

MAHTOMEDI NORDIC SKI TEAM

2010-2011

"It's easy to have faith in yourself and have discipline when you're a winner, when you're number one. What you've got to have is faith and discipline when you're not yet a winner." Vince Lombardi

GENERAL SKIING INFORMATION

PRACTICES

Practices will begin Monday November 15th and run until the State meet on February 17th.

Students must have all forms and fees into the Activities Office and have the clearance card from the office before they are able to participate in any practice.

Practices will begin at 2:45pm and run until approximately 4:30-5:00pm when on campus. (If we travel off campus for a practice or event, we will let you know ahead of time what might be an approximate time we will return.)

Practices will be held Monday through Friday and most Saturdays (A.M.) and will take place rain or shine, snow or no snow.

Dryland practice will occur until there is enough snow on the ground for skiing. Dryland consists of running, roller skiing, hill bounding, pole hiking, strength, circuits, balance drills, etc.

Once on snow (if it's the real thing) we will continue to practice on campus and times will not change. If the snow is at Trollhaugen, some skiers will travel there to practice. There is no way we can accommodate all skiers at Trollhaugen (we have the means to only take so many on the bus and Trollhaugen has only so much space to ski) so we will need to rotate some of the newer skiers into the mix at different times. **We will do our best to get every skier on snow at some point.**

RACES

Conference races begin in early December and are typically held on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Races are normally held at the host school or at a regional park or trail selected by the host school (e.g., Battle Creek Park, Lake Elmo Park, Cottage Grove Ravine, etc.). A schedule of events is attached.

In the event of poor snow conditions, many (but not all) of the races are backed up with reservations at Trollhaugen. Start times for those races will be 6pm unless otherwise noted.

Home races on the Mahtomedi trail are scheduled for Dec. 16, Jan. 25 and Feb. 3.

Our events include both classical and skating techniques and are usually from 3 to 5km in length, or approximately 15-40 minutes.

Conference races will usually have a Varsity and Junior Varsity event. The varsity event will be limited to the top 7-10 skiers for both boys and girls. For the JV event, we will try to include as many skiers as we can, subject to scheduling, bussing and venue limitations.

Special events include the Mesabi Invitation at Giants Ridge in early January, 'Ski Camp' over Martin Luther King weekend and the Conference and Section Championships along with the JV Championships toward the end of the season.

We will also be doing other non-conference events when available.

It is important to understand that we are limited on how many can be accommodated for each event. Newer skiers will get an opportunity to compete when they have developed the necessary skills and/or we have the chance to put more skiers into an event. The coaches will inform skiers when they will be competing. Once again, we will do whatever we can to make sure every skier has an opportunity to race.

Cancellation or rescheduling of events due to snow conditions or weather will be determined by the coaches and in accordance with the MSHSL guidelines. At that time, both schools (high school and middle school) will be notified and we will try to provide an update through the team email list and/or

website. Decisions will be made as early as possible but by necessity, this may occur with limited advance notice.

It is important for all to understand that changes in schedule (dates, location, race format/technique) can happen. We will do our best to provide as much notice as possible, but some degree of flexibility is essential.

EQUIPMENT

Skiers need to supply their own equipment including skis, boots, poles, ski bag, a basic supply of waxes and a waterbottle and carrier.

Separate classic and skate equipment is preferred, especially for varsity level skiers. 'Combi' skis may be adequate for beginning, younger and still-growing skiers.

The team 'Ski Swap' is an affordable means for obtaining used equipment. Please contact Randy LaFoy for details on what is available, the process, etc. Area ski shops often have special high school packages at reasonable prices.

A basic supply of waxes includes a cold and a warm glide wax, and three or so kick waxes to cover cold, medium and warm snow conditions. ('GripTape' has proven to be a relatively effective all-conditions kick wax.)

Skiers should have clothing suitable for heavy exercise in variable winter weather. This includes appropriate layering with moisture-wicking underlayers and wind resistant overlayers. Clothing made primarily of cotton is typically not effective. Also, skiers should bring a DRY set of clothes for after the practice or race.

Skiers will be required to have hats (headbands or earmuffs) and gloves/mittens available while on snow or when temperatures so dictate. Also there will be no 't-shirt and shorts' skiing. We are not here to prove how tough we are by wearing too little. A sick skier does not help themselves or their teammates.

Ski equipment may be stored in the laundry room between the boys and girls locker rooms at the high school. This room is shared by several teams and is NOT 100% secure. It must also be kept clean and in order (no equipment scattered on the floor) or we will not be able to use it.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Mesabi/Giants Ridge Invitation: Jan. 8, 2011 at Giants Ridge. The Mesabi Invite is the largest high school race in the country, attracting over 1200 participants. At this race we are able to field both varsity and JV boys and girls teams. But, that is only 10 skiers each for boys and girls (plus one alternate each). Participation in this event will be primarily based on skier ability, since the level of competition in the event is very high.

Ski Camp: Jan. 15-17, 2011 at Rainbow Resort near Wauban, MN. This is a training camp weekend used primarily to get us ready for the major races that take place towards the end of the season such as the conference championships, section championships and the state meet. This is an intense weekend with morning and afternoon workouts geared more towards advanced and intermediate skiers. Participation in ski camp is a bit more open than for the Mesabi Invite, but again, it will generally be limited to varsity and more advanced/older JV skiers.

Please do not be disappointed or offended if your skier does not attend these events. With the limited numbers and the intensity of both, it is very rare that newer/learning skiers participate in these events. For the newer skiers these are opportunities to strive for in the upcoming years and a reward for their hard work. And hopefully we'll have a 'normal' ski season that includes SNOW which would result in ample opportunities for everyone to be involved in a variety of different things.

COMMUNICATION

The primary form of communication will be through announcements made at practice, either through the coaches or through the captains, and periodic emails sent to the ski team distribution list. As stated previously, schedules can change on short notice so **it is important that skiers attend practice (and pay attention!) so that they stay well-informed** and for parents to periodically check with their skier and for emails from the team.

We would like to make the email distribution list available to all parents so that parents can communicate with other parents, for example to arrange car-pooling to events. We all live in about the same area and all go to the same events so car-pooling certainly makes sense (not to mention results in savings in expenses, vehicle emissions, etc.).

Open communication amongst everyone is important. Skiers are encouraged to talk with their team captains and/or the coaches if questions arise and parents are certainly welcome to contact the head coach as the need arises. If you have an issue with the team, please contact the coaches not the parent volunteers!

- A lot of information is also available on our team website: www.mhsnordic.org

Thank you Tom Stang!!!!

EXPECTATIONS

Many skiers in this program start off brand new to the sport so you should not be afraid or embarrassed about not knowing how to do it. We will teach you everything you need to know. So, take a deep breath and relax!

With many skiers new to the sport and it not being one of the “Big” sports we want you to know that the coaches take it very seriously and expect the same from the skiers. **You MUST show up for practices, be on time and be prepared. You must also show up ready to work hard and listen to instructions. This is a varsity sport, not a club!**

- If you are a Middle Schooler that is new to skiing and unsure of handling the commitment, you may want to try the Middle School Ski Program that meets twice per week.

We have a large team with skiers of all different ages and abilities and we have finite coaching and training resources. **If you are not willing to do what is necessary to improve in this sport, if you are not doing what is asked of you at practice, if you demonstrate behavior or actions considered detrimental to the team, the sport or the school, or if you do not show up for practices, you will be removed from the team.**

*****Parents, please discuss this with your skier. Remember, you will have already invested time and a fare amount of money and there will be no refunds for either.**

Most of all, we’re going to work hard, learn a lot and have fun while doing it!

TRAINING

Endurance is a key element in Nordic skiing. A steady progression to longer distance workouts is beneficial.

Strength is another key element. We will incorporate strength into most every practice.

Balance is critical to Nordic skiing. It is also a learned skill. Balance drills will also be incorporated into most workouts.

Technique is one of the most important aspects of skiing. Those who put the time and effort into developing good technique will most often reap larger rewards than those who rely primarily on conditioning.

Attitude/Mental toughness: As with any competitive activity, the mental aspect of racing is becoming better understood all the time, whether it is to push yourself over a large hill in a race, or to keep skiing while others are messing around. A strong mind along with specific goals and pre-determined means of achieving them are the keys to success.

FUNDRAISING

The school does provide the Nordic ski team with an operating budget. However, money that is raised outside of the team budget is what allows us to participate in the events mentioned earlier (Mesabi Invite, Ski Camp) and it also helps cover many other expenses such as race entry fees, travel (e.g., to Trollhaugen if need be), race waxing, hosting races, trail construction, trail grooming, grooming equipment, trail maintenance, training equipment, etc. Every skier benefits from our fundraising!!!!

Fall and Spring Raking. The team started raking as our primary fundraising activity back in 1995 in an effort to come up with something that could raise money in a short time frame and not be an expense to the parents (like buying all the candy bars that didn't sell) and it has worked out better than we ever dreamed. Over the years, we have developed many loyal customers for our services.

But, it doesn't happen without a lot of organization, maximum participation of all skiers/families and a ton of hard work. You will be contacted prior to the events so please set aside some time to lend a hand. The more people we have to help, the quicker the jobs get finished.

As with everyone's bank account, it takes time and hard work to get it built up and with a couple strokes of a pen, it can quickly go away. The money that is raised is what allows us to keep doing what we need to do to continue a quality program. Again, every skier on this team benefits from the fundraising efforts, so it is important that everyone participates.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

It is not an exaggeration to say that the season just would not happen without the support of the parents. We usually have no shortage of parents willing to do whatever is needed throughout the season helping us at practices, races, meetings and more. Speaking for the skiers and the coaches, we are immensely grateful for that. But, the most important and most appreciated thing you do is supporting and cheering for our skiers and we can't thank you enough for that!

AND FINALLY...

Cross your fingers, do a snow dance or whatever it takes to make the white stuff hit the ground and stay around!! We are very excited about the season and the chance to share our knowledge and our love for skiing with all of our skiers (and any parents that want some help). If you have any questions, concerns or just need to know something, please feel free to give us a call.

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"Nobody is a natural. You work hard to get good and then work hard to get better." Paul Coffey