

FACT SHEET: Minneapolis Alpine Ski Team 2020-2021 Season

Alpine skiing is a sanctioned winter sport of the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL). Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) offers alpine ski racing as a varsity and junior varsity sport for boys and girls in grades seven through twelve who attend a Minneapolis public school (MPS). Most students and parents who participate in alpine skiing are unfamiliar with how the sport is administered. This “Fact Sheet” provides a quick overview of high school alpine ski racing with Minneapolis Public Schools.

Impact of Covid-19: Exactly all the ways that the Covid-19 pandemic will impact how we operate this season are not yet fully known. We now know that the season will open on Monday, November 30, 2020 instead of Monday, November 9. We also know that we will have a fourteen-week season with NO MN State High School Alpine Championships. The good news is that we will be able to train and race through the first week of March instead of shutting down on February 10th

Most ski areas have announced their policies on chalet use, storage of bags, use of lifts, and food service. Transportation is a big issue this year. How much social distancing is needed on buses to keep everyone safe? With reduced capacity, can we afford the expense of hiring additional buses to meet our transportation needs? We are fortunate to have a strong Board of Directors and a committed coaching staff on MAST. Our first priority is to keep our athletes skiing. To get them outdoors, train hard, continue to improve, and keep them as safe as possible. We hope to race against other schools this year, but these opportunities may be more limited than in previous years. We are confident that we can hold races between our three Minneapolis teams. Hopefully we can add other teams to our schedule and even a few races at other ski areas. The FACTS about MAST outlined below need to be considered in the context of a pandemic. Not everything we have offered in the past may be available this season. We will do our best but there are no guarantees.

Organization

- Since 2000, the Minneapolis Alpine Ski Team (MAST), a 501c3, has been providing organizational and financial support for the alpine ski teams of Minneapolis Public Schools.
- Students in grades seven through twelve who attend a Minneapolis Public School are eligible to compete for their high school in the sport of alpine ski racing.
- MAST welcomes students of all ability levels, from beginner to expert. Our coaching staff will work with you to help you improve whatever skills you bring to the slopes. However, it will be your commitment and hard work that will determine just how far you will progress in the sport.
- MAST is funded through a combination of funding sources: Minneapolis Public Schools, Club Membership Fees, MPS Activity Fees, and Fundraising.
- Fundraising opportunities are available to MAST athletes and families to help with costs.
- MAST is incorporated as a 501 (c) 3 non-profit and managed by a Board of Directors.
- Due to limitations of funding and the availability of training space, roster spots are limited even though we roster over 130 athletes last year.

Coaching Staff

- The MAST coaching staff is led by Head Coaches Mark Conway and Daniel Polland and Assistant Coaches Joel Hedrick, Mathew Polland, Eleanor Goodnow, and Jack Strand. We hope to add up to two additional paid coaches this year.
- Additionally, MAST athletes benefit from the time and energy of a large and experienced staff of volunteer coaches.
- All the coaches work hard to maximize skill development for all athletes and to teach safe skiing habits and maintain safe training environments at all times.

Training

- Our season officially opens on Monday, November 30 this year and closes on March 6. If Hyland is open that first week, we will be training on-snow. If Hyland is not open, we will try to offer a combination of outdoor dryland training and instruction via google meets.
- Practices are held at Hyland Ski and Snowboard Area in Bloomington. All athletes are required to purchase an unlimited season pass to Hyland for \$455 (if purchased before November 1; \$479 after November 1. Athletes can purchase the pass directly through MAST until October 24th and save the expense of paying MN state sales tax or you can purchase directly from Three Rivers Parks/Hyland Hills.
- Generally, practices are offered six days a week, Monday-Saturday. Students and parents are encouraged to discern and establish a training schedule that works best with the athlete and his/her academic goals and outside responsibilities/commitments.
- A finalized training and race schedule will be sometime in November. Training times can and do change depending on training space availability. In the past and generally, MAST offers two to three training sessions Monday through Thursday: 3:30-5:45; 5-7:15; 6:30-8:45. We usually hold two sessions on Fridays (3:30-5:30 and 5-7:15) and one on Saturday morning from 7:45-10:30AM or 10:30-1:00PM on Saturdays and over Winter Break.
- In a normal year, MAST will offer five to seven (optional) supplemental training sessions at ski areas that offer more challenging terrain, such as Wild Mt. The cost to attend a supplemental training session is usually around \$50 per session, which includes a lift ticket and bus transportation. It is unclear yet whether we will be able to offer supplemental training in 2020-21.
- In a normal year, MAST offers an extended training camp (optional) at Giants Ridge over winter break. Unfortunately, we have already canceled camp this season due to Covid.

Commitment and Expectations

- Athletes are expected to attend a minimum of four practices a week if in senior high and three practices a week if in junior high. Most athletes easily meet these requirements and actually attend five or six practices a week. If you aspire to ski on varsity someday, a higher level of commitment is necessary.
- MAST is not a ski club. It is a competitive athletic team. The coaches strive to help you become the best ski racer you can be, no matter how much previous experience you have in the sport. The coaches expect athletes to come to the hill each day with singular focus: to develop and improve their technical and tactical skills in the sport of ski racing. The coaches put together a training plan for each practice and expect athletes to participate fully in that plan.

- Use of the chalet is limited to warming up and using the bathroom. If you need to eat during practice, bring something from home and eat it on the hill during a chairlift ride. Bring a water bottle out to the hill to hydrate while training.
- We realize that weather conditions and highway traffic loads can impact driving, but we expect athletes to be on time for practice and to stay for the duration of practice.
- At the end of practice, all athletes are needed to help with cleaning up the hill and storing away the equipment.
- Due to Covid, we may need to LIMIT attendance this season in some way in order to limit our numbers on the hill at any one practice. Please be sure to fill out the Training Times Survey. Your input will be important in helping us figure out how best to organize practices in such a way that allows for the greatest level of participation while also keeping everyone as safe as possible.

Competition

- In 2020-21, Covid is going to limit our race schedule and most likely the number of athletes who can race at any one time. You need to know this going into the season, so that you are not disappointed if your opportunities to race against other schools is limited. We will strive to schedule races with as many schools as possible this year, but no one quite knows yet whether this will even be allowed by the MSHSL, individual school districts, and the ski areas that host these events. Stay tuned. The bullet points below reflect our competition picture in a normal year.
- MAST sets its own competition schedule. In 2019-20, MAST competed in dual meets against Wayzata, Lake Crystal, Mound West Tonka, Academy of Holy Angels, Armstrong-Cooper. MAST also entered teams in three invitational meets at Wild Mt, Mt du Lac, and Afton Alps and competed in the Minnesota State High School Section IV Championships and the MN State High School Alpine Championships.
- The varsity squads consist of 10 male and 10 female athletes for dual meets and 6 male and 6 female athletes for invitational races and Section Championships. The varsity roster is determined by time trials and race results and can change at any time, depending on who is skiing fast that week.
- Dual races generally start at 4:30PM on weekdays. Roughly half of our dual races are held at Hyland Hills. Invitational races and the Section Championships are held during the school day.
- At most dual meets, all team members race. Those designated “varsity” score in the varsity race and everyone else competes as “junior varsity” and scores in the junior varsity race. For this season, we likely will be limiting the number of athletes who can race at any one venue due to the need to restrict the size of the competition field.
- During the season, students from all Minneapolis high schools compete together as three teams of boys and girls: Southwest and Washburn each field varsity teams of boys and girls. We also form a third varsity team from our membership that we call MAST. In competitions, the MAST squad consists of students from South, Roosevelt and other Minneapolis schools. Should students from North, Edison, or Patrick Henry wish to join the team, they would compete as part of the MAST team in races.
- All MAST athletes have the opportunity to earn high school letters and athletic honors in alpine skiing.

Transportation

- Athletes are responsible for securing transportation to and from Hyland for practices and races. Many families set up carpools.
- MAST will charter a bus to transport athletes to supplemental training sessions, camps and “away” competitions. Again, it is not clear yet whether we will be able to utilize bus transportation this season due to Covid.

Parent Involvement

- Parent involvement is critical to the success of MAST. Parents are encouraged to become involved with the team in a variety of volunteer roles (instructors, race workers, accounting, marketing, fundraising, website management, statistics, equipment, photography, cooking, etc). Ski racing could not exist for Minneapolis students without the active involvement and support of parents.

Costs

- Suggested and Optional MAST Team Membership Fee: \$225. MPS funding covers four paid coaches. The optional team fee helps to fund additional coaches and cover a portion of the other cost associated with operating a ski team (i.e., race day lift tickets, race entry fees, training equipment and services such as gates, drills, two-way radios, timing system, online video sharing, etc. No student will be turned away for non-payment of the optional team membership fee.
- \$75 MPS Activity Fee (helps fund additional coaches).
- \$455 for an unlimited season pass at Hyland Ski and Snowboard Area if purchased through MAST through October.
- \$50-60 for MAST supplemental training opportunities at more challenging training venues (optional; approximate cost per training session).
- \$??? for all ski equipment.

Equipment

- Athletes need to secure the following equipment: slalom race skis and bindings; boots; poles with pole guards; alpine race helmet; shin guards; warm winter outdoor clothing, basic ski tuning supplies (edge tuning system, wax, iron, scraper).
- Optional equipment as athletes improve and they become more competitive: gs suit (to enhance aerodynamics), additional tuning equipment/waxes.
- Used race equipment can be purchased during September and October when local ski teams hold “ski swaps” at their home ski areas ([Buck Hill](#), [Hyland](#), [Powder Ridge](#), [Afton Alps](#), etc). Check our website for details. Some swaps are canceled this year.
- Used race equipment can also be found on various online websites. Please be advised to review any online purchases with Coach Mark or Coach Daniel before making the purchase. They are happy to assist you to make sure you are getting the proper equipment in the correct size and for a fair price.
- Certain local ski shops offer deeper discounts to MAST athletes on new equipment when purchased in September through mid-October.
- The MAST website offers detailed information on how to buy used equipment at ski swaps. Go to: <http://www.mplsalpineski.org/equipment.html>
- MAST coaches and parents hold tuning seminars to help you learn how to keep your edges sharp and bases waxed.

Communications

- *All of our communication is done by email to parents and athletes.* Phone calls are rarely, if ever, used to communicate. Consequently, be sure that we have your correct email addresses and that you check your email daily once the season is underway.
- Athletes and parents and guardians can get on the MAST Update distribution list by filling out a simple form here: [Athlete Contact Information Form](#)
- The MAST Website address is: www.mplsalpineski.org. Please check out our website carefully. Not only will you find current and in-depth information about MAST, but also useful information about ski racing, ski tuning, gate judging, equipment, etc.

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