

USA Skimo Guide

to Starting a Youth Skimo Club

Introduction

Youth clubs are the foundation of athlete development in ski mountaineering. Whether your goal is to introduce young athletes to the sport, create a pathway to competition, or build a strong mountain community, thoughtful planning is essential to establishing a successful and sustainable club.

Use the following checklist as a guide when developing your youth skimo club.

Club Vision and Structure

Mission and Vision

- ☐ Define the mission of your club.
- ☐ Establish a long-term vision for athlete development and community engagement.
- ☐ Determine what age groups your club will serve.
- ☐ Decide whether your club will focus on:
 - ☐ Recreational participation
 - ☐ Athlete development
 - ☐ Competition
 - ☐ A combination of all three

Parent Engagement

- ☐ Develop a plan for involving parents in club activities.

- ☐ Establish clear communication channels with families.
 - ☐ Consider hosting monthly parent meetings.
 - ☐ Provide a seasonal timeline and agenda so families understand club expectations and upcoming events.
 - ☐ Consider combining parent meetings with athlete training sessions so families can observe club activities and ask questions afterward.
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Club Organization and Legal Structure

Club Formation

- ☐ Determine how your club will be organized:
 - ☐ Independent LLC
 - ☐ 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization
 - ☐ Under an existing ski/snowboard club
 - ☐ Under another existing sport organization
- ☐ Consult legal and financial professionals as needed.

Insurance and Risk Management

- ☐ Secure appropriate insurance coverage.
 - ☐ Review insurance requirements for your facility and activities.
 - ☐ Establish emergency action and medical procedures.
 - ☐ Ensure all staff understand emergency response protocols.
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SafeSport and Athlete Safety

SafeSport Compliance

- ☐ Review all current SafeSport requirements.
 - ☐ Ensure coaches and volunteers complete required training.
 - ☐ Establish athlete protection policies.
 - ☐ Communicate reporting procedures to athletes, parents, and staff.
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Facilities and Training Environment

Facility Planning

- ☐ Identify a training venue or facility.
- ☐ Obtain necessary permissions or agreements.
- ☐ Evaluate safety considerations for training locations.
- ☐ Determine access to winter and off-season training venues.

Season Planning

- ☐ Identify your primary training season.
- ☐ Determine whether the club will operate:
 - ☐ Winter only
 - ☐ Year-round
 - ☐ Seasonal programming
- ☐ Create an annual club calendar including:
 - Trainings
 - Parent meetings
 - Camps
 - Community events
 - Competitions

Athlete Recruitment and Assessment

Athlete Intake

- ☐ Develop a pre-season survey for athletes and parents.

Suggested questions:

- ☐ Does the athlete have previous skimo experience?
- ☐ What equipment does the athlete currently own?
- ☐ What are the athlete's goals?
- ☐ Does the athlete have previous endurance sport experience?
- ☐ Are there any medical considerations the club should be aware of?

Program Structure

- ☐ Determine whether the club will offer:
 - ☐ Development Program
 - ☐ Competition Program
 - ☐ Both
- ☐ Create age-appropriate training plans.
- ☐ Ensure workouts are developmentally appropriate for the athletes being served.

Competition Pathway

Racing Opportunities

- ☐ Identify local and regional racing opportunities.

Examples may include:

- Town Series races
- State Cup races
- National Cup races
- USA Skimo National Championships

☐ Educate athletes and parents about competition pathways.

☐ Create progression opportunities for athletes interested in higher levels of competition.

Coaching Development

Coach Education

☐ Attend USA Skimo Coaching Clinics and Seminars.

☐ Begin the pathway toward becoming a certified USA Skimo Coach.

☐ Pursue continuing education opportunities.

☐ Build relationships with other coaches and clubs throughout the country.

Financial Planning

Membership Fees

☐ Develop an annual operating budget.

Consider:

- Facility costs
- Insurance
- Coaching compensation

- Equipment
 - Travel
 - Administrative expenses
- ☐ Establish membership fees that align with your budget while remaining affordable.
 - ☐ Consider family discounts for multiple participants.
 - ☐ Explore sponsorship and fundraising opportunities.
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Connection with USA Skimo

Club Registration

- ☐ Register your club with USA Skimo.

Benefits include:

- Information on coaching clinics and educational opportunities
 - Insurance recommendations
 - Connections with industry representatives and sponsors
 - Networking with clubs throughout the United States
 - Access to club development resources
 - Support for growing the sport at the grassroots level
 - Club logo on the USA Skimo website and social media posts to grow your reach
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Final Checklist Before Launch

- ☐ Mission and vision established
- ☐ Club structure selected
- ☐ Insurance and risk management plans completed
- ☐ SafeSport requirements reviewed

- ☐ Facility secured
- ☐ Medical procedures established
- ☐ Parent communication plan developed
- ☐ Athlete survey created
- ☐ Training calendar published
- ☐ Program structure defined
- ☐ Coaches educated and trained
- ☐ Budget completed
- ☐ Membership fees established
- ☐ USA Skimo registration completed
- ☐ First season plan ready for launch