



A parent guide for high school ski racing

Welcome!

The Three Rivers League Interscholastic Ski Racing Association (TRL) is one of seven member Leagues of the Oregon Interscholastic Ski Racing Association (OISRA). OISRA is the governing body for high school ski racing in Oregon and was organized in 1961 to govern and standardize competition.

This presentation was developed to enhance your understanding and enjoyment of our ski races.

General Information

- ❖ High school ski racing is a united effort combining the skill and knowledge of the Coaches, Race Officials and Parent Volunteers.
- ❖ The leagues are run by the coaches with input from parent representatives. The coaches vote on all policy and rules changes. Each school has a designated coach and parent representative (Parent Rep). Sometimes a coach is shared by more than one high school team.
- ❖ The coaches and Parent Rep are required to attend all league meetings. Any parent is also welcome to attend the meetings.
- ❖ Generally your first point of contact for questions or information is the Parent Rep. This is the person that will convey team information to the parents and racers. The Parent Rep usually coordinates team meetings, racer registration, transportation to training and races, etc.
- ❖ Sanctioned training usually begins December 1st and is a combination of dry-land training at the high school and mountain training.

The race season

- ❖ The first race of the season is usually a fun race. This is held the first Saturday after New Years. The three Portland area ski leagues compete against each other. All the racers get at least one run down the race course.
- ❖ Our League races begin the next weekend. All League races are on Saturday mornings and last most of the day. A make-up race can be scheduled for a Sunday.
- ❖ Usually there are six League races over a seven week period. Usually one week is a bye week, this depends on the calendar for that season.
- ❖ Racers compete individually and for team points at each race. Also weekly race points are accumulated for seasonal champions.
- ❖ Unless there is a weather issue or a technical problem, each racer receives two runs down the course. Order of run is usually Girls Varsity, Girls JV, Boys Varsity and Boys JV. Once everyone has run, there is usually a short break for lunch, then the second run begins.

Individual & team competition

- ❖ A Varsity team is comprised of at least three individual racers and not more than six. Team rankings are determined by taking the three fastest times from the first run and the three fastest times from the second run, arriving at a total run time for each team. (The fastest times may come from any of the team member for each run.)
- ❖ The remainder of the individuals not on the Varsity Team, race for JV points. Generally JV competitors run the same course as Varsity.
- ❖ In most cases the race results will be posted at the website no later than the end of the following day.
- ❖ Individuals may be moved up to race Varsity and down to race JV throughout the six season races.
- ❖ The team Coach determines the Varsity racers and each teams individual starting order.
- ❖ There is a team rotation each week which will also effect the racers starting position.
- ❖ The Leagues top individual racers and teams qualify to compete at the OISRA State Championships generally held beginning the first Wednesday of March with the actual races on Thursday & Friday.

Type of race & course

- ❖ High school ski racing uses two types of ski races. One is called a Slalom (SL) race which is the shortest race. The other is called a Giant Slalom (GS).
- ❖ A Slalom course is recognized by the type of poles used for the race course, a single pole. Where as the Giant Slalom uses two poles with a flag attached to the top of both poles.
- ❖ In SL when there is a turning pole and an outside pole, this forms a “gate” which the skier will ski between. Often times there may not be an outside pole. The racers must pass around the single pole on the “natural line” of the race course. Over the years the rules have changed and an outside pole may not always be used.
- ❖ The same is true for GS, there may not be an outside gate. The racers still must pass around the GS gate in the “natural line” of the race course.
- ❖ The distances between each turning pole is determined by course setting rules, terrain and discretion of the course setter. There are certain requirements for types of gate sets such as delays, flushes and hairpins. This also depends on the type of race, Slalom or Giant Slalom.
- ❖ On all types of courses, pole color is alternated between red and blue for each turn. A racer will not always be turning the same direction for each of those colors. For instance there may be a right turn at a red gate, followed by another right turn (or delay) at a blue gate. The next turn, regardless of the direction, would be at a red gate.

Examples of the two types

- Slalom pole



- Giant Slalom Gate



What's happening on race day?

- ❖ First of all it is important to understand there is a lot of preparation done during the week preceding race day!
- ❖ All the Race Official's positions must be filled.
- ❖ The Host Team parent representative must fill all the volunteer positions, which will be discussed later.
- ❖ Arrangements are made to have all the race gate poles, course maintenance gear and timing equipment arrive on time.
- ❖ The Coaches, Race Officials, Timing crew and person to handle the Check-in Desk arrive hours before the racers show up at the mountain.
- ❖ If everything goes right, all the gear is hauled to the top of the race course. Sometimes the resort gives assistance with snow machines and other times the gear is carried by hand onto the chair lifts. The setup crew receives early-on lift tickets.

The starting line

- ❖ While the coaches are setting the gates on the race course, the Start Referee, Assistant Start Referee and Starter are all setting up the starting area.
- ❖ This will include a corral area for the Assistant Start Referee to organize and stage the competitors so there is no delay in between racers. Generally the racers leave at about 45-60 second intervals. By the way, if a racer is not ready on time, they wait until the very end to go.
- ❖ A racer's start time is triggered when the he or she leaves the starting pad, tripping a timing wand with their shins.
- ❖ This electronic start equipment is hooked to a set of wires that runs all the way down to the bottom of the race course.
- ❖ The starter uses a headset with a boom microphone to communicate with the Chief of Timing, who is located in the timing booth at the finish line. This is a closed circuit so only the Starter and Timing officials can speak. The starter will also have a hand radio to communicate with the the other race officials.

The finish line

- ❖ At the same time everything else is being readied, the finish line area is set. This includes netting to enclose the “run-out,” the area the racers utilize to get stopped once they cross the finish line.
- ❖ The timing crew will setup the electronic sensors to capture the finish times for each racer. Both the start & finish sensors connect to equipment located inside the timing booth by wiring. No one is allowed in the timing booth while a race is running.
- ❖ In addition to the headsets as previously mentioned, the timing officials also utilize hand held radios to communicate with the race officials.
- ❖ Usually located with-in view of the finish area is a results board where a volunteer will post an unofficial race time for each racers run.

How is the race timed?

- ❖ Timing of the race is done with electronic sensors, one recording the start and one recording the finish. The start sensor is a switch, the finish time is triggered by the interruption of a infrared beam of light. This is special equipment intended to work specifically for ski racing. The finish sensors are designed to minimize “false finishes” caused by blowing snow or debris.
- ❖ These signals are recorded by a timer which has a printed tape and looks similar to a visa machine. The timer is hooked to a computer which receives the start and stop times and records a total elapsed time for each run.
- ❖ In addition to the hand timers, there is a duplicate set of electronics in place for backup times.
- ❖ This timing equipment is set to the exact time of day and records times to the thousandth of a second. So if a racer leaves the starting line at 10:05:00.000 a.m. and finishes at 10:06.21.998 a.m. his/her elapsed time will be exactly one minute, 21.998 seconds.
- ❖ The timer is sophisticated enough so that multiple racers can be on the course at one time!
- ❖ In most cases timing is able to transmit a live times to a website www.live-timing.com. From there you can select the race and watch what is happening as it happens on your computer at home or at the mountain with your smart phone!

Officials & Volunteers

- ❖ Each race takes a tremendous amount of work, before, during and after the race. This is all done with the help of the coaches, parents and after the race the athletes help take down the course.
- ❖ Throughout the season all teams will be called upon to furnish parent volunteers. Some will help the whole season and others will help during the race when their team has been chosen to host or co-host the race.
- ❖ Generally the Race Official positions will be filled by an experienced parent that will perform that duty for the entire season of six races.
- ❖ The remaining volunteers generally come from the host and co-host teams for that race. That's not to say you can't volunteer for more than the one race, or wait for your team to host a race to volunteer! You may volunteer for all six races if you can!
- ❖ Gate Judges (or gatekeepers) have need for the most positions. Usually a gatekeeper will be responsible to watch a skier race through 3 to 4 gates. So, if a course has 50 gates you can see this would require 12-17 gatekeepers!

List of volunteer positions

Officials:

- **Chief of Race** (Directs and controls the work of all officials)
- **Technical Delegate** (Ensures the race is run safely & effectively)
- **Referee** (Responsible for all matter involving safety & course legality)
- **Chief of Course** (Responsible for preparation of the race course)
- **Start Referee** (Responsible for the start area, ensures the order of start are followed)
- **Chief of Gatekeepers** (Organizes & supervises all gatekeepers)
- **Starter** (Ensure proper racer is in start, gives start command to the racer)
- **Start Assistant** (Assists starter, makes sure racers are ready to enter start line)
- **Finish Referee** (Responsible for the finish area, records all racers that cross the finish line)
- **Referee Mid Course** (Watches from mid-course, helps to communicate racer positions & actions on course)
- **Chief of Timing** (Ensures timing equipment is in place, racer times are recorded including backup times)
- **Assistant for Timing** (Helps in setup & timing the race)
- **Race Secretary** (Generates start orders & produces race results)

Race Volunteers:

- **Check-in Desk** (full season)
- **Gatekeepers** (10-18 people)
- **Course Maintenance** (3-6 people)
- **Crossing Guard(s)** (1-2 for GS races)
- **Start hand timer**
- **Start hand timer recorder**
- **Finish hand timer**
- **Finish hand timer recorder**
- **Results board** (1-2 people)

You make a difference

- ❖ At some point during the season all parents are asked to participate and help out with the races.
- ❖ Some volunteer positions require an ability to ski and others don't. You don't have to be a skier to volunteer and help!
- ❖ If you are interested in volunteering for one race, or the whole season, please inform your Parent Rep and they can put you in contact with the appropriate coordinator. Remember, you can volunteer even if your team is not hosting or co-hosting!
- ❖ The Three Rivers League has a strong tradition of quality officials. We can train and educate if you are unsure of your ability to perform a position.
- ❖ If your duty requires the use of skis, a lift pass will be provided.
- ❖ In addition, all volunteers get a "chit" or free ski pass from the resort at the end of the race.

Race morning athlete preparation

- ❖ Make sure your athlete understands their method of transportation to the mountain. Rules prohibit (no exceptions) an athlete from driving themselves to the mountain.
- ❖ Make sure (you) they are on time! This includes picking your athlete up after the race!
- ❖ Generally most teams have a procedure for race day. Please check with your Coach or Parent Rep for your teams schedule, transportation method, and race day process.
- ❖ Ensure they have all their racing equipment including their racing bib.
- ❖ TRL issues bibs to each athlete at the beginning of the season. This bib is theirs to keep when the season is over. If the athlete arrives at the mountain and has forgot their bib, they may secure a loaner bib (a deposit is required) at the check-in desk. There are a limited number of loaner bibs. If your athlete has lost their bib, contact your teams Parent Rep, you will have to purchase a new one.
- ❖ Do they have a lift ticket or season pass?
- ❖ Do they have their lunch?
- ❖ If for some reason your athlete is unable to attend the race, please notify your coach a.s.a.p. before race day or race morning. Most coaches can be contacted by cell phone.

Parents, join us at the race!

- ❖ Parents, family and friends are encouraged to come watch the event. There is no cost to watch the race!
- ❖ You may watch from any designed safe area along the course. Please stay behind any netting and avoid standing in unsafe areas such as the outside of a turn. Move up or down the hill from the obvious extension of space if a racer were to crash.
- ❖ Remember you are on a ski run and there may be persons skiing down the outside of the course too. Position your self in a safe area.
- ❖ As a spectator you should never ski on the race course
- ❖ You should never confront a race official, volunteer or an athlete. Speak to your Parent Rep or Team Coach if there is an issue or you witness a problem.
- ❖ In most cases, the finish area is usually easily accessible by walking. This is often times a great vantage point to view the race.
- ❖ You are always welcome to encourage your team or an athlete vocally. Please avoid yelling instructions to the racer if he/she should fall or commit a fault. **Let the race officials give the commands.** While you are trying to help, this is creating confusion and an unsafe situation.

Understanding a few rules

- ❖ Please remember, a gatekeeper is not to give any verbal instructions unless the racer asks for help. So, if a racer misses a gate (committed a fault) and the gatekeeper does not say anything, they are only doing their job!
- ❖ If a racer asks for help, and has not committed a fault, the gatekeeper will reply with a simple, one word command, “GO”
- ❖ If the racer has committed a fault and asks for help, the gatekeeper will respond with the word “Back” and points to the gate that the fault has occurred. The gatekeeper may call out the gate color, such as “Back to Red”
- ❖ Also remember, if a racer loses a ski, he/she is immediately disqualified for that run and needs to ski off the course and remain off, and not cross the finish line.
- ❖ There will be a board (usually located near the timing both or on the results board) where all DNS, DNF or DSQ are posted. The list will be posted immediately following each race run. The coaches and racers should always check this board for the postings, even if they are positive they had a clean run. An incorrect bib number might have been posted!
- ❖ Should a racer be listed on the posting and there is a dispute, there is a method for protest and the coach should be immediately informed. The athlete should hurry, there is a short time deadline for disputes.

Understanding the acronyms

- ❖ **DNS** – Racer “Did Not Start” this bib number is not showing a start (or finish) time.
- ❖ **DNF** – Racer “Did Not Finish” this bib number did not cross the finish line.
- ❖ **DSQ** – Racer is “Disqualified” for that run. He/she is accused of committing an infraction of the rules which is usually a missed a gate, straddled a gate, violated behavior rules, etc.

Any of these may be protested to the Jury. After all, mistakes can be made!

After the race

- ❖ All racers should check with their Coach or Parent Rep before leaving for the day.
- ❖ Once the race is finished and the course is called closed, take-down begins. The host and co-host teams, it's coaches, athletes and parents are responsible to bring all the gates down to the finish area for bundling and transport back to the transport trailer. They are also responsible to take down safety netting and roll it up and bring it to the bottom of the hill.
- ❖ If everyone helps this process goes amazingly fast but does take a little extra time.

If your athlete is a member of the host or co-host team and is riding home with you, please allow extra time after the race for take-down. It is mandatory that all athletes help out.

Where to look for more information?

The Three Rivers League has a wonderful website with lots of great information such as:

- ❖ Current information & updates
- ❖ League meeting dates and times
- ❖ Race dates, starting assignments & race results
- ❖ Host and Co-host teams race assignments
- ❖ Contact information
- ❖ League Documents
- ❖ Race Day forms
- ❖ Rules & TRL Standard Operation Procedures

Please visit the website at: www.ski3rivers.org