



Nordic Ski Information



Our section has a long tradition of participation in cross-country skiing and striving to be competitive at the state level. No doubt you can imagine the challenge of keeping pace with upstate programs that are on snow for four months of the year and have significantly more local support. Nonetheless we have managed to medal at the state meet in each of the last 5 years. Last year saw the New Paltz Girls take third in the state along with a 6th place individual girls medallist and 7th place boys individual medallist. In 2004 New Paltz had the individual girls state champion. What continues to bring the kids out every year, training in the cold, traveling on occasion to find snow, facing the grueling nature of the sport? Nordic ski offers a unique experience...a sport surrounded by natural beauty, one that can be continued for a lifetime, and that demands camaraderie and commitment.

Which schools currently have programs?

New Paltz, Wallkill, Rondout Valley, Monticello, and newly added Kingston

Where are the meets held?

Most meets will take place at the Mohonk Mountain House or other locations in Ulster County. On occasion lack of early season snow or deterioration of late season trails has required traveling a couple of hours to get to snow.

How do you furnish an athlete with equipment?

Generally students rent a package for their first year with an option to buy at the end of the season. These packages (boots, poles, skis, and bindings) have been offered through local ski retailers for about \$190 depending on specific needs. These are typically “combi” skis that allow an athlete to compete in both the classic and skate nordic events. The purchase of a similar package is between \$400-\$500. It is also recommended that the kids have a separate pair of poles for both classical and skate techniques. Families have taken on this cost themselves. Additional costs arise from cold weather clothing designed for athletic needs. We find students often use the same clothing for daily wear, why not it’s comfortable. This equipment can last for many years if treated well.

What are the safety considerations?

Athletes are required to have adequate clothing as temperatures are often in the teens and twenties, though we have skied at near zero degree temperatures. Traveling downhill on skis is always a concern. Athletes receive proper downhill technique as well as learn how to “sit down” to avoid serious falls. As always, risks are inherent and must be recognized. All precautions are taken to ensure safe training and racing. This includes the use of two-way radios, cellular phones, and portable first aid kits.

How do you train when there’s no snow?

Running, plyometrics, roller blading, and roller skiing are all part of the program. We make use of local running trails, hills, paved rail trails, and the school grounds. Creativity is a necessity. Many of our athletes are cross-country runners as well. This training regimen has provided excellent cross training in addition to good pre-racing preparation.

How often are you on snow?

We have averaged about 6 consecutive weeks on snow the last few years. Local skiing takes place at the Mohonk Preserve, Williams Lake in Rosendale, and Minnewaska State Park. In addition before the snow falls we travel to it about once every week or two. These have included going to Belleayre downhill area on our nordic skis, north to Glens Falls for night skiing as well as an occasional day trip to the Adirondaks or Southern Vermont. In all we manage to get on snow for a total of about 8 weeks.