

ALPINE EQUIPMENT GUIDE

FAST IS FUN

WELCOME TO CSLP ALPINE

CSLP Alpine serves boys and girls in grades 7-12 and competes exclusively in slalom racing. Our athletes range from beginner skiers who have never raced before to experienced State, National and FIS-level racers.

OUR EQUIPMENT PHILOSOPHY

The goal is not to put every CSLP athlete on the most aggressive or most expensive equipment.

Our goal is to put each athlete on equipment that is appropriate for their size, strength, skiing ability, racing experience, goals and family budget.

More expensive or more aggressive race equipment does not automatically make an athlete faster. In some cases, equipment that is too stiff, too long or too demanding can actually make skiing and learning more difficult.

When in doubt, ask a CSLP coach before making a major equipment purchase. We are happy to help.

EQUIPMENT AT A GLANCE

✓ REQUIRED / OPTIONAL / NOT NEEDED

EQUIPMENT	NEW / FIRST-TIME RACER	DEVELOPING / RECREATIONAL RACER	COMPETITIVE / STATE-LEVEL RACER
 **Ski Boots** (properly fitted)	✓	✓	✓
 **Skis** (appropriate length)	✓	✓	✓
 **Bindings**	✓	✓	✓
 **Helmet**	✓	✓	✓
 **Goggles**	✓	✓	✓
 **Ski Poles**	✓	✓	✓
 **Pole Guards**	OPTIONAL	✓	✓
 **Chin Guard**	OPTIONAL	OPTIONAL	✓
 **Shin Guards**	NOT NEEDED	✓	✓
 **Forearm Guards**	NOT NEEDED	OPTIONAL	OPTIONAL
 **Race Suit**	NOT NEEDED	OPTIONAL	✓

GENERAL SKI GEAR

Having the right gear and taking care of it will make you more comfortable, help you ski better, and extend the life of your equipment.



HELMET

- A properly fitted alpine ski helmet is required for all CSLP Alpine athletes.
- Helmets should fit snugly and securely without excessive movement.
- Athletes who use a slalom chin guard should select a helmet specifically designed to accept a compatible guard.
- CSLP strongly recommends purchasing a current alpine ski helmet from a reputable manufacturer and replacing helmets following a significant impact or according to the manufacturer's replacement guidance.



GOGGLES

- Look for a goggle that fits well with your helmet and provides clear vision. Anti-fog lenses are highly recommended.
- Multiple lenses are ideal for various lighting conditions.
- If you are using a single lens, prioritize a lens for low light conditions such as amber / rose/ yellow.



GLOVES / MITTENS

- Waterproof and insulated gloves or mittens keep your hands warm and dry.
- Bring an extra pair in your bag for cold or wet days.



CLOTHING
(layering)

- Dress in layers. Start with moisture-wicking base layers.
- Add insulating mid-layers and a waterproof, breathable outer layer.
- Bring extra socks and gloves to keep dry and warm.
- Neck gaiter or balaclava recommended in cold conditions.



BAGS & ACCESSORIES

- A quality ski bag keeps your gear organized and protected.
- Other useful items include: backpack, water bottle, snack container, hand warmers, lip balm, and sunscreen.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR GEAR

- Dry your equipment out after every time you ski— even if it doesn't seem wet or damp.
- Moisture inside boots, gloves, and helmets leads to cold, discomfort, odors, and damage over time.
- Remove liners and insoles from boots. Store boots with buckles secured. Store gear in a warm, dry place.
- Your gear will last longer and keep you warmer on the hill.



SKI BOOTS

Ski boots are the most important piece of equipment. A proper fit and appropriate flex are critical for control, comfort, warmth, and injury prevention.



FIT IS EVERYTHING

- A well-fitting boot improves performance, keeps you warmer, and helps prevent injuries.
- Boots should fit snugly without excessive pressure points.
- Work with a qualified boot fitter.



BOOT FLEX

- A ski boot needs to flex to work properly. When a skier flexes forward into the boot, pressure and energy are transferred through the boot and into the ski.
- A boot that is too stiff can prevent the athlete from flexing effectively, making it difficult to pressure the ski and maintain a balanced athletic position.
- A boot that is too soft may flex too easily and provide inadequate support and response.



The goal isn't the stiffest boot — it's a boot the athlete can flex while still providing the support needed for their size, strength and skiing ability.

- Flex ratings are not standardized across manufacturers, so the number should be used as a starting point rather than an exact measurement when comparing different brands.



FLEX RATINGS: GENERAL GUIDE

New / Beginner Youth	30 – 60	Prioritize comfort and easy flex.
Intermediate Youth	50 – 80	Balance of support and forgiveness.
Advanced Youth / U14–U16	70 – 100	More support for stronger skiing and higher speeds.
U16+/ High School Racers	90 – 110+	Designed for stronger, more aggressive skiers and competitive racing.
FIS / Advanced Level Racers	110+	Maximum support for advanced level racing.



These ranges are a starting point / guide.
Discuss with your ski shop / boot fitter or ski coach if you have any questions.

SLALOM SKI SIZING GUIDE

The right ski length can make skiing more fun, help you progress faster, and give you the right mix of control and performance. Use this guide as a starting point to find a length that fits your size, ability, and goals.

CONSIDER THESE FACTORS

Your size
Height & weight

Your ability
Experience level and skiing/racing goals

Your goals
Race progression or recreational skiing focus

HEIGHT / WEIGHT	BEGINNER / RECREATIONAL	ENTRY LEVEL RACE (U10 – U14)	HIGH SCHOOL / FIS RACE (U16+)
Under 4'6" (Under 80 lbs)	130 – 135 cm	135 – 145 cm	140 – 150 cm
4'6" – 5'0" (80 – 100 lbs)	135 – 140 cm	140 – 150 cm	145 – 155 cm
5'0" – 5'6" (100 – 130 lbs)	140 – 145 cm	145 – 155 cm	150 – 160 cm
5'6" – 5'10" (130 – 160 lbs)	145 – 150 cm	150 – 160 cm	155 – 165 cm
5'10" – 6'2" (160+ lbs)	150 – 155 cm	155 – 165 cm	160 – 165 cm

USE THIS GUIDE AS A STARTING POINT.

Every skier is different. These ranges are general recommendations — talk with your ski shop or ski coach to dial in the best length for you.

TYPES OF SLALOM SKIS



BEGINNER SKIS

A forgiving option for new skiers learning the fundamentals.

- Softer flex and more forgiving
- Easier to turn and control
- Great for building confidence



RECREATIONAL / ENTRY LEVEL RACE SKIS

All-mountain performance for developing skiers and new racers.

- Balanced mix of stability and forgiveness
- Versatile for training and recreattional use
- Ideal for progressing ski skills



RACE SKIS

Built for dedicated racers.

- Stiffer flex for quicker response
- Designed for slalom training and racing
- Best for strong intermediate to advanced skiers



FIS RACE SKIS

Maximum performance for State / National level competitors.

- Stiffest flex for precision and power
- Designed for high-level competition
- Best for experienced racers (U16+, FIS level)

POLES & SLALOM PROTECTION

POLES

THE RIGHT POLES HELP YOU SKI MORE EFFICIENTLY, PROVIDE PROPER PLANTING, AND STAND UP TO THE DEMANDS OF RACING.

1. For length, you want approximately 90° elbow bend when holding the poles.
2. Most athletes can start with standard alpine poles.
3. Straight poles are best for slalom. Do not consider or purchase bent poles which are used for speed events like Giant Slalom, Super G, and Downhill.
4. Slalom pole guards become important as you start skiing closure to the gates and blocking them with your hands. This is often the first piece of additional protective equipment needed.
5. Ski straps are important. Make sure your poles have good working ski straps.

PRO TIP

To check pole length, hold the pole upside down with the pole handles on the ground. Your elbow should be bent at roughly 90° angle.



GOOD SKI STRAP

Make sure your straps are secure and in good condition.





STRAIGHT POLE

Recommended for slalom

SLALOM PROTECTION

AS YOU PROGRESS AND START SKIING CLOSER TO THE GATES, PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT BECOMES IMPORTANT. HERE ARE THE KEY ITEMS TO CONSIDER:

1 POLE GUARDS



Protect your hands and poles when blocking gates. Often the first piece of protective equipment needed as you start skiing closer to the gates.

2 SHIN GUARDS



Help protect your lower legs from gate impact. Often the second piece of protective equipment needed as you start consistently blocking gates in training and races.

3 CHIN GUARD



Helps protect your face during gate contact. Often comes with the helmet, but can also be added later. A good idea for racers of all abilities. Make sure the helmet you buy is compatible for chin guards if you plan on adding one later.

4 FOREARM GUARDS



Help protect your forearms from gate impact. Optional depending on the racer and their specific style of racing / blocking gates.

WHERE & WHEN TO BUY

Ski racing equipment can be expensive, but you don't need to buy everything new — or pay full price — to get quality equipment. Knowing where and when to shop can make a big difference. Used equipment can also be an excellent option when you know what to look for.

BUYING NEW

LOCAL SKI SHOPS

Support your local ski shop for skis, boots, bindings, and all your new equipment needs. Knowledgeable staff can help with sizing, setup, and overall equipment selection.

Pinewskis | Joe's Sporting Goods | Gear West | Pierce Skate & Ski | Trollhaugen

TEAM BENEFIT

Pinewskis and Joe's offer CSLP team discounts and provide financial support back to our program through team purchases.

WHEN SHOULD I BUY?

Best Deals: End-of-season sales are often the best opportunity to save on new equipment. Selection may be limited to previous-season models, but for most high school racers, last year's equipment can be an excellent value.

Don't Wait Until the First Practice: Whenever possible, purchase equipment at least one month before you plan to ski. This gives you time for binding mounting, boot fitting and any initial ski tuning or setup.

LAST YEAR'S MODEL + RIGHT FIT = OFTEN A GREAT DEAL

BUYING USED

SKI SWAPS

Fall ski swaps are one of the best places to find both used and discounted new equipment. The Twin Cities area typically has several quality ski swaps from September through November, giving families an opportunity to compare equipment and ask questions before buying.



FACEBOOK MARKETPLACE

Facebook Marketplace can be another great source for used equipment. Be selective in your search and make sure to see the equipment before buying.

If you're unsure whether something is appropriate for your athlete, send the listing to a CSLP coach before purchasing.

BUY SMART

- Be selective
- Ask questions
- Inspect in person
- Have a coach review if unsure

TIMING YOUR PURCHASE

END-OF-SEASON SALES
Best deals on new equipment (previous season models).

FALL SKI SWAPS
Great selection of used and new equipment.

BUY 1+ MONTH BEFORE SKIING
Allows time for mounting, fitting and initial tuning.

BUYING USED: WHAT TO LOOK FOR



USED SKIS

- Bases without major gouges, core shots or repairs
- Edges with enough material for future tuning
- No major edge separation, cracks or delamination
- Bindings in good condition and appropriate for the athlete
- Appropriate length and construction for the skier
- Ask how heavily the skis were used and how often they were tuned

BINDINGS MATTER

Older bindings may no longer be serviceable by a ski shop. Before buying older skis, confirm that the bindings can still be inspected, adjusted and serviced.



USED BOOTS

- Correct size first — don't buy an oversized boot
- Shells without cracks or significant damage
- Buckles and power straps that work properly
- Liners that aren't excessively packed out or damaged
- Soles that aren't excessively worn
- Appropriate flex for the athlete's size, strength and ability

BOOTS ARE DIFFERENT

Used boots can be a good value, but fit is critical. A great deal on the wrong boot isn't a great deal. When possible, have a qualified boot fitter evaluate fit before purchasing.

WHEN IN DOUBT — ASK A COACH.
We're happy to look at equipment or a used listing before you buy.

THE RIGHT GEAR HELPS YOU SKI, RACE AND PROGRESS.

EQUIPMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

HELP US FIND THE RIGHT GEAR FOR YOU

This questionnaire will help you, your family, and your coaches select the best equipment for your needs, based on your experience, goals and budget. Bring this with you when visiting a ski shop, attending a ski swap, or discussing equipment with a coach.

1 ATHLETE INFORMATION

Name: _____

Age: _____ Grade: _____

Height: _____ Weight: _____

2 SKIING & RACING EXPERIENCE

- ☐ Brand new to skiing
- ☐ Recreational skier (a few times per year)
- ☐ 1–2 seasons of alpine racing
- ☐ 3+ seasons of alpine racing
- ☐ High school racer (current or upcoming season)
- ☐ Other: _____

3 TYPE OF SKI

- ☐ Beginner (softer, more forgiving)
- ☐ Recreational (all-mountain)
- ☐ Race Ski (slalom race ski)
- ☐ FIS Race Ski (higher level race ski)

4 GOALS OF THE SEASON

- ☐ Try racing for the first time
- ☐ Improve technique and confidence
- ☐ Be competitive at the high school level
- ☐ Compete at the State / National Level
- ☐ Other: _____

5 BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

- ☐ Looking for the most budget-friendly options
- ☐ Open to buying used equipment
- ☐ Prefer to buy new equipment
- ☐ A mix of new and used
- ☐ Flexible on budget

6 CURRENT EQUIPMENT (IF ANY)

Skis:

- ☐ None
- ☐ Yes – Brand/Model: _____

  Length: _____ Year (if known): _____

Boots:

- ☐ None
- ☐ Yes – Brand/Model: _____

  Size: _____ Flex (if known): _____

Poles:

- ☐ None
- ☐ Yes – Brand: _____ Length: _____

Other (helmet, protection, etc.):

_____

7 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Share anything else that would be helpful (injuries, physical considerations, growth expectations, etc.).

_____

_____

_____

_____

8 QUESTIONS

What questions do you have about equipment?

_____

_____

_____

_____

NEXT STEPS

- ✓ Bring this form to a local ski shop, ski swap or coach.
- ✓ Use it to guide the conversation and find the best options.
- ✓ Remember – the right gear helps you ski, race and progress!