



# Parent Handbook

Congratulations and welcome to the great sport of cross country skiing! We hope that Ski Tigers will be a fun, challenging, and enjoyable experience as well as an opportunity to meet new friends.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide basic information for all Ski Tiger families, but especially for new skiers.

## Our Mission Statement

Copper Country Ski Tigers is dedicated to introducing youth from Houghton and Keweenaw counties to the joy of Nordic skiing in order to encourage a lifelong love of the sport and respect and appreciation for the outdoors.

## A Brief History

Ski Tigers began in the early 1990's as the dream of Beth and Russ Reid. Cross Country skiing was their passion and they wanted to share that passion with the local community and in the process create a ski community for area youth. Ski Tiger volunteers continue this dream with their commitment, generosity, and passion. Volunteers continue to be the heart of Ski Tigers. In fact, unlike many other youth organizations, EVERYONE involved is a volunteer.

## Our Ski Calendar

Our ski calendar is a tentative list of where we expect to ski. Watch for emails from your coach with any updates. [www.skitigers.com/Calendar.html](http://www.skitigers.com/Calendar.html)

## Safety

Every skier's safety is paramount. Please review the following safety policy with your skier(s).

### Skier responsibilities

1. Ski with your group & follow your coach's directions.
2. Wear your armband at all times during each lesson (for green, red and blue groups only).
3. Return your armband to the group helper after each lesson.
4. Ski within your ability.
5. If you are lost, stay in the same location & wait for an adult.
6. Be respectful of other skiers on the trail.
7. Dress appropriately for the weather and make sure that your clothing is dry before heading out to ski.
8. Go to the bathroom before heading out to ski.

### Parent responsibilities

1. Make sure that your child is dressed appropriately and fed before skiing.
2. Make sure that your child is ready to ski and join their group by 10:55pm each Saturday.
3. Make sure that your child has gone to the bathroom before they head out to ski.
4. Ski with all children 7 and under or those in the green group during the lesson.

## Weather

Ski Tigers will be CANCELLED when:

- Temperature at the ski site is below 0 degrees F (-18 C)
- The wind chill is below -10 F (-23 C)
- In the judgment of the Ski Tigers president or his designee, a combination of factors, such as temperature, wind, blowing snow and road conditions makes Ski Tigers inadvisable.

Parents will be notified of cancellation via email list by 9am on Saturdays.

## Parent Involvement

Ski Tigers is successful because of the commitment and involvement of our parents. In fact, our group wouldn't exist without it. As volunteers, we've developed a program to share responsibilities. It's our Parent Involvement Program (PIP) Each family is required to earn 4 points by volunteering. There are many opportunities to help from coaching to pouring juice. More info is available at registration and [www.skitigers.com/Parents.html](http://www.skitigers.com/Parents.html)

## Saturday Skiing

### Group Descriptions

At the beginning of each ski season, the Ski Tiger Board places skiers in groups based on ability, age, social maturity, group dynamics, and the number of coaches available. New skiers, depending on information from registration, will either be placed in a group or put in an evaluation group for placement. There is movement between groups during the season. This will be determined by the coach coordinator. Parents are encouraged to ski with their Tiger, but it is a requirement for GREEN skiers. Here, then is a brief description of each group:

- **Green:** young beginners, accompanied by a parent, learn the basics of classic ski technique, safety, & etiquette. The focus of this groups includes: how to put skis on, get up from falls skiing up and down hills, and taking short tours.
- **Blue:** Skiers improve their balance, confidence, endurance, continue diagonal stride development, double pole, herringbone snowplow, snow plow turn, and step turn. (Classic only)
- **Red:** Skiers continue skill development while skiing longer distances. Depending on group's progress, skate skiing may be introduced. (Predominately classic, usually introduce skating.)
- **Yellow/Bronze:** Skiers cover longer distances at greater speeds while developing advanced aspects of classic & skate skiing.
- **Adventure Group:** This group provides some non-competitive adventures for skiers who have learned to ski, enjoy classic and skate techniques. Activities may include winter camping, moonlight skiing, backcountry skiing, ski games ski-jouring and other activities. Skiers must have completed at least one year of YELLOW or have equivalent proficiency to participate.
- **Development Team:** All Ski Tigers are encouraged to try racing, but members of this group focus on developing their strength, agility, endurance, and technique. They practice 3 days/week. Skiers in this group are typically middle school age.
- **Competition Team:** These Tigers practice 4 days/week during ski season and ski in local and regional races. Skiers in this group are typically high school age.

## Equipment Basics

Skis, bindings, boots, poles, wax, oh my...

With so many styles, models, prices and sizes to choose from, selecting ski equipment for your skier can be confusing. Here's some basic information we hope you find helpful:

### STYLES & TYPES of SKIS

- No-wax (fish-scale )skis: don't require a grip wax. This is an ideal BEGINNER ski, requires the least maintenance, usually costs less, and can be mounted with any type of binding.
- Skating skis: are designed for skating & aren't suitable for striding. DO NOT buy skating skis for a beginner. Skate skiing requires a ski with no grip, so the skis don't have fish scales & the flex (camber) of the ski is such that applying a grip wax won't give the ski grip. Skate skis tend to be more expensive & require glide wax maintenance. Unless your skier is an advanced skier, we don't recommend purchasing skate skis.
- Combi skis: can be used for either striding or skating. They don't have fish scales, so you apply a grip wax to the kick zone (where the fish scales were) if you're striding. If you're skating, the kick/grip wax can be removed. Combi skis are a good choice for the young, advancing skier who wants to stride and skate. They are generally less expensive than skating skis.

### SKI SIZING and FIT

DON'T BUY SKIS THAT ARE TOO LONG no matter what the ability of your skier. Longer skis are more difficult to maneuver - period! Many a young skier and coach have been frustrated by skis that are too long.

- Beginners: about head-high or slightly taller
- Intermediate: can be taller than head-high depending on ability. Never taller than the wrist of a raised arm.
- Skating: these skis tend to be a little shorter than striding skis. Head high or slightly higher is about right.

### BINDINGS

The things that hold the boot to the ski.

- NNN & Salomon- this type of binding on almost every new pair of skis. Either one is excellent.

### BOOTS

This is easy-just make sure the boots match the bindings. General touring boots work for beginners and combi boots, which have a stiffer ankle, for more advanced skiers who stride and skate.

### POLES

Poles are not as critical as ski and boots to a your skier's performance and experience. General touring poles work well for beginners. Poles with a smaller 'racing style' basket promote better technique for intermediate & advanced skiers. Skating poles are longer and stiffer than touring poles.

### Height

- Just under the armpit for beginners
- Slightly higher-chin high- for more advanced skiers

- Below the nose for skating poles

## WAX

The stuff that goes on the bottom of the ski.

- **Glide wax:** for tips and tails on striding skis and skating skis. Iron on, scrape and brush.
- **Kick wax:** for the kick zone of classic skis. Cork on.

Note: Both local ski shops, Cross Country Sports and Downwind Sports, will wax skis for a nominal fee. Throughout the season, wax clinics may be held. Both Swedetown and MTU have community wax benches. Again, ask. You'll get plenty of advice!

## WHERE CAN I PURCHASE EQUIPMENT?

Cross Country Sports, Calumet

- Offers a trade up program for youth general touring (no wax) skis, has package deals, a good selection of all the equipment mentioned, very knowledgeable.
- Offers club discounts on designated day

Downwind Sports, Houghton

- Package deals and very knowledgeable
- Offers club discounts on designated day

Ski Tiger Gear Swap

- Ski Tigers Race Teams run swap with registration in fall and a gear swap in the spring

## Some Helpful Information

- **Label equipment:** To minimize equipment mix-ups, we strongly encourage all skiers to label skis, poles, hats, water bottles, etc. with tape and a permanent marker.
- **Dressing in layers:** A layering system usually consists of 3 different layers. The inner layer should be moisture-wicking, the middle layer should be insulating, & the outer layer a shell. (Dress Green skiers like they are going to play outside, at least until they're skiing/moving more.) More information: <http://www.nsp.org/slopesafety/howtodress.aspx> (NOTE: cotton is not a good inner layer because it doesn't wick.)
- **Communication:** Most of Ski Tiger seasonal information will be dispersed via e-mail and posted on our website and Facebook page.

## Kilometer Club

Check out the details of our Kilometer Club at [www.skitiger.com/kilometerclub.html](http://www.skitiger.com/kilometerclub.html) . Keep track of your KMs for special recognition at the end of the year! For even more fun see our kilometer tracker page [www.kmtracker.org](http://www.kmtracker.org) developed by a Ski Tiger alumni especially for our Ski Tigers.