Ski and Snowboard Parent Tips – Bringing out the Best in Your Child

Western Region
Thank you parents!
Why Children Participate…

- Enjoy / Fun 28%
- Fitness 15%
- Be with Friends 13%
- Compete 13%
- Improve 8%
- Meet New People 8%

Why Children Drop Out…

- Takes too much time 18%
- Coach was negative 15%
- Enjoy other activities more 15%
- Lack of fun 8%
- It was boring 9%
- Parents’ emphasis on winning 6%
What Kids Want...

This is what kids have told us they want from their parents:
- Support and encouragement
- To let them know you are proud of them
- Watch them play
- Praise for their efforts
- Understand their sport and show an interest in being involved
- Have realistic expectations of their abilities

What kids don’t want from their parents:
- To yell at them during or after the game
- Swearing
- Abuse of the referee or coach
- Being pushy and pressuring
- Being critical

What kids want from sport:
- Have fun
- Learn and improve
- Be with their friends

TEAM - LOYALTY - INTEGRITY - RESPECT - ACCOUNTABILITY - PERSEVERANCE
#1: UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

- Make sure your child knows you love them whether they win or lose
  - You don’t want your child to fear failure
  - You want your child to be motivated to seek success
  - Your child depends on your loving support
Perceived Competence

• Perception of competence is a big factor in motivation which ties to effort
• Kids perceive their abilities differently than adults
Role of Praise

• Parents like to praise
• Myth: more praise = more motivation
• Myth: more praise = more confidence
• Praise only when warranted
Effort versus ability message

• Praise effort over ability and be specific
• Carol Dweck study – 400 5th graders
  – Half were told “You must be smart at this.”
  – Other half were told “You must have worked hard at this.”
  – Based on this difference in praise alone, effort-based group saw scores improve 30%, ability-based group saw scores drop 20%
Communication!

• Your coach should be communicating with you
  – Training & events detail
  – Feedback on child’s progress, attitude
• Your role as a parent: support the coach
• Your job as a parent: get a coach you can support
Athlete

Support

Parent

Plan

Coach

Criticism

TEAM - LOYALTY - INTEGRITY - RESPECT - ACCOUNTABILITY - PERSEVERANCE
Concussion Facts

• A concussion is a brain injury that affects how your brain works
• A concussion is caused by a blow to the head or body from contact with another player, hitting a hard surface such as the ground, or being hit by a piece of equipment
• A concussion can happen even if you haven’t been knocked unconscious
• If you think you have a concussion, you should not return to ski/ride on the day of the injury and until a health care professional says you are OK to return to play
Concussion symptoms differ with each person and with each injury, and may not be noticeable for hours or days. Common symptoms include:

• Headache
• Confusion
• Difficulty remembering or paying attention
• Balance problems or dizziness
• Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
• Feeling irritable, more emotional, or “down”
• Nausea or vomiting
• Bothered by light or noise
• Double or blurry vision
• Slowed reaction time
• Sleep problems
• Loss of consciousness
Why is it so important?

• Unlike with some other injuries, skiing/riding or training with concussion symptoms is dangerous and can lead to a longer recovery.
• While your brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have another concussion. Repeat concussions can increase the time it takes for you to recover and the likelihood of long term problems.
• In rare cases, repeat concussions in young athletes can result in brain swelling or permanent damage to your brain. They can even be fatal.
Recovery - How long does it take?

N=134 High School athletes

Collins et al., 2006, Neurosurgery
All Out! The Journey Continues

Team - Loyalty - Integrity - Respect - Accountability - Perseverance

USSA
# Understanding the Phases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foundation Stage</th>
<th>Pre and Post Puberty</th>
<th>World Class Performance Full Maturation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PHASE 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>PHASE 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>PHASE 3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Age</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre Puberty</td>
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<td>Puberty</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>(Growth Spurt)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–6 years old</td>
<td>6–10 years old</td>
<td>Girls: 10–13</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Play Age</strong></td>
<td><strong>Play Age</strong></td>
<td>Boys: 11–14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–4 years in sport</td>
<td>3–6 years in sport</td>
<td><strong>Training Age</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Participation</strong></td>
<td>Girls: 11–14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ride 1 day a week or less</td>
<td>Ride 2–4 days a week</td>
<td>Boys: 12–15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 days/year</td>
<td>60 days/year</td>
<td><strong>Training Age</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% freeriding</td>
<td>60% freeriding</td>
<td>Girls: 12–16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play many other sports - gymnastics or balance-based sports</td>
<td>Emphasis on fun and experience</td>
<td>Boys: 14–17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Play many complementary sports</td>
<td><strong>Training Age</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6–11 years in sport</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Participation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ride 4–5 days a week</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100 days/year</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30% freeriding</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Competition Period: (Dec–Apr)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of events: 5–10</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ratio 1:12 (compete:training)</td>
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**TEAMS - LOYALTY - INTEGRITY - RESPECT - ACCOUNTABILITY - PERSEVERANCE**
Challenge for early maturers/late maturers
### What Should We Help Them Focus On?

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<td><strong>PHASE 6</strong></td>
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<td>Post Puberty</td>
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<td>Age</td>
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<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–6 years old</td>
<td>(Before Growth Spurt)</td>
<td>Female: 16+ J2–J1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play Age</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Male: 17+ J1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–4 years in sport</td>
<td>Girls: 10–13: J4 (J5–J3)</td>
<td>Training Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Training Age</td>
<td>Boys: 12–15: J3 (J4–J3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ski around 1 day a week</td>
<td>4–8 years in sport</td>
<td>Girls: 12–16: J3 (J4–J2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 days a year</td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Boys: 14–17: J2 (J3–J1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 95% free skiing</td>
<td>Ski 4–5 days a week</td>
<td>Training Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play many other sports</td>
<td>70 days/year</td>
<td>Minimum 10+ years in sport</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At least 60% free skiing</td>
<td>Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Competition Period: (Jan.–April)</td>
<td>Ski 4–5 days a week</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of race starts: 10–15</td>
<td>120–140 days/year</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Ratio 1.6 (race:training)</td>
<td>At least 15% free skiing</td>
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<td>Play complementary sports</td>
<td>Competition Period: (Dec.–April)</td>
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<td>Number of race starts: 15–30</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ratio 1:5 (race:training)</td>
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**Foundational Skills/Technique**

- **Transition to competition**
- **Competition skills**

*based on the number of disciplines
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<td>Ski 3–4 days a week</td>
<td>100 days/year</td>
<td>Ski 5–10 days a week</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<td>At least 60% free skiing</td>
<td>At least 30-50% free skiing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ski around 1 day a week</td>
<td>70 days/year</td>
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**Foundational Skills/Technique**

**Transition to competition**

**Competition skills**

**Passion, effort, fun**

**Attitude, effort, fun**

**Dedication, effort, fun**

**World Class Performance Full Maturation**

**PHASE 6**

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<tr>
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<th>Full Maturation</th>
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<td>Pre Puberty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ski 4–5 days a week</td>
<td>130–150* days/year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 10% free-skiiing</td>
<td>At least 15% free skiing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition Period: (Nov.–April)</td>
<td>Competition Period: (Nov.–April)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of race starts: 55*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ratio 1:3 (race:training)</td>
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*based on the number of disciplines
Implications

• Results come early for some and later for others

• Importance of skill development
  – Multi-lateral development

• Avoid early burnout
  – Variety
  – Relative age effect
  – Maturation rate effect
  – Minimize cost barriers
  – Keep it FUN!
Analysis of Birth Month Relationship to Results At Different Levels in Alpine Skiing

J4 JO medalists

BORN 1ST HALF OF YEAR: 73%

J3 JO medalists

BORN 1ST HALF OF YEAR: 68%

World Cup Top 30

BORN 1ST HALF OF YEAR: 48%

2010 ALPINE OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALISTS BORN 1ST HALF OF YEAR: 0%
Performance vs. Results

- We are a results-focused society
- What goes into a result?
- What comes out of a result?
“Did I win? Did I lose? These are the wrong questions. The correct question is: Did I give my best effort? If so, you may get beat, but you will never lose.” – John Wooden
Managing Opportunities

• Athlete management is key, lots of choices
• Support the periodization principle: Train -> Compete -> Recover
• Long-term focus vs. chasing competitions
Managing Opportunities

- Athlete management is key, lots of choices
- Support the periodization principle: Train -> Race -> Recover
- Still have biological vs. chronological age differences
- Long-term focus vs. chasing competitions - Shiffrin
Good performance vs bad performance

• Are your actions different?
• How does your child deal with good performance? Poor performance?
• When do you talk to your child about their performance?
• What should you say? What is their coach saying?
• How do you deal with poor judging or officiating?
Competition Day

• Before
  – Don’t add pressure or stress
  – Help with preparation, positive self-talk
• During
  – Watch, ski/ride, volunteer, enjoy
• Between runs
  – Support, positive, let the coach do the coaching
• After
  – Give room
  – Focus on effort
  – Help with perspective
  – After a tough race, wait with constructive feedback
A Word On Pressure

• To help your child deal with it
  – Help them prepare
  – Help them with perspective
  – Don’t show your own anxiety
  – Give them room to fail
Skier/Rider who trains great but routinely does poorly in competition

• What do you tell them?
  – You know how good you are!
  – You’ve got this nailed!
  – Don’t worry!
  – You can do it, it’s easy!
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  - Don't worry!
  - You can do it, it's easy!

- De-emphasize results
- Focus on learning
- Focus on perseverance
- Focus on one simple task
Great Parents Do This

• Find out:
  – What are child’s goals?
  – What makes it fun?
  – What drives their intrinsic motivation?

• SUPPORT! Parent/coach/athlete triangle

• Praise effort – be specific

• Task vs. results orientation

• Promote an active, healthy lifestyle
Great Parents Do This

• Set the example for sportsmanship
  – Cheer on all competitors
  – Keep it positive
  – Thank competition organizers, resort personnel
  – Volunteer

• Avoid talking numbers and results

• Attend awards ceremonies with your child
  (whether or not they won an award)

• Enjoy the competitions yourself! You earned it!
Questions to Ask

• How well do you think you performed today?
• How good do you think you are?
• How much effort did you put in?
• How much fun did you have?
• What are your goals?
How long do you think you’ll be a …?

![Graph showing Watkins Farnum Performance Scale](image)

- **Low** - Short-term commitment
- **Moderate** - Medium-term commitment
- **High** - Long-term commitment

Gary McPherson, 1997
Jon’s Talent ID

• What does your child do when training is over?
• What is your child’s approach in other sports?
• How does your child deal with a challenging situation?
Life After High School

NCAA Circuit
- Over 20 teams represented at NCAA Championships

USCSA Circuit
- Over 150 teams
- Alpine, freeskiing, snowboarding, cross country, ski jumping
Thank you parents!

All OUT! THE JOURNEY CONTINUES
Resources

- USSA Training Systems
  http://trainingsystem.ussa.org
- USSA Sport Parent CD
  http://educationshop.ussa.org
- SkillsQuest
  http://alpine.useskiteam.com/alpine/skillsquest
- Ski Racing: Inside the Ski Racing Mind articles
  www.skiracing.com
- Contact us: education@ussa.org