ISD 196 NORDIC SKI TEAM ORIENTATION MEETING 2025-2026



INTRODUCTIONS & COACHING PHILOSOPHY

- Introductions
  - Coaches
  - Booster Club Board Members
  - Captains
- Our coaching philosophy
  - Having fun
  - Process over product
  - Skiing as a life-long sport



WHAT TYPE OF SPORT IS NORDIC SKIING?

Q: Is Nordic Skiing a…

- **Endurance** sport like long distance running?
- A **strength-based** sport?
- A **technique-oriented** sport?
- A sport that places a premium on determination?
- A sport where you'll make good friends

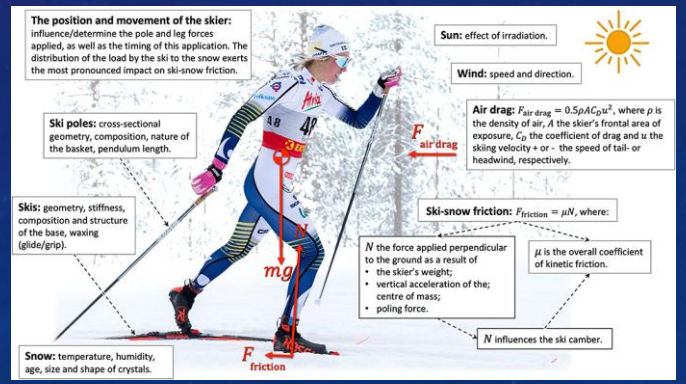
A: All of the Above











TEAMS

- ISD 196 Nordic Ski
  - Boys:
    - ISD 196 Co-Op
      - Rosemount, Apple Valley, Eastview, & Eagan
      - Feeder Middle Schools
  - Girls:
    - Rosemount/Apple Valley/Eastview Co-Op
    - Eagan
    - Feeder Middle Schools
  - Coaching Staff: One coaching staff for district



SOUTH SUBURBAN CONFERENCE TEAMS

- Prior Lake
- Lakeville North & South Co-Op
- Burnsville & Shakopee Co-Op
- Northfield
- Winona/Winona Cotter Co-Op
- ISD 196 (Boys)
- Eagan (Girls)
- Rosemount/Eastview/Apple Valley (Girls)



FORMAT OF HIGH SCHOOL NORDIC SKI RACING

- Two Techniques (video)
  - Classic https://youtu.be/H5isxL8JkNU?si=NaLsugaB_gqm_L0A
  - Freestyle/Skate https://youtu.be/f4grwmeXy-0?si=u8EsY7v4tdusjHvB
- Several Race Types
  - Distance – 5 km
  - Individual Sprints – (1-1.5 Km) Qualifier plus heats
  - Team Sprint Relay – (1-1.5 Km) 4 legs (2 legs/skier)



REQUIRED NORDIC SKI EXPERIENCE

Q: What previous Nordic ski experience do I need to have to join the team?

- **None**, 0, ingen (Nor.), kainer (Ger.), nessuno (Ital.), ninguna/ninguno (Span.)
- Only a small number of athletes who join the team have had previous Nordic Ski experience (2-5%)
- We will provide instruction so that you learn how to ski…and ski FAST!
- Athletes new to the sport sometimes pick it up so quickly they are skiing on the varsity halfway through the season



WHAT WILL MY FIRST YEAR BE LIKE

- You'll have fun!!
- You will meet and become friends with athletes from schools within the district you compete against in other sports
- You will learn to ski ***classic*** **and** ***freestyle*** technique
- You will become more proficient and fast at each discipline over the course of the season
- You will have the chance to take part in ***ALL*** of our races as soon as you tell us you are ready to compete
- You will learn to race and push yourself
- You will not need to worry about being "cut." ALL 6-12 grade students are welcome to be a part of our team



WHAT BECOMES OF OUR SKIERS AFTER THEY LEAVE H.S.?

- Some race in college
  - Univ. Vermont; Bowdoin; Williams College
  - St. Lawrence Univ.; Colby; St. Scholastica
  - Univ. New Hampshire; St. Olaf
- Some remain in the sport
  - Annika Martell – Head Coach Craftsbury Green Racing Team
  - Margie Freed – U.S. Biathlon Team
- After college they become
  - Doctors
  - Lawyers
  - Teachers
  - Biomechanical, chemical and electrical engineers
  - Pharmaceutical researchers









PRIOR TO START OF THE SEASON

- **Complete for School**
  - **School Athletic Registration Forms & School participation fee**
  - MSHSL eligibility form
  - Physical - New to high school sports or have not had a physical in 3 years
- **Complete for Booster Club**
  - Register for Booster Club & TeamSnap Website
  - **PLEASE NOTE**: *This is a total separate process than registering with the school district*
    - ***ATHLETES/PARENTS NEED TO DO BOTH***
  - All communication with skiers and families for this year will run through the team website & TEAM SNAP
- Equipment Needs
- Equipment Rental



EQUIPMENT

- Skis
  - Freestyle
  - Classic (Waxable Skis)

Freestyle/Skate





Classic

EQUIPMENT

- Boots
  - Freestyle
  - Classic
  - Combi/Pursuit



Freestyle



Classic



Combi/Pursuit

Obtaining Needed Equipment: First-year skiers

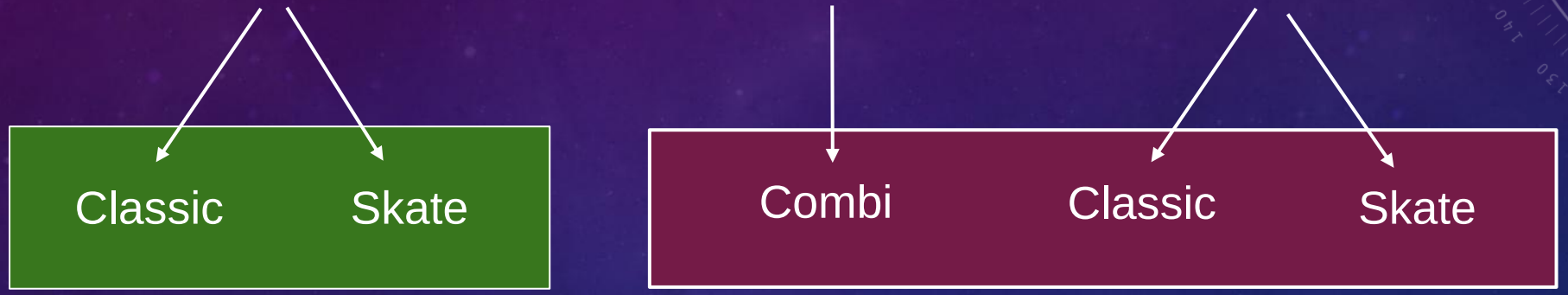
Complete size information on TeamSnap

Paid for with TeamSnap enrollment.

POLES

BOOTS

SKIS



PURCHASE

Fittings at **Finn Sisu**

Sign-ups on homepage to meet w. Coach Abery!

RENT

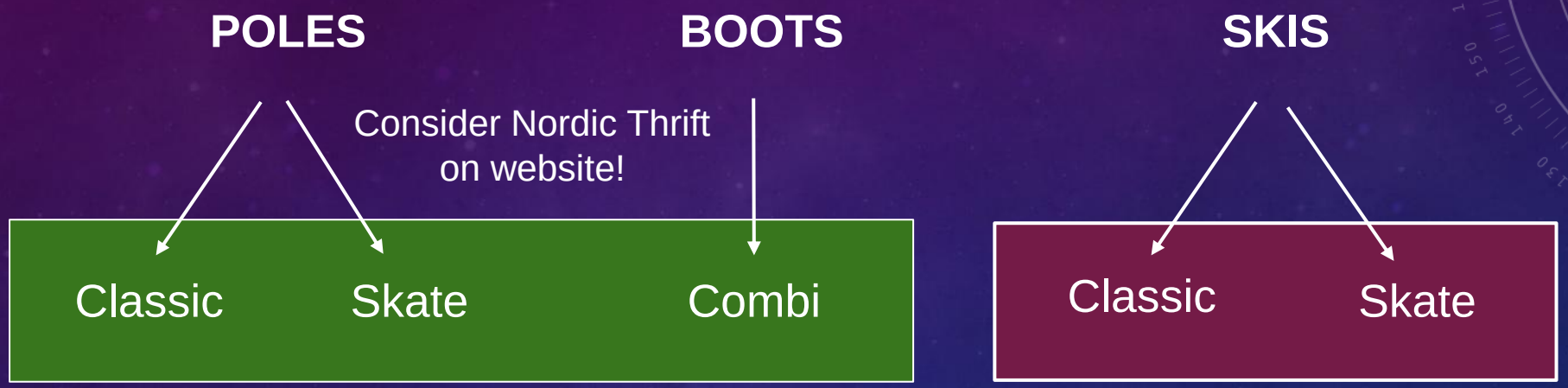
Fittings at **Coach Abery's**

November 21st/22nd (sign-ups coming soon!)

SKI BAG

PURCHASE

Who: Returning High School Skiers + 2nd & 3rd-year Middle Schoolers



PURCHASE

Fittings at **Finn Sisu**

Sign-ups on homepage!

RENT

Fittings at **Coach Abery's**

November 21st/22nd (sign-ups coming soon!)

SKI BAG PURCHASE

SKI + BOOT RENTAL

- Skis available
  - Classic skis
  - Skate skis
- Who may rent skis?

  Middle School & 1st-year HS skiers: Rent 2 pair

  2nd-year HS skiers: Purchase 1 pair & Rent 1 pair
- Boots available for rent to 1st-year skiers!
- Rental fitting schedule coming soon.



GEAR PURCHASE

- Poles (All skiers must purchase themselves)
  - 1 pair classic poles, 1 pair skate poles
  - Poles need to be suitable for racing. No “touring/loop only” straps
- Boots (for non-1st-year skiers)
  - 1 pair Combi OR 1 pair Classic + 1 pair Skate
  - Check the used section on the website!
- Finn Sisu fitting sign ups are on the website
  - Please check with coach Abery before purchasing equipment



OTHER EQUIPMENT

- **On Snow Training**
  - *Hat*
  - *Cross Country Ski Gloves/Mittens*
  - *Thermal underwear (top and bottom).*
  - *Wind briefs*
  - *Polar Fleece* & T-Neck
  - Warm-ups
  - Medium Weight Wool blend socks
  - Buff(s)
  - Eye Protection
  - Skin Protection
  - Water bottle & carrier
- **Dryland Training**
  - Ski poles (used, cheap, up to shoulders, NOT bamboo or Alpine)
  - Good running shoes



WHERE TO PURCHASE

Finn – Sisu Ski Shop

2436 Larpenteur Avenue West

Lauderdale, MN 55113 - Just north of St. Paul off HW 280)

651-645-2443

(Request that your skis be fit by Devon, Armand, Tom, Greg, Rebecca)

https://finnsisu.com

**NOTE: Coach Abery has 5 nights set up where he will meet skiers at Finn-sisu to discuss their equipment needs and support the purchase of equipment. Sign ups at parent meeting

Gear West Ski & Run

1786 W Wayzata Blvd, Suite B

Long Lake, MN 55356

952-473-0377

https://gearwest.com/sports/nordic/

Pioneer Midwest

415 County Road 81, Osseo, MN 55369

763-420-8981

info@pioneermidwest.com



PURCHASING EQUIPMENT



- ***New skiers***: Strongly recommend meeting with Coach Abery at one of the nights after practice he schedules for equipment purchases at Finn Sisu
- ***Returning skiers*** especially those buying for the first time are also encouraged to purchase on these nights
  - We will make sure you buy only what is needed and do not over purchase
  - We will guarantee you purchase the right equipment (EX: We do not want skiers purchasing waxless/skin skis)
  - We will make sure equipment fits properly
- ***All Skiers & Parents: Check out the "Nordic Thrift" link on the team website for used equipment***

RENTAL PROGRAM

- Athletes new to the sport can take part the team's ***equipment rental program*** rather than purchasing ski gear
  - 1 pair of classic skis & 1 pair freestyle skis Total = $100 for season
  - Combi Boots (if we have your size) Total = $25
- All skiers responsible for purchase of 2 sets of racing poles
- **Strongly recommend** rental program for middle school athletes and first-year skiers
- Expectation is that by high school those who have rented in middle school will be purchasing their own equipment
- Rental ski fittings:
  - Nov. 21: 12:00-6:00 PM
  - Nov. 22: 11:00-5:00 PM

  @ 11380 Albavar Path (Coach Abery's house)



SEASON & PRACTICE SCHEDULE

- November 9th to February 12th (with or without snow)
- **High School Athletes: Varsity & Junior Varsity**
  - Monday - Friday from 3:15 - 5:00 PM (or dark)
  - Saturday from 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (optional for JV)
- **Middle School Athletes**
  - Monday - Friday from 3:30 - 5:00 PM
  - Saturday from 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (optional)



MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

- Our MSHSL Nordic program runs for grades 7-12
  - Practice for middle school students is from 3:30-5:00 PM
- Development Program (6th grade students)
  - It is run through the booster club and is not MSHSL or school sanctioned
  - Register your athlete through the booster club NOT their school
  - Developmental skiers compete in shorter races of 2.0-2.5 KM against other 6th grade students that are separate from but immediately following the high school races
  - Focus of program is on developing a love for Nordic skiing and good ski technique

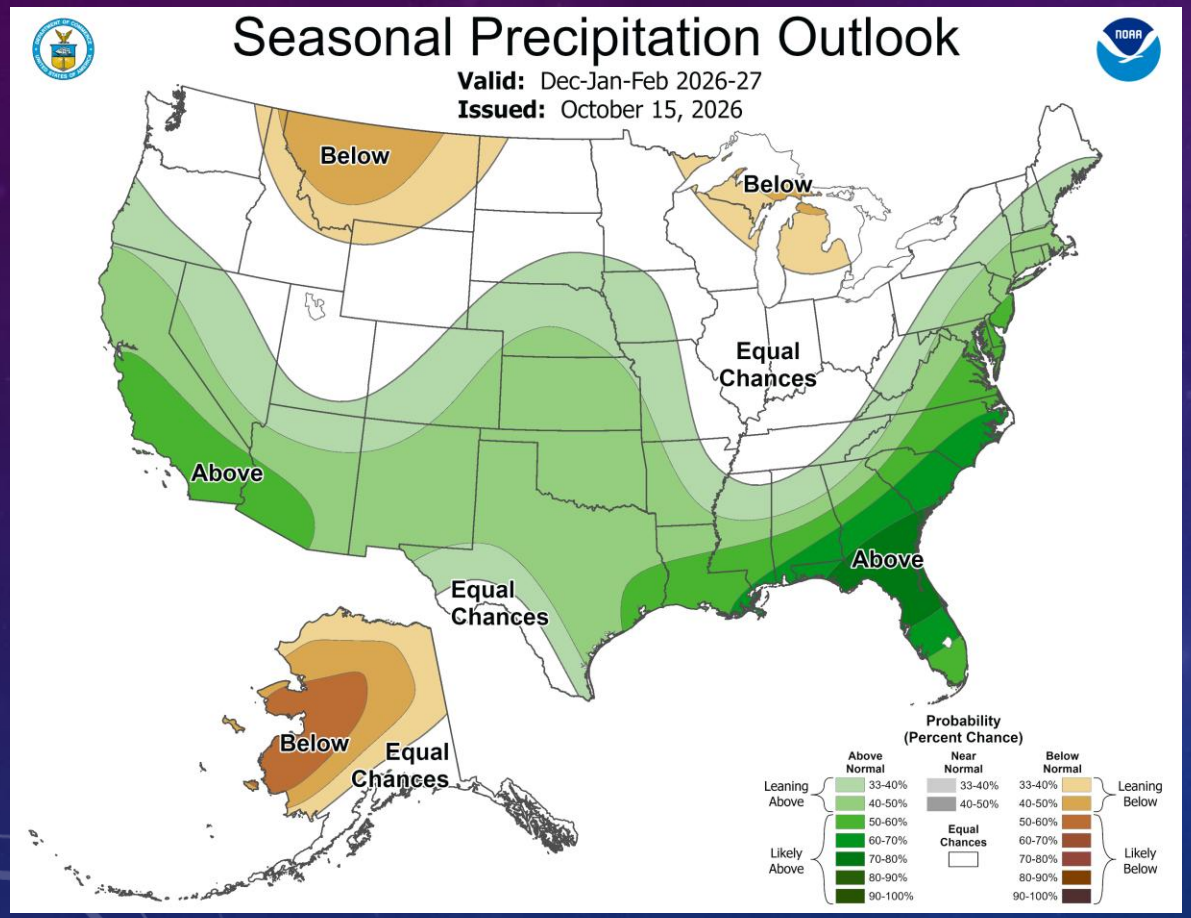


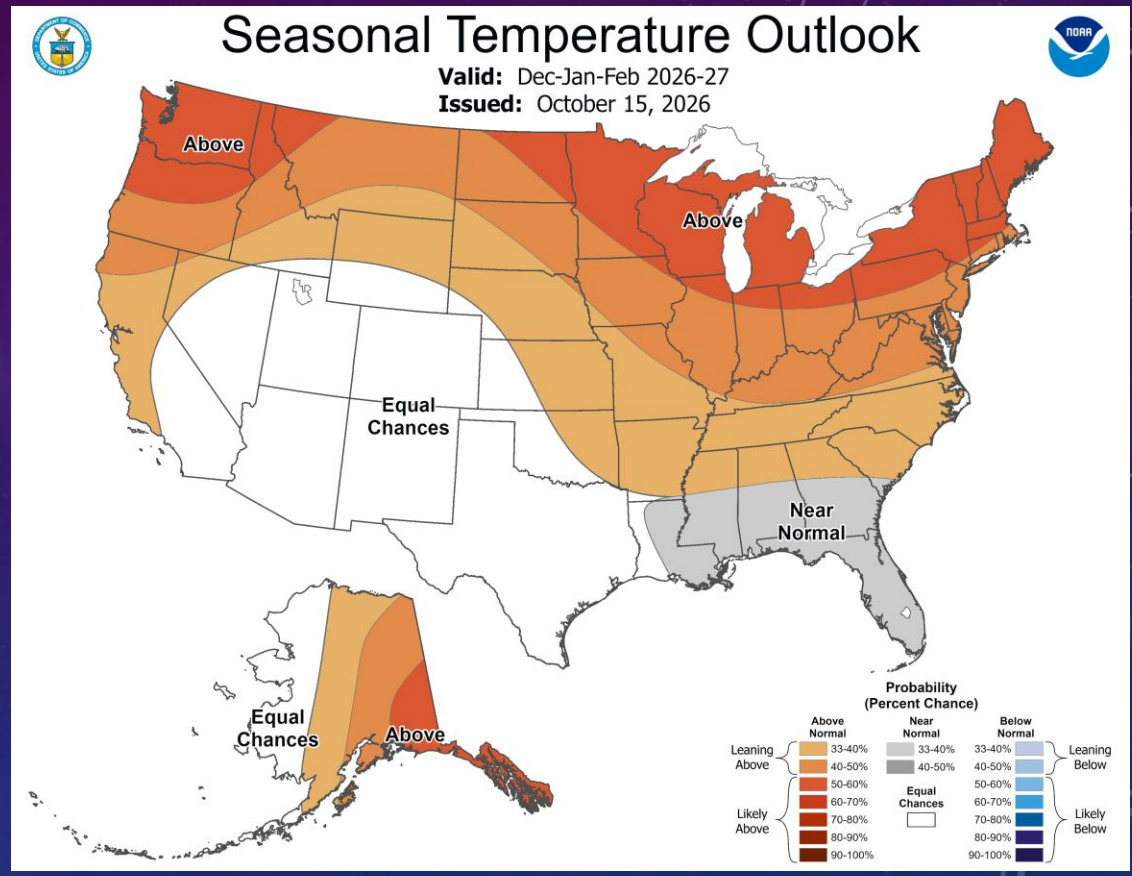
PRACTICE & RACE LOCATIONS

- Practice
  - Lebanon Hills – Holland or Schultz Trailheads for Dryland Training
  - Valleywood Golf Course – On Snow and Some Dryland training
  - Hyland Rec. Areas and Battle Creek Park
- Race Venues
  - Hyland Recreation Area (Bloomington)
  - Battle Creek Park (St. Paul)
  - Valleywood G.C.



WILL WE HAVE SNOW?





POTENTIAL SEASON WITH LITTLE SNOW

- On-Snow practices @ **Hyland Recreation Area** on their machine-made snow (typically avail. mid Dec.)
  - We ***request*** practice times (as does every other team in the south suburban area)
  - Practice times can be:
    - 2:45-4:15 PM
    - **4:30-6:00 PM**
    - **6:15-7:45 PM**
    - 7:45-9:15 PM
- Requires 3-Rivers Trail Pass included in Booster Club Fees & purchased through team at 50% discount





POTENTIAL SEASON WITH LITTLE SNOW

- School district does not provide transportation to ANY practices
  - Relatively easy for student & parents to carpool when practices are at Valleywood Golf Course
  - More of a challenge when we need to practice at Hyland Park Reserve
    - Bring a good book and visit the chalet
    - Learn to Nordic Ski yourself



PRACTICE REQUIREMENTS

- High School Athletes
  - Expected attendance 5 days/week
  - Varsity require 6-days per week
- Middle School Athletes
  - 3 days/week minimum (more if desired)
  - Arranged with head coach
- Ready to begin on time
- Coach Abery must be notified by athlete or parent when practice is going to be missed
  - Extensive unexcused missed practices will result in skiers being asked to leave team



WHAT IS NORDIC TRAINING LIKE?





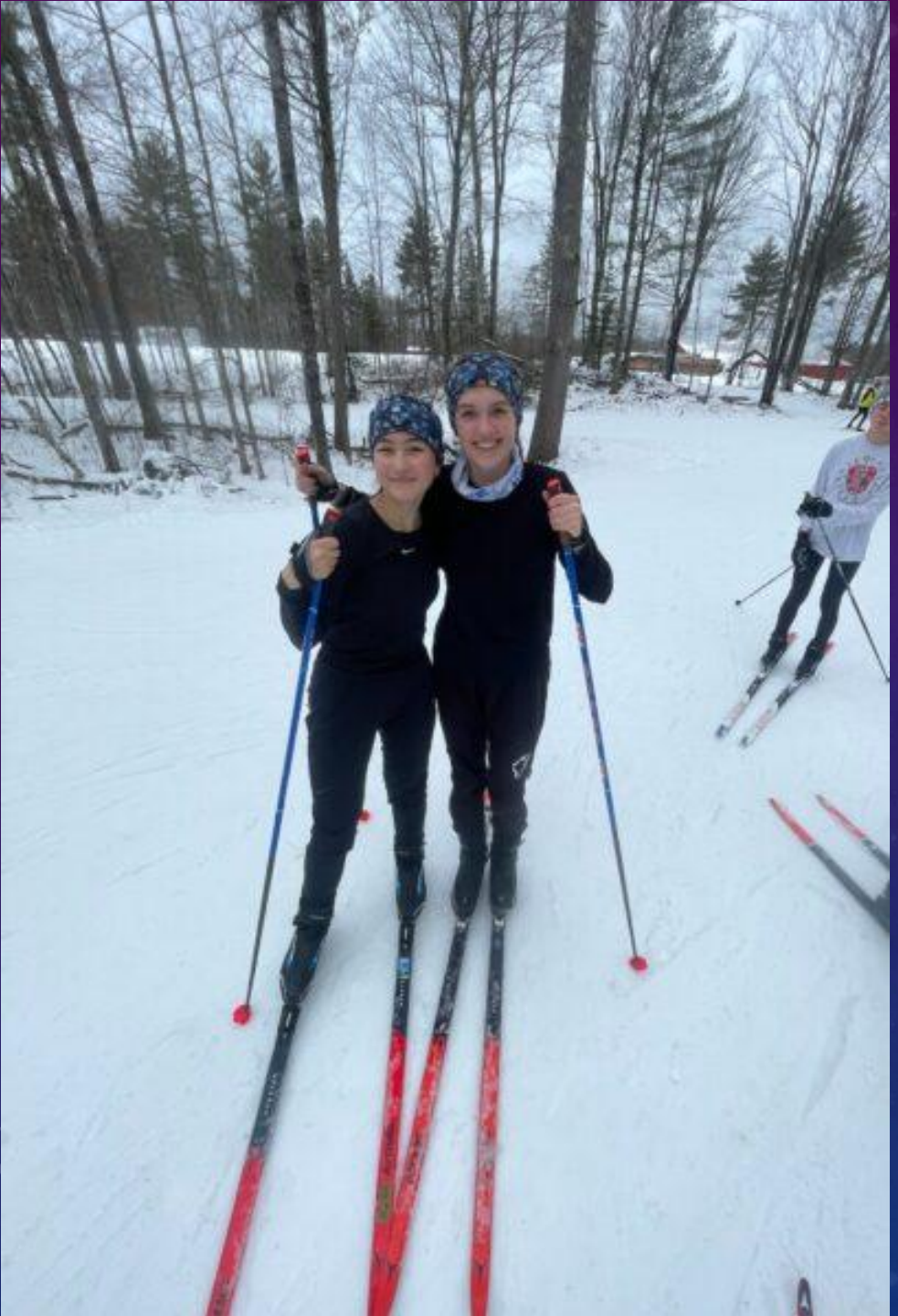
- **Dryland Training (before it snows)**
  - Running with classic ski poles
  - Bounding
  - Core strength exercises (circuit training)
  - Roller Skiing
  - Some easy workouts (long slow distance) & some harder (interval) training
  - Games





- On Snow Training
  - Technique, technique, technique (classic and freestyle/skate)
  - Easy long-distance workouts at a slow pace with minimal rest
  - Intervals
  - Recovery workouts





VARSITY & JV TEAM SELECTION

- All skiers get to compete
  - Able to race 10 skiers per regular season meet at varsity level
  - Reduced to 7 skiers for section races
  - Able to race as many JV & Developmental (6th grade) skiers as we have on the team
  - Skiers qualify for varsity status on a technique and race-by-race basis

VARSITY MEETS

- Typically, at Hyland - especially in low snow years
  - Also held at Valleywood GC, Battle Creek, Murphy
- **Varsity Races**
  - December 3:30 start; January 3:45
- Races Types & Technique
  - Freestyle interval start (2 skiers every 15-30 sec.) races
  - Classic interval start races
  - Mass start classic or freestyle
  - Individual Sprint championship race – interval start and heats (2025-2026 = SKATE/FREESTYLE)
  - Team Sprint championship race – Prelims & both A & B finals (2025-2026 = CLASSIC)
  - SSC Pursuit championship – 5km classic AM & 5km Freestyle PM
  - Section Meet First week in Feb.
  - State Meet Feb. 11th & 12th



JUNIOR VARSITY & DEVELOPMENTAL MEETS

- Held in conjunction with Varsity Meets
  - Also held at Valleywood GC, Battle Creek, Murphy
  - December 4:00-4:15 start; January 4:15
- Technique
  - Two-three freestyle interval start races
  - Two-three classic interval start races
  - Two day JV pursuit championship – 5km classic day 1 & 5km Freestyle day 2
- There is no section race for JV or developmental skiers



SKI WAXING

- Prior to each race skis need to be glide and or kick waxed
  - Families volunteer to host waxing pods
  - Goal is for pods to have 6-9 skiers
  - Host family and skier are supplied with waxes, base cleaner, benches etc. ***All we need is your space***
  - Skiers bring a clean set of skis to waxing
  - Liquid wax is applied and brushed out using a process that takes no more than 30 minutes
  - Coaches attend early season pods that have new skiers to assist
- Before our first race, there will be a ***waxing clinic*** led by the coaches & captains that will serve to teach skiers the waxing process







TRANSPORTATION

- Skiers required to have own transportation to and from ***practices***
  - School policy is that families are responsible for transportation to practices
  - For meets we have busing
- For races, buses leave from the high school with the largest number of skiers on the team – Eagan H.S.
- Two buses with JV bus leaving approx. 1-hour after varsity bus
- Because of district transportation and race venue requirements, for most races athletes need to leave school early.

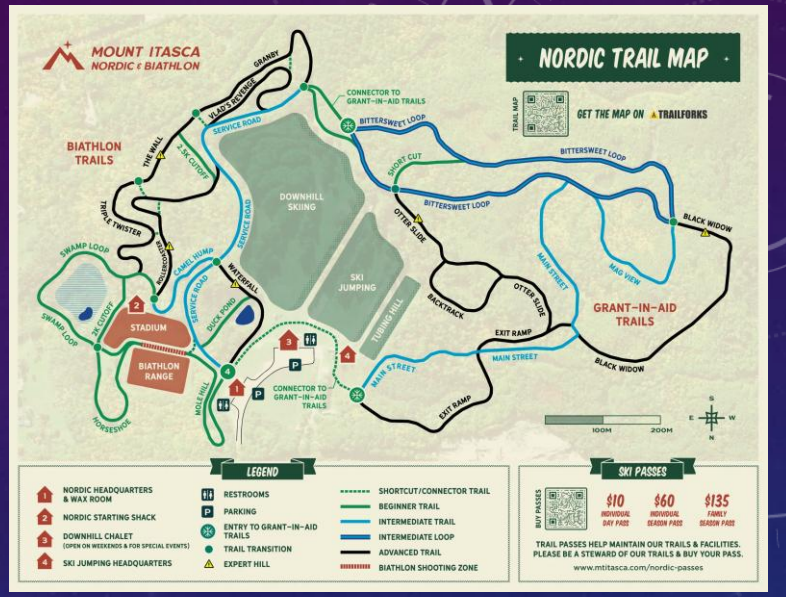
THREE RIVERS & RAMSEY COUNTY PARKS SKI PASSES

- In low snow years, we often practice and athletes ski on their own at Hyland Rec. Area (Bloomington) and Battle Creek Park (St. Paul) each of which has machine made snow
- High School skiers receive 50% discount purchasing trail passes through the team. 3-Rivers pass is included in booster club fees
    - 3-Rivers $47.50
    - Ramsey Co. $40.00



TRIPS

- Team has typically scheduled two training trips during the season
  - Team bonding
  - Provide opportunity to ski on different and more challenging courses
- ***Thanksgiving trip*** (Friday – Sunday to Michigan's Upper Peninsula (Ironwood, MI)
  - For experienced skiers only
- ***Holiday season trip (12/28-12/30)*** to **Mt. Itasca Ski Area**
  - All skiers welcome
  - Skier should be able to ski for approximately 2-hours at a pace that is fast enough to keep them warm
  - Lodging at camp 15 minutes from Giant's Ridge
- Please Note: Additional costs are associated with each of these trips
- All trips are optional



JUNIOR NATIONAL RACING

- Our more experienced skiers often take part in additional ski races during our season
  - Races are sponsored by the USSA Central Cross County and are not high school sanctioned
  - Competitions are held on weekends and typically include the top skiers in state, MN, WI & MI
- Skiers are grouped by age rather than all skiers competing against each other
  - Under 14
  - Under 16
  - Under 18
- Not something a new skier would do but a goal to reach for as taking p[art in these competitions makes one a better skier



BEHAVIORAL CONDUCT

- As athletes representing ISD #196, all skiers are expected to behave in an appropriate manner at practices, competitions, and within the community.
- Any misconduct including
  - verbal or physical harassment,
  - poor sportsmanship, and/or
  - use of chemicals/drugs

  will be handled in accordance with school district policies and result in suspension from competition for the specified period of time.



COACHING STAFF

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QUESTIONS









