

SOUTHWEST MOUNTAIN SKI TEAMS

SKI GEAR GUIDE

NEW ATHLETES

The **minimum** gear needed to race in Metro League OISRA sanctioned events are:
*safe, functioning boots+skis+bindings and a **hard-eared FIS-certified ski racing helmet**.*
CONTACT COACHES REGARDING QUESTIONS ABOUT SKI TUNING

Helmets: All racers must wear a FIS certified Helmet. Sizing and fit vary by manufacturer, so be sure to try them on and have them properly fitted. Helmets should fit snugly without a beanie or other thick layer on the inside (a thin balaclava is fine). All FIS helmets will have hard, fixed ear covering. Most FIS helmets have an optional, removable chin guard for use when racing Slalom (SL), but be sure to check this when making your selection. If you choose to place stickers on your helmet please be sure to not cover the FIS certification sticker. If the race officials can't see the sticker, you can't race!

Skis: We recommend a minimum investment into all-mountain carving skis (not powder or park skis), less than 100 millimeters width underfoot, made primarily for carving on groomers. Length sized to be approximately the skier's height in centimeters, give or take a few. Err on the wider side if you prefer some flexibility in powder and crud conditions. The manufacturer's turning radius of the ski should be 12 to 18 meters if using an all mountain carving ski. An alternative could be something closer to a race ski, found in a skier-cross, or "tweener" ski. These are generally stiff with a pronounced parabolic shape like a slalom ski but feature a longer radius (~14-18meters). They're great for carving on groomers and can be used to race in either SL or GS up to the advanced-intermediate skill level.

Bindings should have an upper DIN number of at least 12. Dins on recreational and rental bindings that max out at less than 10 are too weak for ski racing and skiing at a higher level in general.

Boots are THE most important piece of equipment you will own. They must fit snugly all around and should be fit by a professional. Snug and slightly uncomfortable is generally good— soft and loose is bad, even if it feels comfortable. Flex values on boots are somewhat subjective and relative to the boot model, gender, size, and manufacturer, however, you should seek a good pair of performance boots and not lower-end recreational boots. Performance boots are stiffer, generally better fitting, and deliver more stable power to the skis. Tell the ski shop you are getting the boots for racing, but unless you are a strong black diamond skier or have already been training and racing, a true race boot is unnecessary and will be uncomfortable to learn in. Focus on what fits well in a boot, as the trouble areas, especially if too tight or a painful pressure point, can usually be modified by a boot professional (see reverse).

Poles should be sized so that if the skier flips the pole upside down and grips it just below the basket (handle resting on the ground next to their feet), their arm should be 90 degrees at the elbow.

Race skis: New racers with a solid season of skiing experience or better can benefit greatly from an actual race ski. We recommend starting out with a slalom (SL) ski as they provide a faster learning curve and a great return on investment. These are typically 11 to 13 meter radius skis and are made for slalom racing. DO NOT get the FIS version of a race ski, however. It will be too stiff and is only good for a higher level racer. Length of a slalom ski should be approximately the height of the athlete's nose to eyes range in CM. Giant Slalom (GS) skis are not recommended for new racers unless they are very strong skiers with good carving skills. They excel at making the precise long turns in a giant slalom course and are stable at speed, but are not versatile and have a steep learning curve.

Goggles and Apparel: All racers should own at least two pairs of goggles, if not three. At a minimum, one should own a pair of daytime lens goggles for bright conditions, and a pair of clear or night lenses/goggles – key for safe and productive night skiing. Additionally, a pair of storm lenses/goggles are great to have for when light is lower and flat when overcast/stormy. These can be a savior as a backup

pair if your daytime goggles get fogged up on a high humidity day. Clothing should be appropriate for repelling water, snow and wind, and layers appropriate for keeping the athlete DRY and WARM (temperature regulated). A cold and/or wet athlete cannot be a very productive athlete. It's worth investing in good gear to stay comfortable and stay outdoors.

VETERAN ATHLETES

Tuning: Athletes are expected to tune and wax their skis weekly, according to conditions. Contact coach Jesse (see below) for info on tuning equipment. Tuning clinics and help will be provided pre-season.

Race Boots: We recommend upgrading to race boots as your skills improve. They are lower volume, stiffer, better for custom fitting, and are able to deliver faster, more precise power to the skis than recreational boots. They will need consultation and custom fitting. See below.

Race Skis: We recommend at least having slalom race skis, sized appropriately (approx up to the nose to eyes range in CM length), with an 11-13 meter radius. They should NOT be FIS skis unless the athlete is at a higher level or is advised by coaches; this is especially true for GS skis. GS skis should be close to the skier's height in CM, and have at least a 17 to 23 meter radius for those on the more intermediate skill level (or small in body size), or 23-25 meter radius for more advanced racers.

Poles: A pair of pole guards on dedicated slalom poles are ideal as freeskiing with pole guards is clunky (and slalom baskets aren't good in powder and crud). Pole guards are also a safety consideration when training and racing GS and should be avoided. Freeski poles are OK for GS but the baskets often get ripped off when flying past a GS gate. Downhill baskets can be retrofitted on poles, or GS poles can provide this feature plus a more ergonomic transition into tuck position.

Race suits: Those racing varsity and/or having competitive aspirations should have a GS race suit – They are aerodynamic and will shave a little time, especially on GS courses. Note GS suits are padded while Downhill suits are not. Get the padded version.

Protective Gear: Chin guards on helmets are great to have (for SL only). You can fit a compatible chin guard on your FIS helmet and swap it off for GS days. Shin guards offer great protection for the knees during SL courses. Forearm guards are a bonus for those at the level of clearing GS gates. Back protectors are generally not necessary and were designed for speed disciplines and park/mogul athletes.

WHERE TO GET GEAR!

New Gear: **Contact Coach Jesse.** He has pro deal accounts to get between 20% and 60% off from most manufacturers – for skis it's often ½ off! ::

A good site to check out for solid sale prices and discounts on new prior-season inventory is <https://www.coloradodiscountskis.com/>

Also, The Race Place <https://the-raceplace.com/> in Bend, OR is one of the best retail race shops in the region, as well as Bob Olson's Mt Hood Alpine Race Center <https://www.mthoodarc.com/> (he is an expert level boot fitter and ski tuner), and Hillcrest Sports in Gresham <https://hillcrestsports.com/> which has a couple great boot fitters, race tuning, and a limited race gear section. Call ahead when boot fitting.

USED Gear: One of the best online sources for used racing gear is SidelineSwap <https://sidelineswap.com/shop/skiing/>. One of the best places to find the lowest prices for race skis, suits and protective racing gear on a budget (not helmets- see below). Another source can be the Lake Oswego Ski Swap in the fall, and sections of the Portland Ski Expo/Ski Fever/Snowvana, also in the fall.

NOTE: Boots and helmets are not advised for purchase online. Boots CAN be, but you should already have tried on the specific model and size before buying, and know their condition and usage life. Helmets should NOT be purchased online when USED because of the safety risk of unknown damage.