Member Handbook

BIG SKY SKI EDUCATION FOUNDATION NORDIC SKI TEAM

BIG SKY SKI EDUCATION FOUNDATION

BIG SKY SKI EDUCATION FOUNDATION FREERIDE TEAM

https://bssef.com

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Message from the Program Director

Thank you for your interest in the Big Sky Ski Education Foundation (BSSEF)!

The BSSEF was founded in 1993 to offer area youth a variety of competitive Alpine, Freeride, and Nordic ski programs. As a non-profit, volunteer-based organization, our mission is to provide an opportunity for kids to become great skiers and pursue personal goals while promoting good sportsmanship, healthy competitiveness, sound technical skills, and an appreciation for the spirit of skiing in the mountains. Participants in our programs range from young skiers learning the fundamentals of skiing to more experienced freeriders and racers.

This handbook's purpose is to help you understand BSSEF's various rules, expectations, organization, and structure. It is a valuable tool for program participants and parents and provides tools for effective communication and cooperation among our participants, coaches, parents, volunteers, and board of directors.

The handbook will cover many of your questions and provide you with contact information for further information.

Jeremy Ueland
Program Director & Head Coach

Message from the Board of Directors

BSSEF would like to thank you for participating in our programs. As a volunteer-based organization, we realize the value of every moment you spend participating in our programs and events.

Many generous donors of both time and money are the pillars of our program. Without hundreds of volunteer hours and financial support from donors, our programs would not be as accessible or delivered to the high standard for which we are known.

BSSEF is also extremely fortunate to have the support and assistance of Big Sky Resort. Big Sky generously provides our team with many services and privileges that make our programs possible. Lone Mountain Ranch is a generous donor that provides ski passes to our Nordic team. The BSSEF board extends our deepest thanks to both resorts for their generosity, help, and guidance.

The BSSEF Board of Directors,

Shea Unger (President), Peter Taylor (Vice President), Sean Thompson (Treasurer), Mary Marshall (Secretary), Becca Pape Wenger, Ben Anderson, Holly Hill, John Flach, Jonathan Distad, Lana Rupprecht, Matt Jennings, Neil Johnson, Win Roney

Financial Information and Policy

To participate in any BSSEF program, full payment must be made in compliance with our payment policies. Additionally, the athlete and parent/legal guardian must acknowledge and agree to all terms and conditions at the time of registration, including a liability release.

Volunteer Deposit

Program fees only cover a portion of the associated costs. Consequently, we rely on parents to volunteer to help with races, fundraisers, team administration, and other events that help keep program fees affordable. To encourage volunteering, families will be required to make a refundable Volunteer Deposit as a function of program registrations:

Program Registrations per Family per Season	Volunteer Deposit Required
1	$250
2+	$500

For purposes of the Volunteer Deposit, program registrations include Youth Ski League, Buddy Werner, Junior Development, and Freeride program registrations but not Nordic or Masters program registrations.

Volunteer deposits will be refunded by April 30th if your family earns the minimum required volunteer credits by April 1st:

Program Registrations per Family per Season	Minimum Volunteer Credits Required for Deposit Refund
1	3
2+	6

By default, one (1) Volunteer Credit will be awarded when one family member fulfills a single volunteer role for a day. However, at the discretion of the Program Director, some volunteer roles might earn more than one Volunteer Credit. For purposes of illustration:

- Volunteering to be a Scoreboard Recorder for one day of a three-day Youth Ski League race would typically earn one (1) Volunteer Credit. Volunteering for all three days would usually earn three (3) credits.
- The Program Director might offer Volunteer Credits to those who complete a U.S. Ski & Snowboard official's certification (e.g., Race Administration or Timing & Calculations).

You can find and sign up for volunteer opportunities online:

https://bssef.com/volunteer-opportunities/

A few other things to keep in mind:

- If you are unsure about the Volunteer Credits associated with a role, check with the Program Director for clarification.
- **Partial refunds are not available** — you must earn the minimum required credits to receive your full deposit back
- If you earn more than the minimum Volunteer Credits, your "excess" credits cannot be carried over into the next season.
- **If you have completed your volunteer requirements and a refund is due, any outstanding balance with BSSEF will be deducted from the volunteer deposit refu**nd before the remaining amount is returned.
- The BSSEF board is the final arbiter of matters related to the Volunteer Deposit.

Payment

Program fees and volunteer deposits must be paid in full before beginning on-hill skiing or training. The BSSEF cannot finance athletes, accept partial payments, or act as a collection agency. Failure to pay all program fees or volunteer deposits promptly will result in denial of service for the participants.

Event/Race Fees and Travel Expenses

Each participating athlete will be charged their prorated share of coaching fees, coaches' per diem, mileage, lodging, lift tickets, and race entry fees. The average Youth Ski League race cost is approximately $140 per racer, while the typical cost for a junior race is $200 or more per competitor. If a race or event is held on a regularly scheduled program day, a coaching fee will not be charged for that day. A final accounting of each participating racer's share of race costs will be prepared promptly after each race.

Financial Aid

In instances where a child or athlete desires to participate but the family can't afford program fees, the Board of Directors will help connect the family with organizations that can help. Specially arranged payment options can also be discussed on an individual basis. BSSEF wants to help all children interested in the sport of skiing participate.

Gear Purchases and Discounts

BSSEF is very fortunate to have relationships with several local shops that support the team by providing participants with discounts on gear. Ask a coach or a board member for more information. In addition, inter-family gear exchange is encouraged. Share information about gear needs and availability via the Montana Ski Racing Classifieds Facebook group:

https://www.facebook.com/groups/759797630830870/

Team Jacket

Team jackets are required to be worn by all Alpine and Freeride team participants, and a seasonal jacket lease is incorporated in the Alpine and Freeride program fees. We will designate two locations in the fall for jacket pick-up and two in the spring for jacket returns. Check the website for dates, times, and locations.

Lift Tickets

Participants of BSSEF programs who do not attend Ophir School or Big Sky Discovery Academy must purchase a Big Sky season pass or day tickets for the days they participate in BSSEF ski activities.

Ski Ball

As the Ski Ball generates 47% of our annual fundraising revenue, teamwork is essential for its success. Each BSSEF family is encouraged to contribute auction items worth at least $150 per athlete, up to a maximum of $300 per family. Donations can include gift cards, experiences, apparel, and other items. For families preferring not to source auction items, you can alternatively donate $150 per athlete directly through our Ski Ball donation link.

Event/Race Travel Policy

The Program Director will coordinate travel arrangements for all athletes. Based on an indication of interest from eligible athletes, the Program Director will secure lodging and lift tickets, tabulate entry fees, and assist with carpooling arrangements. Please be prompt with your confirmation for participation in all races due to deadlines for race entry and lodging arrangements. Athletes must declare whether they will participate in the team lodging package at the time of announcement. Participation is assumed if other arrangements are not confirmed.

Parental/Coach Responsibility

Parents who travel to a race with a group of children are responsible only for their children unless the coaching staff has been notified in advance of parents assuming responsibility for children other than their own. All other unchaperoned children are the coaching staff's responsibility. If there is an injury on the hill and the injured athlete's parent or legal guardian is not present, the coaching staff is responsible for the injured athlete and may assign an attending parent to help care for the injured child.

Athlete safety is a primary concern, and skiing is a demanding winter sport with long days and long drives. The coach will use their discretion to determine whether travel distance to and from a race necessitates overnight stays. If a hotel stay en route is necessary, hotel bills will be shared among all traveling athletes.

Pocket Money

Each athlete will be responsible for their meals and incidentals while traveling for races or events. If a parent is not traveling with an athlete, parents should discuss an estimated trip budget with their child and his or her coach. Too little pocket money will leave a child hungry; too much can cause problems. It is the family's responsibility to provide enough cash or access to funds (e.g., a credit card) before the athlete departs or attends events or races.

Rules and Expectations While at Events/Races

Upon arrival at the host resort, the coaching staff will distribute a schedule to which strict adherence is expected.

- Attendance at scheduled team meetings is mandatory.
- Athletes must reside in the hotel/condo rooms to which they are assigned.
- The curfew established by coaches must be observed.
- Illegal use or possession of drugs or alcohol will not be tolerated.
- Use of tobacco products by athletes or coaches is prohibited.

U.S. Ski & Snowboard Age Classification

U.S. Ski & Snowboard has established a classification system that permits athletes of similar ages to compete with and be compared to each other. Here are the age classifications for 2025-26:

Age Class	Ages as of 12/31/25	Birth Year
U8	7 and younger	2018 and later
U10	8 and 9	2016 or 2017
U12	10 and 11	2014 or 2015
U14	12 and 13	2012 or 2013
U16	14 and 15	2010 or 2011
U18	16 - 17	2008 or 2009
U21	19 and 20	2005, 2006, or 2007
SR	21 and older	2004 or earlier

For more information, please visit the U.S. Ski & Snowboard website:

https://usskiandsnowboard.org

Behavior and Conduct for Participants, Families, and Coaches

Parents' Responsibilities

- Review and become thoroughly familiar with the policies and procedures in this Handbook, the Northern Division Handbook, and the U.S. Ski & Snowboard Competition Guide and discuss with participating children.
- Make sure your child is ready and on time for his or her program.
- Assist in the administration of race and fundraising events.
- Provide safe and reliable transportation to and from practices and race sites.
- Meet all financial obligations associated with participation in BSSEF programs.
- Understand that all parental concerns with respect to the adequacy of training, competency of the coaching staff, or other problems with BSSEF programs are to be handled through the Program Director.
- Complete all forms and paperwork regarding participation in BSSEF programs.

We believe that parents should be supportive of their kids and coaches. Our coaches are highly qualified and experienced, and we are confident in their ability to help develop your children. To give quality time and instruction to your children, we ask that you do not accompany them during training unless invited to do so by a coach. Naturally, you will be curious about your child's progress, and we encourage you to talk to your child's

coach. However, direct interventions (i.e., a parent tagging along for runs or inspecting a racecourse with their child) create difficult situations, especially at races. Please feel free to talk to your child's coach before or after skiing should you have any concerns.

An optional Christmas camp is available to returning YSL skiers unsure of their readiness for the more advanced Buddy Werner program. Your child's coach will advise you regarding your child's readiness for Buddy Werner.

Athletes' Responsibilities

- Read, understand, and follow all aspects of the BSSEF policies and procedures and your U.S. Ski & Snowboard Competition Guide.
- Be a team-oriented skier and practice kindness.
- Be ready for, and on time for, all programs, training, and events.
- Always conduct yourself in a sportsmanlike manner.
- Obtain necessary U.S. Ski & Snowboard, FIS, or IFSA licenses and credentials.
- Register with the U.S. Ski & Snowboard Northern Division.
- Maintain your ski equipment.
- Assist in fundraising efforts.
- Assist coaching staff in course setting, maintenance, and breakdown.
- Know and follow the training schedule.

Coaches' Responsibilities

- Review and become thoroughly familiar with the policies and procedures in this Handbook, the Northern Division Handbook, and the U.S. Ski & Snowboard Competition Guide and discuss with participating children.
- Promote good sportsmanship.
- Prioritize the safety and well-being of all athletes.
- Stay informed about current teaching philosophies and good ski techniques and implement these skills when working with athletes.
- Arrive on time for coaching sessions, clinics, races, and meetings, prepared with all necessary equipment.

Code of Conduct

BSSEF athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, and parents are expected to conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner. They are responsible for their actions during training, at competitions, traveling to and from competitions, at areas hosting training or competitions, and during fundraising events. BSSEF expects all athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, and parents to behave with a high degree of decorum and to realize their actions reflect directly upon the team and its supporters. While with the team, all athletes must treat other team participants with the respect and dignity worthy of young leaders. Any behavior perceived as bullying will not be tolerated. Using cell phones to text or talk during team activities is not allowed. (Exceptions are made for parents trying to communicate with their child.)

BSSEF athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, and parents are responsible for knowing competition rules and procedures. This includes demonstrating respect for competition officials, ski area employees, ski patrol personnel, and the skiing and snowboarding public; courtesy and good manners; responsible behavior; no profane or abusive language; mature conduct; respect for property; abstinence from illegal use or possession of alcohol or drugs; refraining from using tobacco products; respect for facilities, privileges, and operating procedures; and respect for closed areas. All the preceding is in accordance with the U.S. Ski & Snowboard Code of Conduct.

Athlete Discipline Policy

Failure to comply with any part of the Code of Conduct can lead to disciplinary action against an athlete. The disciplinary action taken at each of the following steps will reflect the severity of the offense and will be at the discretion of the board, program director, and coach. **If an athlete breaks the law, endangers another or themselves, breaks ski area rules, or damages property, the misconduct will be handled as if it were a fourth offense**. If an athlete engages in misconduct or unsportsmanlike behavior, the following steps will be taken:

- 1st offense: The coach will speak to the athlete privately to discuss inappropriate behavior and ask that the misconduct be stopped.
- 2nd offense: The coach will speak to the athlete privately to discuss the inappropriate behavior, ask that the misconduct stop, and will contact the athlete's parents.
- 3rd offense: The coach will arrange a meeting with the athlete, a parent or guardian, the program director, and a board member to discuss the behavior and decide on appropriate disciplinary action.
- 4th offense: The athlete, his or her legal guardian or parent, coach, and program director will meet with the entire board to decide appropriate disciplinary actions, including, but not limited to:
    - Removal from the team trip or training camp
    - Suspension from training and/or competition
    - Elimination of coaching, travel, and other privileges

The coaching staff reserves the right to excuse any athlete from training and/or competition for any behavior that is deemed disruptive, dangerous, or disorderly.

- Disruptive Behavior—is any behavior that interrupts or impedes the progress, movement, or procedure of training, racing, or operation of the BSSEF.
- Dangerous Behavior—is any behavior that is apt or able to harm him/her or others.
- Disorderly Behavior—is any behavior that is disturbing the public peace or decorum or is unsportsmanlike and offensive to others. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of foul language; inappropriately addressing or treating an athlete, parent, fellow coach, board member, ski area representative, volunteer, or program director; willfully disregarding BSSEF policies; and not fulfilling responsibilities outlined in this Handbook.

If an athlete is suspended from participating in BSSEF programs for misconduct, that athlete and family will forfeit their program fees and deposits.

Coaches, Volunteers, Officials, and Parents Disciplinary Policy

Failure to comply with any part of the Code of Conduct can lead to disciplinary action against coaches, officials, volunteers, and parents. Disciplinary action can include, but is not limited to:

- Removal from the team trip or training camp
- Suspension from training and/or competition
- Elimination of coaching, travel, and other privileges

The Program Director and the BSSEF Board reserve the right to excuse any coach, volunteer, official, or parent from coaching, training, and/or competition for any behavior that is deemed disruptive, dangerous, or disorderly.

- Disruptive Behavior—is any behavior that interrupts or impedes the progress, movement, or procedure of training, racing, or operation of the BSSEF.

- Dangerous Behavior—is any behavior that is apt or able to harm oneself or others.
- Disorderly Behavior—is any behavior that is disturbing the public peace or decorum or is unsportsmanlike and offensive to others. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of foul language; inappropriately addressing or treating an athlete, parent, fellow coach, board member, ski area representative, volunteer, or program director; willfully disregarding BSSEF policies; privately contracting with athletes for coaching while employed with BSSEF; and not fulfilling responsibilities outlined in this Handbook.

Failure to comply with any part of the Code of Conduct can result in disciplinary action for coaches, officials, volunteers, and parents.

- 1st offense: The coach, official, volunteer, or parent will be excused from training or competition.
- 2nd offense: The coach, official, volunteer, or parent will be excused from training or competition, and a suspension will be levied.

Any disciplinary action taken shall be applied fairly and equitably to all parties involved. The Board of Directors will hold a hearing within five (5) days to review the situation in each case of disciplinary action.

Mountain Policy

BSSEF's use of Big Sky Ski and Summer Resort property and facilities is a privilege. Everyone associated with BSSEF should always follow the Code of Conduct contained in this Handbook. In addition:

- Do not cut the lift line at any time for any reason.
- Always display exemplary conduct.
- Ski at safe and responsible speeds.
- Be especially polite and helpful to all ski patrol personnel, mountain staff, and the skiing and snowboarding public.

Remember—your behavior reflects on the team and our host mountain.

Notice of Non-discriminatory Policy

BSSEF admits participants of any color, race, and national or ethnic origin. All rights, privileges, programs, and activities are generally accorded or made available to participants in BSSEF. BSSEF does not discriminate based on race, color, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship, and athletic and other BSSEF-administered programs.

School Policy

Parents, legal guardians, and athletes should all review their athlete's school's policies and procedures regarding participation, eligibility, and excused and unexcused absences. All athletes must maintain a B- cumulative grade point average to participate in competitions.

Social Media Account Policy

BSSEF uses social media to share information about our programs and photos of our activities. We encourage all athletes and their families who use Instagram or Facebook to follow our official pages to stay up to date with activities and to view and share photos:

Facebook

https://www.facebook.com/bigskyskiteam/

Instagram

@bssef – Main page
@bigskyfreerideteam – Freeride Team
@bssefnordic – Nordic Team

We understand that athletes or their family members may want to create a social media page or account to stay connected with their teammates. However, using our program logos or program names to identify an account created by any athlete or an athlete's family is prohibited. Additionally, any phrase or username that implies it is an account officially associated with our organization is not allowed, including "BSSEF," "Big Sky Ski Team," "BSSEF Freeride," or anything similar.

Medical/Accident Insurance

All BSSEF program participants must have valid and sufficient medical/accident insurance coverage and accept full responsibility for providing coverage as a condition of participation in official training and competition. Program participants must always carry proof of insurance and be available so that prompt medical/hospital care can be authorized.

Press Policy

All verbal or written communication to the public, U.S. Ski & Snowboard, or the media regarding the BSSEF must be approved in advance by the BSSEF Board or a designated representative.

Information

Information regarding events, activities, and training schedules will be available from the following sources:

- https://bssef.com
- director@bssef.com
- Local newspapers (for advertisements of events)
- Any member of the coaching staff or designated members of BSSEF

The BSSEF's office phone number is 406-993-2773.

Concussion Policy

About Concussions

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury—or TBI— caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. This fast movement can cause the brain to bounce around or twist in the skull, creating chemical changes in the brain and sometimes stretching and damaging the brain cells.

Removal from Participation

Any BSSEF athlete suspected of having sustained a concussion/traumatic brain injury, whether self-reported or witnessed, will be removed immediately from participation in a BSSEF sporting event (e.g., training, practice, camps, competitions, or club activities). The athlete will be prohibited from further participation until evaluated and cleared in writing to resume participation in BSSEF sporting events or club activities by a qualified healthcare provider trained in evaluating and managing concussive head injuries.

U.S. Ski & Snowboard and International Freeskiers Association Reporting

For an athlete who is competing in a U.S. Ski & Snowboard or International Freeskiers Association-sanctioned event and is removed from participation for a suspected concussion/traumatic brain injury, the BSSEF member coach making the removal must also inform U.S. Ski & Snowboard or the International Freeskiers Association Competition Services of that athlete. Athletes who have subsequently been medically cleared to resume participation must provide such medical clearance (as described above) to U.S. Ski & Snowboard Competition Services for U.S. Ski & Snowboard competition athletes.

Risk of Continued Participation

A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain has recovered can increase the likeliness of having long-term problems. In rare cases, repeat concussions can result in edema (brain swelling), permanent brain damage, and even death.

Helpful Resources

BSSEF encourages all members to become more informed on concussions and complete the CDC online training here: HEADS UP to Youth Sports: Online Training. BSSEF also recommends that all athletes complete an IMPACT concussion baseline test before the ski season and after sustaining a concussion: ImPACT Baseline Concussion Test Online (baselinetesting.com).