



Alyeska Mighty Mites | Parent Handbook

Ski Season 2015 - 2016

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Check the website for updates on upcoming weekend events (**Updates**) and program information. Parents receive regular update emails.

COACHES

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Gordon Descutner
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Paul Ferucci
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Kevin Leach
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Jason Woodward
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INTRODUCTION

For over forty years, Alyeska Mighty Mites has been a volunteer-operated ski racing program for children ages 7 to 13. The goal of the program is to introduce the fundamentals of alpine ski racing to children of a variety of ability levels.

Mighty Mites strives to promote self-confidence, a sense of accomplishment, good sportsmanship and positive racing experiences for all age and ability groups. Many Mighty Mite coaches grew up skiing at Alyeska Resort, and wish to share their experience with new generations of skiers.

Whether the child has a goal of making the Olympics, or just wants to have fun with friends, Alyeska Mighty Mites provides the foundation for a lifelong love of skiing.

Mighty Mites captures the balance between racing and free skiing by offering six races throughout the season, opportunities to train gates, as well as ample time to explore the mountain with their coach and group.



Check-In and Dismissal

Skiers should be ready to ski at 10:45 a.m. each Sunday. We will ski rain, snow or shine if at least the lower mountain lifts are operating. If the weather (or temperature) is questionable, check the website for updates (alYESkamightymites.org/updates.html) – if you have signed up for our text notifications, you will receive a text with updates.

Skiers must check in, and ski, with their coach in the morning and the afternoon to obtain one attendance point for each session (for a total of two points per day). Coaches will meet their groups in front of the Race Training Center next to their respective animal group signs.



Generally, Mighty Mites break for lunch from 12:30 to 1:15 p.m. and is over for the day at 3:15 p.m. Coaches release their groups at the Race Training Center. We ask that you meet your children at these times to make sure that they have come off the mountain safely. Schedules for race days, however, may vary as they depend on a variety of weather, snow, equipment and other conditions.

Grouping and Moving Up

Upward mobility in Mighty Mite ability groups is based on the mastery of ski racing fundamentals, age **and** race results. The goal is to provide a non-subjective and fair process to delineate groups. The first race of the season is a kombi grouping race. Grouping decisions will be made after the grouping race.

After the grouping race, the groups are set for the remainder of the season. Skiers can still fulfill criteria for the next highest group and receive recognition but they will stay in place until the following season.

A goal of Mighty Mites Ski Groups is to encourage a positive racing experience for all kids through competition among equal ability & similar age groups.

Group Move-Up Procedures

1. Coach observes mastery of fundamentals.
2. Skier finishes a race with a time in the midrange, or better, of a higher ability group within the appropriate age range.
3. If the skier turns 10 on or before December 31 of the current season, the racer becomes a Cougar unless he or she is already a Jr. Hopeful.

Mighty Mite Groups

Ages 7-9: Chipmunks, Otters, Beavers, Lynx, Tigers
Ages 10-13: Cougars, Wildcats, Jr. Hopefuls

Love to Ski, Learn to Ski Race!

Races

Mighty Mites use USSA non-scored event guidelines. Our goal is to build racer confidence in a safe environment. We encourage all Mighty Mites to finish each race, regardless of falls or missed gates, to build a sense of accomplishment. Athletes who miss a gate in a GS or Slalom are encouraged to hike to complete the gate if possible and will not be disqualified. However, if a racer loses a ski they are not allowed to finish and should exit the race course with their equipment for safety reasons.

Reruns are given for interference or for technical difficulties and are determined by the race officials. Racers who believe they were interfered with should report to their coach, or another available coach. Gate keepers may advise the racer on missed gates. During our two-run races, any racer who is disqualified (DQ) in the first run will be allowed to run the second run normally within their group. DQ's will be posted after the second run.



Attendance Counts!

There are many ways to achieve success in Mighty Mites. Winning races is one way. Skiing with your group every Sunday, rain or shine, is another way. Skiers demonstrating a full season of dedication by skiing morning and afternoon, each and every training or race day, will earn a plaque at the end of the season for perfect attendance.

Also, overall season trophies are awarded based on race results together with attendance points. Skiers can receive one attendance point for the morning and one attendance point for the afternoon. Here's how to make sure that skiers receive their points:

1. Mighty Mites should meet their group on time in the morning and afternoon
2. If a Mighty Mite loses his/her group on the mountain, there are two ways to keep your attendance points:
 - A. If he/she knows which chair his group is skiing on, wait at the bottom of the lift to rejoin the group, otherwise go to the RTC.
 - B. Find another group to ski with and tell his/her coach who he/she skied with.
3. Always ski where the group is heading. Never ski off by him/herself and hope the group will follow.
4. Review Master attendance online and provide feedback online on any potential errors.

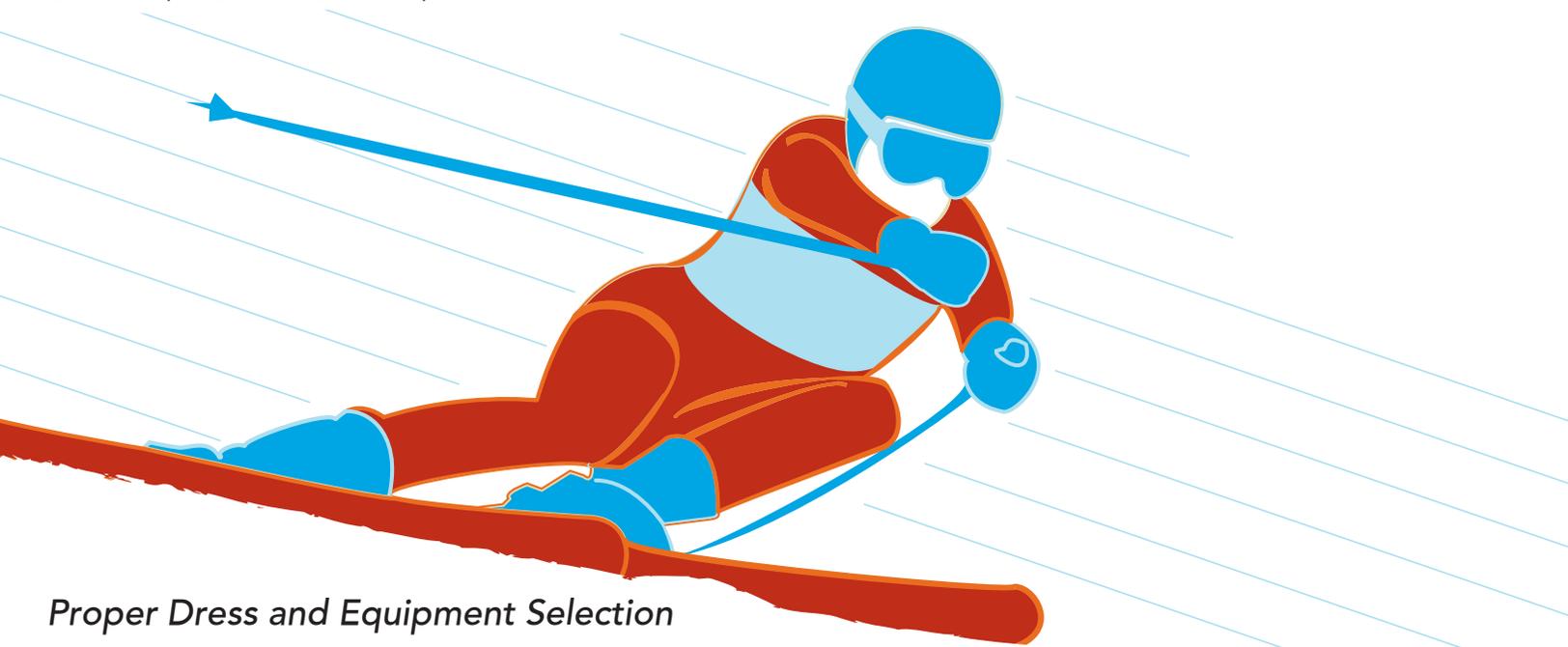
NOTE: The only deviation for attendance is participation in another non-Mighty Mite Race or Alyeska Ski Club Event with pre-approval and confirmation of participation. Attendance will be awarded as if the athlete attended the Mighty Mite session.

Safety and Conduct on the Mountain

Safe behavior and good conduct are expected at all times while Mighty Mites is in session. Rude and unsafe behavior is discouraged and not tolerated. The Mighty Mites are examples to all young skiers as role models. Therefore, at the coaches' discretions, a Mighty Mite engaging in unsafe or rude behavior may be asked to sit out the program for the remainder of the day. If the Mighty Mite is asked to leave early, he/she will forfeit the afternoon attendance point.

Volunteers

Since Mighty Mites is a volunteer organization, we are always in need of parents to help out so that our program and race days run smoothly. We need assistance with registration, handing out and collecting bibs, gate keeping, timing, and special events.



Proper Dress and Equipment Selection

Children should come to Mighty Mites dressed for the weather! On very cold days, hand and toe warming pouches could mean the difference between skiing and sitting in the lodge. Mittens tend to be warmer than gloves. On rainy days, wear rain jackets AND rain pants. Helmets are required for participants. There are so many options available today in the area of children's ski gear, so the best advice is to "Keep It Simple and Affordable". Ski swaps and used gear are a great way to meet the needs of young skiers. Find your comfort zone (\$) while paying attention to ski length, boot flexibility and pole height.

Skis

Skis should reach between the skier's chin and nose. If in doubt, go shorter. Shorter skis are easier to handle. Look for sidecut! Wide tip and tail, narrow waist.

Boots

Boots need to fit and be flexible. To determine if a boot fits lengthwise, take the bladder out, have child put his/her foot in the shell and slide toes to the front. He/she should have 1/2 - 1 inch of space between the back of his heel and the back of the shell. Put the bladder back in and try on boot for comfort. Have child flex the boot, this should be easy!

Poles

Have child hold a ski pole upside down and grip just below the basket. You are looking for a 90 degree angle bend in the skier's elbow while the lower arm is parallel to the ground.

Helmets

Helmets must fit properly to be of any use; they should fit snugly. While not required, yet, it is recommended that helmets cover the ears.

If you have any questions on equipment, please talk to your children's coaches!

Awards

There are a total of five races (one kombi grouping and four pointed) throughout the season and award medals are given to the three fastest girls and three fastest boys in each animal group, with recognition given to the top 5 finishers. Points will be awarded in the four pointed races for the first through fifth positions respectively: 10-7-5-4-3. Season trophies are based on the four pointed race finishes AND training day attendance.

The Tanaka Award, given at the end of the year banquet, is awarded to the boy and girl that the coaches believe exemplify excellence in sportsmanship. Good sportsmanship is marked by a positive attitude no matter what the weather, encouragement given to fellow racers, helpfulness to coaches and volunteers, politeness, and respectfulness of authority.

The Most Improved Award, also given at the end of the year banquet, goes to the boy and girl who have shown the most improvement for that year. This award is voted upon by the entire coaching staff.

For skiers who have perfect attendance, their names will be announced at the end of the year banquet, and they will also receive a plaque with their name engraved on it.

Finally, each racer is awarded a tee shirt and season trophy for participation.

Mighty Mite Hopefuls / Tryouts

All participants who were enrolled in the preceding season's program will automatically be eligible to enroll in the current year. All other candidates must attend at least one session of the AMM Hopeful tryouts and pass a minimum qualification test prior to acceptance in the Mighty Mite program. Hopefuls will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Age 7 -13 years old, as of December 31, 2015
- Ability to put on own skis
- Ability to get on/off all ski lifts by themselves
- Ability to ski entire mountain from top of Chair 6 down the blue star route
- Ability to stop and turn under control
- Can successfully ski down the Tanaka Hill, or similar terrain, in control and keep up with the group
- Emotional maturity: ability to be away from parents for an entire Mighty Mite ski day

Please visit our website, www.alyeskamightymites.org, for further information.

Alyeska Mighty Mites

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