getting tired and developing sloppy habits. In Fairbanks, the Town Race Series, Turkey Day Relays, Besh Cups and Interior Youth Championships all feature age appropriate distances. Longer spring events such as the Tour of Anchorage and Sonot Kkaazoot should be viewed more as endurance challenges, and the emphasis should be on completing the distance, not racing as hard and as fast as possible.

At this level, we feel 10-20 races is an appropriate number over the course of a season.

#### **4.9 Waxing**

The Prep Team coaches with the help of parent volunteers provide waxing support for all in-town and Besh Cup races. Time is set aside at practice prior to local races for skiers to glide wax their skis with the help of the coaches. This is an important time for skiers to learn good waxing habits and how to take care of their own skis. Additionally, kick waxing help is available for all classic races the morning of the race. For out of town races, arrangements are made for waxing as well.

#### **4.10 Special Events and Activities**

Besh Cups – Often skiers on the Prep Team are new to the Besh Cup series. A good way to build into the series is to first try the local weekend, and the next year try one weekend of races out of town, before trying the whole series the year after.

Spring Trip – We aim to conclude our season with an overnight team ski trip each spring.

#### **4.11 How Can Parents Help?**

Approximately 50% of the funding for the Prep and Comp Teams comes from tuition and the other half comes from fundraising efforts. As such, we ask all families in the program to volunteer for our various fundraising efforts when they are available, and we ask each family that has been involved in the program for a year or more to take a leadership role in a fundraiser or other task that helps the program. Further details are available at annual meetings.

#### **4.12 Cost and Refund Policy**

Cost for the winter session which runs from October 30 to April 14 is \$650.

The refund policy for the Prep Team is as follows: If an athlete ends his or her membership in the program prior to its ending date, he/she will be refunded a daily, pro-rated amount minus \$300. The prorated amount will be calculated from the date of receipt of written notification (email or otherwise).

## 5. NSCF-FXC Comp Team

The NSCF-FXC **Comp Team** is for high school and post-graduate (i.e. college-age) skiers who are looking for a full-service junior ski program. The program provides year-round training opportunities for skiers with goals that range from making the varsity team at their high school, to success on a world stage. The program is designed to work in conjunction with local high school ski programs, so skiers are provided with year-round continuity in their training and also able to be an intrinsic part of the local skiing community. Regular workouts throughout the year provide the opportunity to develop fitness and improve technique. In addition, ancillary aspects of skiing, such as individual goal-setting, training planning and review, physical testing, and assistance with ski selection and preparation are all part of the program. Various opportunities for training camps and competition trips are provided during both the summer and winter season.

### 5.1 Orientation

There is an organizational meeting for parents at the beginning of each winter season. This year's meeting is tentatively scheduled for November 11.

### 5.2 Training Times and Locations

Training times and locations for the Comp Team vary widely through the year, but we endeavor to provide a wide-range of opportunities to fit the diverse needs and goals of skiers involved in this program.

Training opportunities occur on varying schedules for most of the year.

### 5.3 Weather Guidelines

It is exceedingly rare that we cancel a practice due to weather. However, it is not uncommon that we will alter practice plans – sometimes on very short notice – due to conditions such as extreme cold, smoke, or anything else that could affect safety or long-term health. It is essential that skiers are prepared for changes (i.e. bring running shoes) each day to practice.

### 5.4 Attendance

It is no secret that consistent practice is essential to improving technique, fitness and knowledge in skiing. However, we recognize the value in maintaining balance in life and that skiers will have to miss practice at times due to school work, music lessons, family commitments, etc. We believe it is up to each skier and their family to decide what is the right amount of skiing. As such, the NSCF-FXC race teams do not have a required attendance policy. As part of our goal-setting process, we try to help Comp Team athletes establish how much skiing is appropriate and consistent with their goals.

### 5.5 Coaches

The Comp Team is coached by the NSCF's certified professional coaches.

**Pete Leonard** is the Head Coach of NSCF-FXC and the Director of Skier Development for the NSCF. He has been in Fairbanks since the program's inception and is entering his sixth winter here. Prior to that he spent two years coaching in Lake Placid, NY after graduating from Williams College where he

was captain of the ski team. He has been a member of the Junior National coaching staff for Alaska since 2007, head serviceman for the US J1 Scandinavian Cup Trip in 2011, and a coach for the US Ski Team at the 2011 National Elite Group Camp, and the 2012 World Junior and Under-23 World Championships in Turkey. He is a USSA L100 technique instructor, a member of the Cross Country Alaska Competition Committee, a board member of the Alaska Ski Education Foundation, and serves on the USSA Junior Committee.

**Chris Sanville** is the Assistant Coach of NSCF-FXC, working with the Prep and Comp Teams. A 2012 Graduate from Bowdoin College in Maine, Chris competed collegiately and has coached at various times for clubs in his native Minnesota, and at the world famous Snow Farm in New Zealand in the summer of 2011.

## 5.6 Expectations

- Skiers are expected to abide by the Comp Team code of conduct which is signed by both the skier and parent before training with the team.
- Skiers must have the skiing skills, physical fitness and desire to keep up with the group or a subgroup during training in order to assure safety of all members, and prevent an excessive burden on the coaches and program. Modified training programs can be established.

## 5.7 Equipment

**Skis:** Skiers should have at least two pairs of skate and two pairs of classic skis. One pair of each technique should be for games or marginal conditions where damage could occur to the ski, and at least one better pair in each technique should be reserved for races and training in good conditions. Older Comp Team skiers might elect to have multiple pairs of racing skis that are optimized for certain snow conditions.

**Boots:** Skiers should have one pair of classic and one pair of skate boots.

**Poles:** Skiers should have one pair of poles for classic and one pair of poles for skate technique, as well as a pair of dryland poles for ski-walking and bounding. Skate poles should come up to the lips, classic poles should come up to the tip of the shoulder, and dryland poles should ideally come up to the middle of the chest.

**Clothing:** Skiers should come to practice with appropriate clothing for training in the days conditions. In winter time this means adequate clothing and layers for skiing in subzero temperatures for extended periods or completing multiple practices in a day.

**Other:** Skiers should bring a training bag with them to practice which should always include running shoes, water and a snack, as well as a change of clothing for after practice. Good recovery and good health are essential for success on the snow! Skiers should also obtain roller skis, ideally one pair each of skate and classic. A team rollerski order is organized each May.

## **5.8 Racing**

The NSCF's junior racing programs view competition as an opportunity to apply the skills one has learned during training, much like a test in school or a recital for a dance class or a concert for a music group

At this level, we feel 15-30 races is an appropriate number over the course of a season.

## **5.9 Waxing**

The Comp Team provides waxing support at Besh Cups, Senior Nationals and other local races where skiers are not supported by their High Schools.

## **5.10 Special Events and Activities**

Training Camps – Traditionally, we run team training camps in southcentral Alaska each Summer and Christmas Break. These provide an opportunity for skiers to learn to live and function in a group of their peers, while devoting themselves to their ski training for a week.

Racing Trips – We organize various racing trips during the winter, depending on schedules and interest. Frequently this is a trip to Senior Nationals, but, depending on group interest, may also include other options such as spring trips to Europe, Spring Series or to other Alaskan races.

## **5.11 How Can Parents Help?**

Approximately 50% of the funding for the Prep and Comp Teams comes from tuition and the other half comes from fundraising efforts. As such, we ask all families in the program to volunteer for our various fundraising efforts when they are available, and we ask each family that has been involved in the program for a year or more to take a leadership role in a fundraiser or other task that helps the program. Further details are available at annual meetings.

## **5.12 Cost and Refund Policy**

Cost for the year round program begins at \$2000 for J1 and older skiers and \$1600 for J2s. Further details on seasonal options and payment plans can be found on the sign-up sheet.

The refund policy for the Comp Team is as follows: If an athlete ends his or her membership in the program prior to its ending date, he/she will be refunded a daily, pro-rated amount minus \$300. The prorated amount will be calculated from the date of receipt of written notification (email or otherwise).