

Athletes and Parents: To complete team registration, read through the following document and send an email to ponyalpinecoaches@gmail.com stating that you, athlete and parent, agree to abide by it. In this way, we also ensure that we're in your contacts and you're in ours. Thank you.

Welcome to the Stillwater Pony Alpine Ski Team!



TEAM HANDBOOK 2022-23

Please familiarize yourself with the information in this handbook. It will be useful as you navigate the season. Skiing offers excitement, variety, and challenge. The mastery you develop as a member of the Pony alpine team will serve you throughout your life. You will experience the importance of teamwork and of respect for self and others. Practice, repetition, and focusing on a task will produce excellence in performance. Learning to strive for a goal and to compete under pressure bring valuable life lessons for all of us. We welcome the opportunity to work with you in a positive atmosphere of camaraderie as well as competition. Many elements, from race logistics to weather, controllable to not, can create changes and challenges during the season. We expect to share a team spirit of cooperation as we navigate these together, aiming toward the greatest outcomes for all.

COACHING STAFF

- Head Coach: Kevin Neubauer
- Assistant Coaches: Julia Charlsen, Floyd Foslien, Patrick Keller, Mark Ludack, Mike O'Reilly, Bill Petrich, Shawn Ryan, Mark Schwantes, Nate Smith, Lisa Weinberger, Mike Zajac

TEAM CAPTAINS

Brooke Elfert, Bella Helke, Louis Hoye, and Wyatt Riniker

PRE-SEASON MANDATORY ITEMS

1. Athletes must have a current sports-qualifying physical exam on file at the SAHS Activities Office.
2. Register for the team via *SmartSchoolK12*. Both athlete and a parent/guardian must electronically sign MSHSL Eligibility Statements when registering.
3. Athlete and Parent/Guardian must attend kick-off event (details follow).
4. Athletes and parents/guardians sign up for TeamSnap app (see COMMUNICATIONS).

START DATE

Monday, November 14 with Dryland Training from 3:00-5:00 p.m. Meet in the High School cafeteria by 3:00 p.m. for check-in. Dryland training takes place both outdoors and indoors. Dress appropriately (layers recommended!).

PARENT/GUARDIAN & ATHLETE KICKOFF MEETING at SAHS, WEDNESDAY, 11/16, 6:00 P.M. in the SAHS MAIN FORUM ROOM D205 (MANDATORY)

Parents are required to attend along with their student athlete. Meet teammates, captains, coaches & fellow parents; complete essential paperwork; learn about team expectations, practice & race schedules; gain access to TeamSnap (the team communications forum); sign up for Booster Club and activities; order team "swag" items (optional). Bring a checkbook.

OVERVIEW

- This slalom-racing team is open to women and men in grades 7-12.
- With one coaching staff for all racers, athletes come from Stillwater Area High School (SAHS), Oak-Land Middle School (OMS) and Stillwater Middle School (SMS).
- The Alpine Ski program is a varsity sport. While we break into flexible varsity and JV squads for meets, all athletes are accountable to one another and expected to approach practice with commitment and self-discipline. Team members, captains, and coaches all work to create an atmosphere of mutual support where each member is dedicated to the elevation of all.
- No previous racing experience is necessary, but participants should be competent skiers. Be advised this is not a ski club where one goes to the chalet at will. Our practice field is at a ski area and team members are required to be with the coaches during all training sessions.

COMMUNICATIONS

Athletes and parents: please download the free TeamSnap smartphone app from the Play Store or App Store, then stop by the signup table at the kickoff event in November to be granted access to our *private* TeamSnap account. If you missed that opportunity, send a request to be added to parent volunteer Nicole at iskithemountains@gmail.com. If you are not on TeamSnap you will be out of the loop.

Schedules are prepared in advance; however, given the nature of the ski program and winter weather, they are subject to change – many times at the last minute. Race rosters generally come out the evening before a race. This makes quick communication a priority within the team. TeamSnap is where you will find the season calendar, race rosters, schedule changes, announcements, volunteer requests, race results, photos, and more. The official word on last-minute race or meet cancellations will come first through the school Athletic Office (*not* via other athletes) and then through your coaches via TeamSnap. Past-season returning athletes, parents, and guardians, please make sure your TeamSnap account reflects current information (mobile phone numbers and email addresses).

COSTS

- **School Athletic Fee**
- **Afton Alps Season Pass:** Purchase directly through Afton Alps Ski Area.
- **Booster Club:** This volunteer parent group supports and enhances the team and its experiences in innumerable ways including purchasing & maintaining equipment, providing meals & other forms of warmth, and coordinating fundraising to support their initiatives.

EQUIPMENT

- **Individual Racer Gear:** Athletes need their own equipment: helmet, skis, boots, poles, and shinguards. Protective headgear is required by the MSHSL.
- **Storage Room:** Provided for equipment at each school during the season. These rooms are locked during the school day. School District 834 assumes NO responsibility for theft or misplaced equipment. Rental lockers may be available for rental at Afton Alps.
- **Boot and Ski Fitting & Ski Tuning Clinic** for athletes and parents with guest lecturer Brad Nelson.
- **Ski Gear Shopping as Fundraiser:** Hi Tempo in White Bear Lake and Joe's Sporting Goods in St. Paul offer a **discount to team members**, and a percentage of the sale is donated to the team. Please be sure to mention you are a member of the **Stillwater ALPINE** Team at check-out!

TRAINING

- **Dryland Training:** Practices are held Monday - Thursday at the high school from 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. A shuttle bus is provided for athletes from SMS and OMS to SAHS. Students will need transportation from SAHS to their homes following practice.
SMS Activity Bus: Moose bus departs at 2:25 p.m.
OMS Activity Bus: Elephant bus departs at 2:25 p.m.

TRAINING, continued

- **On-Snow Training:** On-snow practices are held at Afton Alps Mondays through Thursdays from 3:30-6:00 p.m. Students will need to provide their own transportation.

COMPETITION

We plan to participate in five Suburban East Conference (SEC) meets at which all team members will compete. Based on performance, team members will participate in select invitational meets and our Section and State meets. Up-to-date info. will be communicated via TeamSnap.

RACER SELECTION

Coaches use the following considerations to determine team positions for races:

- **Practice Attendance:** 85-percent attendance rule (see ATHLETE EXPECTATIONS); attendance at practice the night before a meet
- **Performance at practice:** Give it your all!
- **Attitude & Participation:** Positive & goal-driven; willing to listen and to participate with teammates, captains and coaches; shows respect for coaches, captains, teammates, school & ski area personnel, bus drivers, and skiing public; no foul or negative talk, disrespectful language or actions
- **Current and preceding year individual Stillwater High School Team performance history**
- **Class ranking:** All other things being equal, class rankings take precedence; for example, a 12th grader may have priority over an 11th grader

We use these considerations when determining team positions; however, a certain amount of subjectivity may often still play a role. The coaches are familiar with athletes, opponents, hill conditions, and the coaches are qualified to make strategic decisions relative to placements that will benefit the team. Racer selection and lineup decisions are solely at the discretion of the coaches.

ATHLETE EXPECTATIONS

- **Personal Responsibility:** **Athletes are required to handle their own communication with coaches, in person and via email. *Parents, please respect this boundary, established for the benefit of our young adult athletes.*** We expect all team athletes to act as responsible adults. Participation in a team activity is a privilege which is accompanied by responsibility. Athletes represent not only themselves but their team and schools and as such are expected to be respectful and courteous to all team members, competitors, coaches, transportation providers, employees, spectators, and recreational skiers at all ski areas. Our training and ski program is dependent upon you, the athlete, and your actions. Please think before you act. We expect and demand total honesty at all times from each and every athlete, on and off the hill.
- **Athlete Goals:** Determine to make this your best ski racing season ever, whether it's your first or your twelfth! Each Stillwater Alpine Team Member will work with coaches to establish personal goals for this competitive season. Here's an opportunity to take ownership of your own skiing abilities! Goals should be CHALLENGING yet ATTAINABLE with hard work and focus, be SPECIFIC and CONCRETE, center on degree of IMPROVEMENT rather than on absolutes, and include an ATTITUDE ELEMENT (thinking impacts performance!).
- **Attendance:** Athletes, email ponyalpinecoaches@gmail.com if you will be late to or absent from practice or events. Athletes are expected to participate in 85 percent of all the practice days offered. This makes accommodation for illness or other circumstances that may arise. We hope to offer "extra credit" practice days during holiday breaks which may allow athletes to make up missed days. Captains will check all athletes in and out of practice at a designated time and place. Both dryland at the high school and on-snow practices count toward your attendance. Athletes must be in ski gear prior to and at the end of ski practice to receive credit. An athlete is expected to be with the team and coaches the duration of practice (NOT in the locker room or chalet) to earn required attendance credit. Athletes are expected to participate in team drills and exercises. Athletes who are not helping with course tear down and putting away equipment will not be given attendance credit. Athletes must be at practice the night before a meet to be eligible to ski in the meet.

Attendance, continued

- Athletes: if you need to be absent from a practice or meet, advise coaches in writing ahead of time (email ponyalpinecoaches@gmail.com). We don't want team athletes skiing ill or injured, we don't want frostbite; communicate your situation with your coach and together we will work out a solution!
- **Concussion Protocol:** All team athletes are required to complete a concussion protocol with the SAHS athletic department trainers. Baseline testing will take place during dryland training.
- **Responsibility on the Hill:** SETUP/TEARDOWN (training and home meets): Captains will supervise course tear down, slipping the hill to its original condition, making sure all gates and equipment are off the hill, and sorting and bundling the gates. Everyone is required to help – many hands make this quick work. Athletes risk losing points if they neglect this team responsibility. GATEKEEPING: During meets, we may assign athletes gatekeeping responsibilities in order to maintain the course. If an assigned gatekeeper neglects their duties, they will not be eligible to ski in the next meet. Team members have consistently done a fantastic job here!
- **Appropriate Behavior:** This team shows respect for self, others, and property at all times. Negative talk, profanity, name calling, personal attacks, displays of temper, throwing of equipment, bullying, harassment, or other acts of disrespect will immediately be addressed by coaches. This type of behavior impacts us all and is a reflection on the whole team. It will not be tolerated.
- **Transportation:** Athletes/families provide their own transportation.
- **Dispute Resolution:** It is our goal to encourage self-reliance in our young adult athletes. If an athlete has a problem or complaint, the athlete may approach the coaches before or after practices or meets to make their concerns known and we will work toward a resolution together. If the athlete wishes to further pursue the issue, they have the option to make arrangements with parents and coaches to meet face-to-face at the High School. *There will be no direct contact from parents to coaches until this process is initiated.* Coaches and the Athletic Director will then address the issue together with the athlete and parent/s.

EARNING A LETTER

Earning a letter will be based on season performances.

- **Automatic Letter Awards**
Being named to Section and/or State Team (includes alternates)
- **Discretionary Letter Awards (based on points)**
 - Contribute scorable team conference meet points
 - Complete four years of alpine ski team participation and contribution

Individual Requirements to Qualify for Consideration

 - Practice attendance/participation (85% required)
 - Sportsmanship (i.e. serving as coat carrier at meets, cheering for teammates, etc.)
 - Leadership (i.e. helping set and teardown, race course work, etc.)

Upon the third year of earning a letter, a white letter is awarded.

If a team member receives an MSHSL violation they will NOT earn a letter that season.

STATE MEET/END OF SEASON

The official last date of the season is the **State Championship February 14th, 2023**

AWARDS BANQUET

Typically held late-February or early March

LOOKING FORWARD TO A GREAT SEASON!

Coach Kevin Neubauer
ponyalpinecoaches@gmail.com