

## Information and Care of rental ski equipment

The goal of the ski club's rental program is to provide affordable skis and poles for families with growing kids. The club spends about \$1500-\$2500 on new skis each year to keep expanding the numbers available. If everyone cares for their skis and returns them in good condition, this makes the rental program economical. We were able to keep the price this year to \$30. Some of our skis are more than 10 years old and still quite usable. Others are abused and break within a few years. Each pair of skis costs about \$150 and poles about \$30 with the club discount from AMH. You still need to provide your own boots. Junior size boots are about \$90 new. For buying boots, remember all our rentals have NNN bindings. NNN (new nordic norm) boots have 2 grooves on the bottom to match the 2 ridges on the binding. One wide central groove will not work.

First rule, NO skiing on dirt, rocks, roads, or parking lots. Rocks leave gashes in the relatively soft plastic ski base. The small sharp gravel put on parking lots is the worst. Second, cross-country skis are not made for jumping. Often the binding breaks off the ski.

All the skis have been waxed and are ready for use. For Classic skiers (Polar Cub, White Beginners, White Zoomers, Orange groups), the ski tip and tails are glide waxed and the kick zone has been prepared with sticky kick wax. The kick zone is from the toe bar back to the skier's heel (sometimes not as long as the binding plate) plus that same distance forward ahead of the toe bar. For no-wax skis (fish-scale, posi-traction bases) only the tips and tails are glide waxed. Kick wax is not permanent and will wear off after several ski sessions. Kick wax is also specific to temperature; red for warm (>25 F), blue for moderate (15-25 F), and green for cold (<15 F) temperatures. With the proper wax, snow sticks to the ski under pressure and then releases the snow when the skier's weight is shifted to the other foot. The type and age of the snow also makes a difference. There is a lot of technical complexity for optimal waxing, but it matters little for beginners. Every few sessions, parents and kids can crayon on many thin layers of kick wax and repeatedly cork it in to smooth it. Coaches should have some wax available.

Skating technique (Blue Beginners, Blue Extra, Purple, and Competitive groups) skis are glide waxed tip to tail. Glide wax has been applied to the rental skis. No kick wax ever, and no fish scales. The glide wax is applied with using a waxing iron, then scraped and brushed. Skate wax is also temperature dependant. For extreme cold (<10 F), a harder glide wax (green) is noticeably faster. Glide wax should last several weeks. If whitish cloudy patches appear on the black base, it is time for more wax.

You should label your skis and poles to identify them among a line of skis on the rack or a pile of skis next to the trail. A sticker or some creative decoration is fine. Applied when warm and dry, a small strip of green Froggie tape or electrical tape works better

than blue painters tape or duct tape. Froggie tape does not disintegrate or leave a residue when scraped off after the season.

We only have and rent Junior size skis, 100-170 cm for kids sized 36 to 64 inches. Many are “combi” skis that are suitable for either classic or skating depending on how they are waxed. All our Jr Nordic skis have NNN bindings for 2-groove boots, NOT the single wider groove SNS boots. Ski length should be about head height for beginners, and 2 to 4 inches above the head for more experienced junior skiers. Pole length for Classic skiing should be near or just below shoulder height. Although Polar Cubs do not use poles during our JN sessions, we issue them to you to use on family outings. Kids love poles, but poles can distract from learning proper forward balance, they are too much to learn all at once, and become a bit dangerous in crowds. Blue, Purple, and Competitive groups will be learning and using the skating technique that requires longer poles. Skate poles should be about chin to nose high. We matched skis and poles to each skier’s height and group as best as possible according to a size chart. However, if your assigned skis or poles are far from the correct size, please let me know. Mistakes could have been made. Likewise, if the skis are improperly waxed, we can help you rewax them. If the bindings don’t work properly, or if something breaks during the season, let me know ([bob.stehn@gmail.com](mailto:bob.stehn@gmail.com)). Usually it can be fixed or replaced. I should be around during the first few sessions to help with equipment problems.

Kids taller than about 5 ft 4 inches will need skis that are stronger and stiffer. Adult skis also have better quality bases and are more expensive. The weight of the skier begins to make more of a difference than only height. Adult skis are made with hard, medium, and soft stiffness. Middle School and High School ski teams train and race using both classic and skate techniques. Many of the older high school athletes have 2 pairs of skis, poles, and boots. Stiffer skis and stiffer boots provide for more speed and control for skate skiing. Schools teams often have some equipment available.

Skis and poles are to be turned in at the last Jr Nordic session in March.