

 **Giants Ridge Alpine Development Team**
Parent Handbook ~ 2023/2024

Welcome to the Giants Ridge D-Team. This handbook is designed as a reference that will answer many of your questions regarding the D-Team program. Please take some time to review the information in this packet. If you have any questions, feel free to call the D-Team Administrator, or speak directly with your Coaches. We hope that your winter with the D-Team will be a positive and enriching experience for your entire family. We'll see you on the hill!

D-Team Philosophy: The Development Team (D-Team) is designed to introduce young athletes to the joy of skiing through racing. Our primary focus is to develop strong skiing skills in each athlete while providing a fun-filled experience for all. Our coaches work with each of the athletes to develop their technique, help set a race strategy and work on long-term goal setting.

It is a priority of the D-Team coaches to remain flexible, and to make sure all of our racers have the opportunity to work on their skills in a fun and safe environment. We understand that everyone learns new skills in different ways and at different paces, and our coaches take this into consideration. It is also important that our racers are committed to practicing and racing. We trust that athletes will listen to their coaches and work hard to improve each week. We also hope that each athlete genuinely enjoys the experience and looks forward to coming back each week.

Giants Ridge D- Team Coaches

- Chad Larson
- Adam Nelson
- Andrea Kannas
- Evan Johnson
- Heidi Jo Karlsson ~ Mountain Sports School Director

Giants Ridge D- Team Practice Dates:

- **Practices times** ~ Saturdays 1:PM – 3:PM
 - December 2~ *“Try it Day”* ~ Ski with the Coaches
 - December 9
 - December 16
 - January 6
 - January 20
 - January 27
 - February 3
 - February 10
 - February 24
 - March 2 - (End of season Pizza Party, following practice)
 - March 10 ~*NJRS Championships at Mont du Lac*
 - **NO Practice Holidays (December 23, 24, 30, January 13, February 17)**



Meeting area for Team Practices;

- December 2nd *“Try it Day”* **meet ready to ski**, 1:00 PM at the Mountain Sports meeting flags between the two chalets
- December 9th and all remaining practices:
 - meet at the *“Sprung Building”* located at the bottom of Helsinki
 - There will be a D-Team vertical banner next to the building
- If you are late for practice where to meet?
 - Go to the Mountain Sports School they will direct you to what hill practice is on that day, at the top of the practice hill, there will be a sign posted *“Giants Ridge D-Team”* wait at the sign for a coach.

Recommended Equipment

- Goggles
- Jr Race Skis – for Giant Slalom (race specific not required but recommended)
- Poles
- Always be sure that skis are well-tuned and waxed for each practice
 - This service is offered in our Rental Department
- Good Warm Winter Clothing
 - Windproof/water resistant snow pants & long johns
 - Speed suits are not required but optional
 - Warm Jacket
 - Dress in layers with the base layer being a moisture wicking material
 - Leather mittens or choppers
 - Face mask/double layer neck-up

Safety Equipment

- Helmets are required for all D-Team practices and competitions. Concussions are a growing concern in youth sports, and helmets significantly reduce the risk of concussions in athletes. SnowSports specific helmets are available for sale at all local ski and snowboard shops

Conduct

- What is expected of my child when it comes to conduct? Answer: As a member of the D-Team, you are representing not only yourselves, but also the coaches and Giants Ridge Ski Area. Racers are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful manner at all times and understand the public's right to ski on the same hills on which we train. The Giants Ridge D-Team is expected to display good sportsmanship at all times.
- Please never leave the practice area without informing a coach, when possible we will have an assistant coach accompany the athlete.
- No horseplay of the lift or lift lines; all athletes must be able to ride the lift independently.

Race Day Course Inspection:

- On Race Day we will have a designated meeting area for our team
 - We will send out a group communication for race day procedures by Wednesdays prior to the Sunday Race Day
- Course inspection is an important part of ski racing. All experienced and successful racers inspect, study, and memorize each course before they ski it. It is a skill that needs to be learned and practiced just like a carved turn. Use your coaches to learn what to look for and how to inspect courses on your own. Our philosophy is that course inspection should become part of a pre-racing routine and be used to start focusing on the race. We provide group inspection for younger racers; older more experienced racers are able to inspect alone if they prefer.

Home Hill NJRS Races

- What can I do to help on race day?
 - Answer: While it is always fun to have a race on your home hill, it is also a lot of work for the host hill to organize and run a D-Team event. For these races to operate successfully it requires cooperation between the ski area, the coaches and the parents. Giants Ridge has always run outstanding races and this has largely been due to the involvement of our dedicated group of parents. There are far too many responsibilities for races to be run by only the Giants Ridge staff and coaches.
 - We encourage all D-Team parents to volunteer at one of our home races. We will send out a "Volunteer Signup sheet one week prior to the Race.
 - Our first NJRS Race at Giants Ridge is on **January 28, 2024**

What is NJRS (Northland Junior Race Series)

As a member athlete of our Giants Ridge D-Team, your child is able to race in the NJRS series. It is not required that they race, and they can also race just a couple to try it out. There are 6 races throughout the season. If they want to be eligible to race in the Championship at the end of the season they need to participate in 2 regular season races, to qualify for an award.

The NJRS is a series of fun local ski races, where young athletes test their developing skills. Races are generally held every Sunday, beginning with the first Sunday in January. Local ski areas and clubs take turns hosting the races. There is no charge (entry fee) for the racers who are a member of an NJRS club.

2024 NJRS Race Schedule	
Jan 7th	MDL – Mont du Lac
Jan 14th	MLK Weekend – No Race -
Jan 21st	Open Date
Jan 28th	Giants Ridge - 2GS
Feb 4th	Ski Gull - 2 GS -10, 2 SL 10 +
Feb 11th	Lutsen - 2 GS
Feb 18th	Presidents Weekend – No Race -
Feb 25th	Detroit Mountain - 2 GS -10, 2 SL 10 +
March 3rd	Team Duluth / Spirit Mountain - 2 GS
March 10th	MDL - Championship

Member Teams

- Team Duluth
- Lutsen Junior Alpine Club
- Ski Gull Alpine Club
- Mont du Lac Alpine Club
- Giants Ridge
- Detroit Mountain

Associate Clubs:

- TB Fast (Lutsen)
- Norwesters Alpine Club (Loch Lomond Ski Area)
- Port Arthur Ski Club (Mount Baldy)

*Associate Clubs do not host races, but are allowed to send racers along with coaching staff to NJRS events.

*For more detailed information regarding NJRS Registration and Race Day Information look on the Team Duluth Web Site. <https://www.teamduluth.org/>

We hope this handbook is helpful in familiarizing you with our D-Team program. We strive each season to keep our skiers and parents informed through this handbook and periodic updates. If you have any further questions that were not answered in this handbook, please feel free to talk;

Heidi Jo Karlsson ~ PSIA Level 3 Trainer

Mountain Sports Academy Director

heidi.karlsson@giantsridge.com

218-865-8062

