BSC Freestyle Handbook

2025/2026 Season

Table of Contents

Mission Statement

To educate athletes in the sport of freestyle skiing, stressing the importance of safety and the respect for others on the slopes; while improving overall skiing ability and promoting teamwork in an individual sport.

Athlete Requirements

Able to ski confidently on all intermediate and advanced terrain and in all conditions.
Able to load/unload chairlifts without assistance.
Able to ski independently and be dismissed on hill for lunch and at the end of training.

Travel (Competition Team)

A competitive freestyle skiing program for advanced skiers with opportunities to train and compete in moguls, aerials, and slope-style events through the USSS Eastern Freestyle Circuit.
Saturdays 9:00am-2:30pm
Sundays 11:00am–2:00pm
Wednesday evenings 6:30pm – 8:30pm
All team participants who plan on competing must have a current USSS membership.

Club (Development Team)

This program designed for newer skiers and is an introduction to freestyle skiing. Emphasis is on improving skiing skills, basic freestyle fundamentals, skiing etiquette and safety. Club members must be able to load chairlifts independently, confidently ski blue runs, be able to ski independently, and be dismissed on hill for lunch and at the end of training.
Saturdays 9:00 am-2:30pm
Sundays 11:00 am–2:00pm

Lunch/Dinner breaks

All participants are responsible for their own lunch, snacks, hydration, etc. If purchasing a lunch at the Tamarack lodge during a practice session, the athlete must notify a coach, and is responsible for meeting back at the Sitzmarker lodge by the time specified, or finding the group on the hill.

Sundays – All athletes are expected to begin practice on Sundays fed and ready to participate for the three hour session. We typically do not take a structured lunch break.

Wednesdays - All athletes are expected to begin practice on Wednesday evenings fed and ready to participate for the two hour session. We do not take a dinner break.

Training Options:

Pre-season Dryland Training

Saturday's
ALL PROGRAMS / 9:00 – 10:30 am at the Sitzmarker Lodge.
This is a great way to prepare for on snow training.

Christmas Camp

ALL PROGRAMS / Times TBD
Runs between Christmas and New Year, dates TBD on weather and terrain availability.
This is a day camp held between Christmas and New Year. This will be on snow with an emphasis on improving skiing skills prior to the competition season. Jumping mechanics (proper take-off and landing) will also be a focus.

Meeting Location and Dismissal

We will meet outside the lower entrance to the Sitzmarker Lodge, at the top of *Old Sitz*. Please be ready to ski at least 10 minutes prior to the scheduled training times.

Athletes will be dismissed at the Sitzmarker lodge (unless otherwise notified) at the end of each session. Please be aware that lift lines, mechanical breakdowns, etc., may result in a later dismissal time that is out of our control. It is a good idea for the parent/guardian to communicate a meeting location that works best for you. We will not leave anyone behind, but it is not the coaches' responsibility to track down parents at the end of the session.

Staff

The staff consists of BSC Snowsports personnel and certified USSS Coaches. All coaches and officials must undergo background screening in accordance with USSS's Child Protection policy, and have been trained in CPR, First Aid and the use of an AED. See www.usskiandsnowboard.org for more information.

Program Director/
Head Coach: David Von Derau
Freestyle@buffaloskiclub.com

Coaches:

Mark DePeters mdepeters@hotmail.com

Keith Young keith.subway@yahoo.com

Stan Bagrowski

Jason Conley

Tom Flynn

Jeff Domster

Terry Courtney

Jim McDonald

Assistant coaches:

None at this time

Parent Committee Chairs:

None at this time

Code of Conduct

Follow the rules as set forth by the coaches, the ski area(s), and USSS (United States Ski & Snowboard), both at BSC and while traveling. This includes staying on open trails, maintaining control and reasonable speed, no jumping off ski lifts / T-bars, or unauthorized lift line cutting. Serious infractions may result in suspension or removal from the program.
1. Understand and follow the Skier/Snowboarder Responsibility Code.
2. Represent BSC with upmost respect and courtesy.

3. Inverted and off axis jumps are prohibited unless they are performed in front of a USSS Level 200 or higher Aerials coach on designated freestyle sites during official training or competition.
4. Conduct oneself with the highest level of integrity.
    - Keep frustrations and temper in check.
    - Profane language will not be tolerated.
    - Show respect and support to teammates and staff and to each other's property.
5. Rely upon and obey the judgment and direction of the coaches.
6. Report any injury to a coach or BSC employee immediately.
7. Be on time for scheduled training and competitions.
8. Help keep training courses maintained as requested by coaches. Slip mogul courses after each training session or as needed.
9. Give coaches appropriate advance warning of inability to attend training, or the need to leave practice early.

Membership on the freestyle team is conditional upon abiding by the rules and principles of the team. In the event an athlete violates any program rule, the coaches will handle the offense in the following manner:

1st Offense – Coach will discuss with athlete and notify the Program Director. The parent may be notified in a serious offense.

2nd Offense – Program Director will discuss with athlete and notify parents.

3rd Offense – Program Director will notify parents and disciplinary action will be determined for each case by the Program Director and the BSC General Manager.

Medical

Medical Hold Procedure - In the event of an injury that requires medical attention, an athlete must provide a Physicians note to return to training and competition.

This includes, but is no limited to head injuries and concussions. We do not take head injuries lightly, and will strictly enforce this requirement.

Goal Setting

Goals keep us focused and motivated. Goal setting is a phased process which you must work through in order to set and achieve successful goals. Training logs sheets or a diary are encouraged to be filled out weekly, by the athlete. Periodically through the season, the coaches will meet with the athletes to review their goals and progress.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

Parents are responsible for transportation to and from training and competitions. Parents

need to communicate with coaches for late drop-off or early pick-up. Accept and uphold coaches' and Team Managements decisions, which are made with the intention of providing the most successful environment for the athletes and the Team.

Your input is valuable and we need it to improve our program and the team. Filling initial complaints with the general manager will not help us as a team. For questions or concerns related to the freestyle program operations, please direct them to the program director or a coach.

Parent Tips

Encourage your child to compete against himself/herself first; the ultimate goal of the sport is to challenge oneself and continually improve. Winning in sports is about doing the best that you can, regardless of the outcome or the results of you or your opponent. Do not define success and failure in terms of winning and losing. If a child competes to his/her very best and doesn't achieve their goals, you need to help them feel like a winner. Be your child's biggest fan - provide support, encouragement, empathy and feedback - but please leave the coaching and instruction to the coaching staff. Stop by practice sessions to see the progress being made, there is nothing more rewarding to an athlete than to have his/her parents watch and support them as they progress in the sport.

The more fun an athlete is having the more he/she will learn and the better they will perform. If your child is not having fun – investigate! What is keeping them from having fun? Is it the coaching, is it pressure or is it you? Remember the importance of high self-esteem in all your interactions with your child-athlete. Athletes of all levels and ages perform in direct relationship to how they feel about themselves. Make your child feel good about themselves and you've given them a gift that lasts a lifetime. Give your child the gift of failure. The most successful people both in and out of sports do two things differently. First, they are willing to take risks and therefore fail more frequently. Second, they use their failures in a positive way as a source of positive motivation and feedback to improve. Failure is a stepping-stone to success.

Stress the process, (skill acquisition, mastery and fun), not the outcome. An outcome focus will almost always distract and tighten up the athlete insuring bad performance. If you truly want your child to succeed, help get his/her focus away from how important the contest is and have them focus on the task at hand, having fun! Supportive parents de-emphasize winning and instead stress learning the skills and participating. Avoid comparisons and respect developmental differences. Comparisons are inaccurate and destructive since every child matures and develops differently.

Volunteers

Your volunteer time is greatly appreciated and is a direct correlation to our overall success as a program. We do not collect a volunteer deposit or keep track of your volunteer hours. However it is to the benefit of everyone involved that you help out where you can, when you can. Opportunities to volunteer also occur during BSC hosted events. See Parent Committee section below.

We can always use some mogul course slippers at the end of each training day. As more athletes ski a course, they will create gouges on jump take-offs and landing as well as deepen the trough and steepen the faces of mogul bumps. Slipping a course involves carefully sliding down a course on skis and smoothing out gouges, and slipping snow off the peaks of mogul bumps to reduce the depth of troughs and reduce the steepness of the bump faces. If a heavily skied course is left un-slipped overnight to freeze, the course may become very hard and dangerous to ski the next morning.

The aerial site requires many man hours of work for each training session. Tasks that we can use help with are slipping the in-run and out-run, moving snow to the landing, chopping and stepping the landing, and moving fencing at the beginning and end of practice, to name a few. During especially difficult weather conditions, this may be an "all hands on deck" call to be able to open the site and still have time to train (reference the massive snow dump during the 2020/2021 season). All shovels and other snow moving equipment are stored at the jump site and available for your use and enjoyment.

If you're on the hill ask a coach if there is anything they could use a hand with. No good deed goes unnoticed. Thank You in advance!

Fundraising

Fund raising is done through team events as well as the weekly hotdog sales at the Sitzmarker lodge. All money raised will be put into a BSC sanctioned fund, run by the BSC general manager. The funds are used to further coaching education and certification, improve the freestyle terrain, and purchase tools and equipment; while keeping the cost of the program affordable and not relying on general BSC funds. The judges stands have been built with many hours of sweat and fundraised dollars, not placing any financial burden on BSC.

Parent Committee

A Parent Committee chairperson will be identified to work with the parents and assist the coaches with on and off-slope duties. Each family is expected to help where they can during the season and off-season. As with any competitive sport your child may be involved in, parent support and involvement is critical to helping them develop their skills and abilities while nurturing their love for the sport. Skiing is a bit unique in that, for many

families, it is not just a competitive sport your child is involved in, but hopefully an activity that is enjoyed by the entire family. Skiing is something that your child and family will enjoy together for a lifetime. We are all very fortunate to be members of a small, fun, welcoming, and safe ski community at BSC. Our governing agencies of Eastern Freestyle and USSS have many great resources for parents regarding conducting their own communications to help parents with their skiers. We ask that you please pay attention to all such communications and share things as appropriate with your skier.

Aside from supporting your skier, the next most important aspect to being a BSC Freestyle Parent is to be in attendance at and help with various duties at the BSC Freestyle competitions we host each season. Typically, each year we host at least two events and sometimes up to three, when we are fortunate enough to host the NY-PA State Championships. The stringent regulations to run a fun and safe sanctioned ski competition are set by USSS, not by us. A competition day at BSC is one where we have an opportunity to showcase the Buffalo Ski Center. We must have help to cover all of the required roles and responsibilities for competition day - it takes about 20 people (not including the coaches) so we will be enlisting the parent committee for your help!

To ensure that our program can be the best possible experience for all our families, it is imperative that the parents become involved. There are many areas in which parent volunteers are needed, and each family who has a child in the program is expected to participate in these areas. It is our expectation that all parents assist in some capacity, including parents of athletes in the Club program. Please mark your calendars for Saturday and Sunday of February 11th to 12th, as well as February 18th to 19th. The committee will need at least one family member, from each family, regardless of whether or not your child is competing. This sense of Freestyle family is what has made our program what it is today and afforded BSC to be named the Freestyle Club of the Year in 2017, let us all shoot for this prestigious award again in the near future, we thank you all in advance for your invaluable efforts.

Some examples of the competition day duties include: hot dog sales, registration and (pre) organization of bibs, managing the lunch for officials/coaches/volunteers, ordering awards, scorekeeping, hand-timing, announcing, course set up, course tear down, and much more.

Course maintenance during the season: chopping, shoveling, building, weather inconsistencies (too much snow or too little snow) will require addition manpower to prepare the terrain for training. This will be on an as-needed basis, and advance notice will be given when possible.

Equipment

Skis

In general, ski length should be between the chin and the top of the forehead for both mogul and free-ride or park skis. Mogul skis tend to have less shape or side cut than that of other skis. They should be softer in the tips with a stiffer tail. Park skis should be twin-tips and typically wider than moguls skis. For the majority of the team members an all mountain or recreational ski is all they need. As they start to get serious in moguls or park or aerials, they will greatly benefit from a discipline specific ski.

Boots

Good quality, properly fitted boots are essential. Good boots = happy feet = happy kids. Cold or uncomfortable boots = unhappy kids. Full Tilt boots as an example are a good choice for both mogul skiing and jumping. A softer flexing boot will be more effective than a stiffer boot. To determine if a boot is soft enough for your child you should be able to clearly see the boot flex forward in unison with the lower leg. If the upper boot cuff does not move or moves very little, the boot is too stiff and will hinder your child in their skill progression. Skis and equipment should be properly maintained during the season, including, but not limited to waxing and sharpening.

Bindings

Youth ski bindings (DIN up to 4.5) are OK for kids up to about 60 pounds. Heavier or more aggressive kids should be in a binding with at least DIN 7 or 10+.

Equipment (Cont.)

Helmet

USSS approved ski helmets are mandatory for all training and competitions, no exceptions. If you show up without a proper helmet you won't be allow to train or compete. Proper sizing, fit and securing of helmets is absolutely essential to athlete safety. Loose straps or hats worn underneath are not allowed. Beware of headgear that is labeled "Hardhat," these appear to be helmets, although are not rated for freestyle skiing.

Facilities (Freestyle Acres)

The Sitzmarker lodge will be used for the scheduled meeting location, unless otherwise specified.

Jump Site – Tamarack – "Double Full" Trail

The Aerial or Jump Site is located near the Sitzmarker T-bar. The Jump Site will be used for aerial and park training. It will be closed during all non-training and completion times.

Mogul Course – Tamarack – "Stampede" Trail

The Mogul Course will be located next to the aerial site. The Mogul Course will be used for mogul training and our hosted USSS competition.

Slopestyle Course – Tamarack – "Materhorn" Trail

The Slopestyle Course will be the north of the Mogul Course.

Communications

Information and notifications are an important part of a successful Team. We distribute weekly emails to remind and update the training schedule. It may be necessary to move training times or locations based on weather or facility availability. These changes will be announced in the weekly email, please be sure to check your email prior to training or an event for updates.

Competitions

Fundamentally sound skiing technique is a pre-requisite. It is therefore recommended that young skiers demonstrate sound skiing fundamentals before embarking on competition. Mogul skiing technique differs from alpine skiing, but requires similar fundamental skills such as ski-edge control and balance. Because all disciplines also incorporate jumps, in order to safely progress, skiers need to incorporate aerial training into their progression, usually incorporating trampoline training (to develop acrobatic "air-sense" and safe landing techniques) – which can start at an early age – and water ramp and or air bag training, which involves developing ski jumps in a safe water pool or air bag landing environment. Ramping and on snow qualification are a pre-requisite for competing inverted tricks and is strongly recommended for off-axis maneuvers. As a skier progresses they may develop an affinity for specific disciplines and wish to concentrate on those, but in starting off, an "all-round" approach is recommended as skills translate across all disciplines.

Athletes are not required to compete, however a great deal of training time is spent preparing for competitions. If they are ready we will encourage new members to try out competing at our event the first year. We host an aerial, mogul and slopestyle competition in February. If you have questions or concerns ask any coach. To compete you must hold a USSS Jr, Rookie, or USSS competitors license. Go to www.usskiandsnowboard.org for more information.

Travel Procedures

Supervision Policy - Athletes attending events must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. If an athlete is going to an event with another family, the attending coaching staff should be made aware of this.

Transportation - It is the responsibility of the athlete and the athlete's parents/guardians to arrange travel to training and competitions.

Lodging and Meals - Lodging and Meals are the responsibility of the athlete and the athlete's parents/guardians.

USSS

The U.S. Ski and Snowboard or USSS is the national governing body for Olympic skiing and snowboarding, and the parent organization for the U.S Ski Team and U.S Snowboarding. The U.S. is divided into seven regions: Alaska, Central, Eastern, Far West, Intermountain, Northern, Pacific Northwest, and Rocky Mountain. In the Eastern Region (which covers, PA, NY and the New England States), USSA Eastern Freestyle-Freeskiing is the organizing non-profit body. The Eastern Freestyle-Freeskiing organizing committee consists of coaches, officials, organizers and competitors from mountains across the East.

How to get a USSS License?

USSS membership for competitors, coaches, and officials can be obtained either online or via fax using USSS membership application form found on the usskiandsnowboard.org website. Membership requires renewal each year. Late fees apply after October 15 for renewals of full competitor membership. Competitors 12 year old and under should apply for the less expensive Youth Competitor membership (no late fees apply). First time competitors should apply for the less expensive Rookie Competitor membership (no late fees apply). Once processed, the membership details can be downloaded off the USSS website. You should print and carry your card to competitions.

Eastern Freestyle

Beyond local mountain events, the entry level of freestyle competition in the East is the Eastern Qualifying Series (EQS) – also known as the "B" level – typically for 7 to 15 year olds. EQS athletes compete in regular season events that culminate in invitations to the EQS State Championships and EQS "B" Championships based on results during the regular season. The next level is the Eastern Championship Series (ECS) – also known as the "A" level. ECS athletes compete in regular season events that culminate in invitations to the ECS Eastern Championships, Junior Olympics and US Championships based on results during the regular season. Although male and female athletes compete separately, unlike in alpine racing, freestyle meets at both the "A" and "B" level always include both male and female

events. Beyond this, athletes compete in national and international meets at the Nor-Am (North American Tour), FIS (Federation Internationale de Ski) World Cup and Olympic level.

Age Categories

Freestyle competition age categories are in two-year bands with male (M) and female (F) designations starting with U7 for 6 year old and younger, running up to U19 for 17 and 18 year olds, in 2 year increments based on their year of birth (see page 12 of the 2022 Competition Guide).

How to Register for an Event?

You can register on line through the schedule of events on the www.easternfreestyle.org website. You will need a current USSS competitor membership and credit card. EQS competitors should be aware that the registration limit for a mogul event is 100 athletes (male and female combined). On-line registration closes two days prior to the first event of a competition, after which athletes need to register on-site and pay a $15 late fee for the competition (not per event), if there are still spots available. There is no mail, email, fax or phone registration.

Competitive Disciplines

There are three principal disciplines we train for: Moguls, Slopestyle, and Aerials.

Moguls

A mogul run is scored based on the quality of turns & line, degree of difficulty and execution of the tricks and run time. Competition mogul courses will include two small kickers or jumps to help competitors perform their tricks. Competitors are also required to perform two different tricks.

A mogul run is scored out of a maximum of 100 points. 60% or up to 60 points are awarded for turns & line, 20% or up to 20 points for jumps (each awarded by judges) and 20% or up to 20 points for elapsed time. For a beginner, focus on good mogul skiing form and avoiding falls is the most effective way to build a good score on a mogul run.

Judges look for minimal deviation from the fall line, a quiet upper body and arms, steady hands out front with pole plants effected with a flick of the wrist rather than arm motion, feet and knees working in unison with no break in form (no daylight between feet or knees), and good balance on top of the skis (no sitting back). Deductions will be applied for changes in line, stoppages, touch downs and falls. Steady uninterrupted turn rhythm adds

to the overall impression. Good moguls skiers will find that skiing a higher speed runs ***under control*** will achieve high turns & line points and vice versa.

Each jump/grab combination carries a degree of difficulty score. If the same jump is attempted twice on a mogul run, only the better scoring jump will count. Execution scores are judged on amplitude (height), in-air execution and landing. Falls on jumps tend to destroy the total run score as judges will apply deductions on the jump score as well as the turns & line score, so it is recommended that competitors are confident in a given jump before using it in competition.

Time points are awarded based performance against a "pace time" for a mogul course. The pace time is based on the length of the course (no adjustments are made for steepness or difficulty of the conditions).

Aerials

In aerial competition, athletes are judged based on a single jump per run, with two runs per competition. Athletes need to call down their intended jump and execute it, and not permitted to repeat maneuvers in the same jump family. Athletes are only allowed to attempt in competition jumps of the type they have performed during the practice session. In EQS the combined score of both runs is used to establish event results.

An aerial jump is scored based on a combination of 10% take-off, 10% amplitude (height/distance), 50% form and 30% landing scores up to a maximum of 30 points adjusted by a degree of difficulty (DoD) for the jump (factor of >1.5). The judges are typically split between judging take-off/amplitude/form and landing.

Jump Qualification

Jump qualification procedures are established in Section 3070 of the USSS Competition Guide.

Athletes are highly encouraged to review these qualification procedures in the USSS Competition Guide.

Athletes should be sure that their qualified jumps are entered into the USSS Jump Look Up database within a week of completing them. Jumps can be qualified by a Level 200 or higher certified Aerials coach. Athletes who perform jumps that are not qualified will be DSQ'd from competition.

USSS Jump Look Up database: http://ussa.hfti.com/jumpViewer.php

Reminder: Athletes performing unqualified jumps in competition will be disqualified from the event.

It should be noted the TD may suspend or withdraw the qualification for any jump preformed in official training or in competition if that athlete's jump is deemed to be performed in an unsafe manner. The coaches may also not allow an athlete to perform a maneuver if the weather or course conditions are not appropriate, or the athlete is not "on their game" that particular day.

2023/2024 Training and Competition Schedule

The training schedule is dependent on the club operational plan.

The competitions schedule is published by Easterfreestyle.org, please follow their site for dates and locations of this seasons events.

BSC Freestyle - Athlete Information Form

Please fill out the following information and return via email, or at the first practice:

Athlete name:
Program enrolled:
Parent/Guardian name(s) and phone numbers:
Email address(s):
Are there any medications that we need to be aware of?
Are there any allergies we need to be aware of?
Comments/special requests:
I acknowledge receipt of the Freestyle Handbook and understand the rules and requirements for the season. Parent: Date: Athlete: Date: