

Snow Valley Nordic Ski Club

JackRabbit Program Parent Guide

Welcome Nordic skiers! We hope this short guide will answer a few questions you may have about our program.

Ski Levels

Our club follows the Canadian National JackRabbit program from Cross-Country Canada, <http://www.cccski.com>. We divide our groups based on age, skill level, and social/friends. We initially divide the groups by age, and adjust the kids into the best skill level after the first lesson.

- Bunnies – 4 & 5 years old, must be accompanied by an adult
- Jack Rabbits Level 1 & 2 – 6 & 7 years old
- Jack Rabbits Level 3 & 4 – 8 & 9 years old, new older skiers
- Track Attack – 10 - 12 years old
- Teen skiers / Assistants – post JackRabbit program, we look for volunteers to help us with the younger groups; this counts towards school and volunteering work experience.

Coaches

All our coaches are NCCP (National Coaching Certification Program) certified. All coaches are volunteers and some have their own children, so please be patient as we tie ski boot laces and wipe noses too!

Ski Equipment

Bunnies and JackRabbits L1&2 use classic skis and learn classic technique.

JackRabbits 3&4 and Track Attack use and learn technique for both classic and skate skis.

All skiers are expected to have (or rent) their own classic skis. Skate skis are available at the club and are loaned out to skiers for no extra charge. Please let your coach know if you want to borrow them, but please bring them back for Saturday lessons as our equipment is very limited. We have been working to bring in new equipment and there are many brand new pairs this year.

Please **label your equipment** (even your rentals) with your name or initials. Lots of skis and poles look the same – there is a clear box in the lodge with tape and markers that you can use.

Boots and Bindings: The club uses the Salomon **SNS profil** system. The other main binding style is the Rossignol NNN system. Boots and bindings must match! Size boots for kids 1-finger-width in behind their ankle and the back of the boot, so the boots are big enough that they don't get cold feet. Boots for skating are taller and stiffer thru the ankle. There is a combi-style boot which is a hybrid between a classic and skate boot and works great for kids wanting to do both classic and skate skiing. Kids can learn to skate ski with classic boots but it requires more strength.

Poles: **Classic poles** should fit uncomfortably under the armpits (ie. a little bit taller than your armpit). **Skate poles** should be between the nose and the chin.

Skis: For **classic skis**, the general rule of thumb is to stand with one arm in the air above your head, and measure to the wrist. However, skis have different camber stiffness (that's the curve in the ski) and the kids must be able to press the ski to the snow, otherwise they will slip backwards. Lighter weight kids will need a shorter ski in order to press the ski to

the snow. When in doubt, go shorter. **Skate skis** are usually sized 10 centimeters shorter than a classic ski; for learning skate technique, it is easier learn on a shorter ski.

Wax/ski prep

For **classic skis**, there are 2 parts to wax: the glide zone (tip section and tail section) and the grip zone (middle section under the binding). For **skate skis**, there is 1 part to wax: the glide zone. **All skis need wax!** Wax improves the glide and protects the bases.

For the wet coastal climate at our ski club, for classic skiing we recommend waxless skis (also called fishscale skis). This means the grip zone of your ski does not need grip wax. The coastal snow makes grip waxing a challenge and klister waxing is sticky-gooey stuff. There are a few experts around the club, so please ask if you really want to know.

Glide waxes are temperature rated and can contain all kinds of special formulas to make you ski faster. For those of you wondering, it is the same stuff you use for your Alpine downhill skis and snowboards. Also, at the end of each season, coat your skis in warm glide wax to protect the bases from drying out over the summer. Treat your glide zone right – always work from tip to tail of the ski to respect the base structure and you will keep skiing fast from year to year!

Weather

The weather varies a lot in our climate. Below -20C, or if there is an essential-travel-only warning for the highway (check the Drive BC website and webcam, linked from the club website), we cancel ski lessons for the day. We can also have rain, sleet, snow, and even sunshine (put on your sunscreen!); please dress for the weather!

Clothing

The key to clothing is dressing for the weather, and dressing in layers. The younger children move less so will tend to get colder faster. The older kids will ski a lot and get warm!

Feet: Wool or synthetic socks – cotton gets wet and cold, frost bite is a risk.

Pants: Young children can wear snow pants with light pants or long johns underneath. Long johns should be polyester or wool, not cotton. Older children can graduate to long johns under polar fleece pants or tights. Breathable water proof rain pants are ideal but nylon is OK too, breathable is the key.

Shirts: Polyester long sleeved undershirts are ideal for the bottom layer. Next layer - turtle neck shirt (60/40 polyester/cotton works fine). Then a warm sweater – wool or acrylic is good, polar fleece is better. 2 sweaters will be needed if the temperature is below -5. Fleece Vest is great too – find what works for you.

Coat: Wind breaker shell – breathable water proof is ideal but a nylon shell is OK.

Head: Tuque or ear warmers and/or a baseball cap if you really hate rain on your face.

Hands: Mitts – 2 pairs – water proof for younger children. Gloves – 2 pairs – for older children – 1 size fits all works fine to about -5 degrees, below that they need mitts.

Back pack or fanny pack to hold extra mitts, snacks, small water bottle, and clothing.

Children are expected, and taught, to take layers off as they heat up and put them back on as they cool down.

Adults who are skiing with younger children should dress more warmly as they will not be moving fast enough to stay as warm as the children do.

Club Kilometre Challenge and Snow Goals

Inside the new section of the lodge we have the club kilometer challenge. Everyone can join, build a popsicle stick guy and move it 1 kilometer mark for every one kilometer skied. The JackRabbits have Snow Goal Distances (Bronze, Silver, Gold) to encourage kids to ski outside of regular lesson time. Lessons will usually get them to the Bronze level, and for Silver and Gold levels, they can keep track of their kilometers skied. Once they reach a snow goal, there are bronze, silver, and gold stamps they can mark for their name, which can be found next to the start of the club kilometer challenge or in the cubby-hole-shelves in front of the fire place.

Prize Packs

The Canadian National JackRabbit program distributes prize packs to each skier across Canada every year. We usually receive these mid-season. The last couple of years, they have been toques and buffs, designed by a child who skied the previous year; keep your eyes out for the design contest messages. If your child registered late, we may not be able to get the prize pack for the current ski year, but we will try to give them something so they don't feel left out.

Skills Report

At the end of each season, skiers will receive a report about the skills they learned. Years gone by some of you may remember the badge system. It has been a book system for many years, and they are soon changing to a new system. Please return your ski books to your coaches so we can update them. The books are somewhat expensive (ex. Track Attack books are \$10) so please take care of them! We will transition to the new system as we run out of books and stickers.

Photos

To provide a keepsake, we take a group photo and give a copy to each skier with the skills report. Photos are also taken during races; some photos are put up on the website for parents to download. Please let us know if you are not comfortable and we will make sure not to post them.

Game play and FUNdamentals

The program at our ski club is about having FUN! Learning FUNdamental skills thru playing games and having fun. Please let your coach know if your kids are not having fun so we can adjust.

Grown-up Involvement

Bunnies' parents/grandparents/adults-in-charge ski with their kids. Parents are always welcome to join their kids for the other levels. As our ski groups have grown, rather than limiting the number of participants, we request helpers to join us. Sometimes it's to accompany a cold child back to the lodge, and sometimes it's just to help keep order and pick up the stragglers in a group. Please let us know if you can help out!

Snacks and Water

Please pack a small healthy snack and drink of water or juice. Our lessons are 2 hours long and some skiers need a snack/drink break to keep up their energy. We encourage the pack-your-own-garbage-out philosophy and use this to teach kids about keeping our trails clean.

Hot chocolate drink after skiing

At the end of each lesson, there is hot chocolate drink which can be found outside for skiers. There is no charge; it is part of the program, so enjoy!

Safety

A few words about some safety items around the club:

Log pile: we have some large log piles and split wood. There is absolutely NO playing on or around the log and wood piles, even when they are covered in snow. They can roll and crush a child in an instant. Please help us police this for all kids, even if they aren't your own kids.

Roof snow falls: the main lodge roof is sloped towards the door entrances. On heavy snowfalls, this sits on the roof and eventually lets go and comes down in a whomph! We try to clear this, but please be aware you can be buried in an avalanche while exiting the lodge porch from the front side.

Hot stove: there is a screen for the front of the main lodge stove. Please no running inside and no playing near or around the stove. It gets extremely hot and we don't want anyone getting burns.

Slippery fresh-painted floors: when the floors get a fresh coat of paint in the summer, but they are quite slippery with snow under a ski boot. Please use caution on the older section part of the main lodge.

Kids never ski alone: Every year we seem to lose a child out on the trails because they have decided to go for a ski during lunch, or after a race, and not tell anyone. We encourage the buddy system for skiing (i.e. never ski alone) and kids MUST tell a responsible adult where they are skiing if they go out on the trails. Please discuss this with your children and remind them to tell you when they go for a ski or a play. Coaches are responsible for kids in the program only during lesson time.

Race day vs. lesson days

Part of our program is participating in our club races. These are meant to be fun, not stressful, and to learn how to participate in a race.

All kids in our program are automatically registered for the race events. Just show up at the regular ski lesson time (unless otherwise indicated). Parents please check in with registration in the lodge to indicate what distance your child is interested in completing and to pick up their race bib. Coaches will have some fun warm up events to keep kids busy until the race starts.

Parents of bunnies are expected to ski with their child to ensure their safety and encourage them on. For all other age ranges, once the race starts it will be the racers personal responsibility to ensure they travel on the right course, and once finished they will be back in their parents care. All efforts are made to indicate what trail to stay on. Check out the race map at the lodge before the race start. There will be snacks and drinks out on the course and people will be writing down their number to make sure they have been seen. If you as a parent are worried about your child then by all means ski with them. Challenge them on!!!

There are usually some fun games and activities organized for after the race, but some coaches race or help out with race organization, so please ensure a responsible adult has an eye on your child.

Federal Tax Receipts

We provide federal tax receipts for the ski lesson fees, so you can claim the children's fitness tax credit. Keep an eye out for these receipts about mid-way thru the ski season.

Snowflake Café

The Snowflake Café, our volunteer run club kitchen, has soups and sweets during lunch on JackRabbits lesson days. It runs thanks to our dedicated volunteers, so if you can lend a hand with the kitchen preparations, return dirty dishes to the kitchen, or wash a few dishes, please let the kitchen volunteers know. Anyone can use the kitchen - it's very busy on lesson days; ask a club member to show you around. Many hands make for light work!

Special Activities

Depending on the year, snow conditions, and coaches/volunteers availability, we try to host a couple of special activities. These activities are optional and are meant to socialize together and have fun on skis. Some examples of activities in previous years: a night-time candle-light ski, an Olympic-games day, a hot-dog lunch at the moose hut, an overnight with the older kids to the moose hut, a back-country adventure day.

Questions that you have

Any questions, please ask us!