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Athlete Summer Email Series August/Sept. 2019 Equipment Sizing Tips and Advice from the Pros

This email is a general guide for parents, coaches, and athletes looking for tips on equipment sizing. Fit days are coming up for many club programs and whether or not you can make it to one knowing the information in this email will help you to make the best choices for your equipment needs.

Thanks to PJ Dewey of Race Stock Sports for using his expertise in equipment sizing and boot fit know-how in the creation of this email! Also thankful for contributions from Geof Curtis and Thatcher Jacques, MDV - USA, Pearson Neal, Tecnia Group, and Jerry Murphy from Swix.

RACE STOCK SPORTS

Thanks to Race Stock Sports for contributing to this email !

Ski Boot Sizing

Ski boots are the most important piece of equipment you will buy for your athlete. Getting the wrong ski boot or not addressing simple modifications to the boot can significantly reduce the fun and success your athlete will have. Ski boots should fit tightly and have good ankle flex allowing for precision and control of the skis.

To get the right size:

1. Go Bare foot
2. Remove liner from shell
3. Put foot in shell
4. With toes grazing the front, take a flash light and look at distance from the heel to the back of shell.

For kids 70 lbs. or less this distance is 2.5-3 cm as the boots in the 65 flex rating typically have short lasted liners. This is in addition to the fact that a kid this size won't like a boot too tight. If they are not comfortable at this stage they just won't want to go skiing. When you get to 70 flex boots (and stiffer) the distance should not be more than 2 cm. This is true for non-race boots as well. One cm is typical of a competitive FIS level athlete. It is important to remember that boots can be easily modified for better fit. Making boots bigger is a much more effective path than trying to pad up a boot that is a little big. Boots "pack out" and get a little bigger on their own. Working with a skilled ski boot technician should come with the purchase of ski boots. Another sizing trick is to use the original insole out of the liner. The foot

of the purchase of ski boots. Another sizing trick is to use the original insole out of the liner. The foot should fill up the piece but not hang over the front of the insole. Toes should be right to the end of the insole but not over it.

The other major consideration is flex. The most successful athlete has boots that allow them to bend their ankle. Temperature affects plastic radically and consideration of this along with the athlete's weight are determining factors for flex. Another consideration is that ski boots can be softened but not stiffened. A boot too soft will not drive the skis or hold on hard snow. A boot too stiff will not allow the skier to engage and arc the skis.

General guidelines:

1. >60 lbs. = 50 flex
2. 60-78 lbs. = 60/65 flex
3. 75-90 lbs. = 70 flex
4. 87-100 lbs. = 80 flex
5. 95-110 lbs. = 90 flex
6. 105-135 lbs. = 110 flex
7. 130-165 lbs. = 130 flex
8. 158-198 = 150 flex

Sadly there is no industry standard for flex. It is wise to work with someone familiar with the material and its history of success with former athletes.

Ski Sizing

There are several factors to consider when picking ski lengths. Height is a primary determination of ski size for athletes short of the U19 level. Skis that are too short are squirrely at speed while skis that are too long are hard to turn and control. Short of FIS level skis, most of the major manufacturer's equipment is similar. If an athlete has a predisposition to brand, they may not be able to get the ideal length as it correlates to their height. Level of ability is a consideration that may lead you to a longer or shorter length. Below are some general guidelines. It is highly recommended that a coach who has worked with the athlete have some input re: determination of length.

1. U 8- This age bracket only requires one ski. This ski should come to the nose in length, be fairly soft, and have a lot of side cut. Many manufactures offer "combi" skis at these sizes which are really just SL skis.
2. U10- This age bracket only requires one race ski but you may want to consider a free ski so the race skis don't get destroyed when the athletes are free skiing. Length should be to the bridge of the nose. Even though most of the races are "GS" it will be hard to find GS skis shorter than 135 cm and so often the skier will use SL skis in a longer length. Using a SL ski will help the skier learn to carve and plays to your hand moving to a U12 level as the SL ski can be used again for a second year (saving money the next season).
3. U12-This age will require SL and GS skis. The SL ski should be to the bridge of the nose and the GS ski should be a minimum of top of the head and maximum of 2" over top of head. Level of ability is an influencing factor.
4. U14- SL and GS. Same recommendations as for U12 but in these lengths you may be able to move the more aggressive (and larger) athlete to what are known as "Tweener" skis that are beefier than junior skis but not as strong as adult constructions. SG is part of this level and one size up from their GS length is a general guideline. Smart to consider purchasing GS skis for SG at this age with an idea they can use the ski the next year as a GS ski.
5. U16- The sizing gets easier as the athlete gets older. Typical female athlete will be on a 150cm SL and a 173/6cm GS (first year); 182cm (second year). Boys will typically move to a 155/7 cm SL and a 182/3 GS (first year) and a 185/9 cm 27 meter GS (second year). You will need SG skis at this point. Some use a longer GS. SG skis tend to be softer than GS skis and are more ideal especially for a less aggressive athlete.
6. U19- Sizing is pretty straight forward here. Women are on a 155/7cm SL and a 183/188 GS. Men can use a 157 as a first year but then will move to 165cm SL and 188/193cm GS. SG skis should be over 200 cm and for FIS must meet the minimum radius of R>40 for women and R>45 for men.

Contribution by PJ Dewey



POLE SIZING BASICS Speed and Slalom

Race fit days are held at authorized race ski shops and are coming up soon. This is a good opportunity to select your equipment for the season. If you need race poles, now is the time to purchase. There will be many options available, such as Swix, Leki, Komperdell, Scott, Atomic, Rossignol, Fischer.

The Slalom pole has a dual density grip for swing weight, a tapered extruded shaft, race disc and 10mm ferrule. An extra item which may be a necessity for an older racer is a full hand guard.

Giant Slalom poles come with a dual density grip and a downhill basket. There is a slight bend to the pole, a cone shaped basket and a 10mm ferrule.

The traditional method for choosing the correct pole length is for the racer to stand, turn the pole upside down, hand parallel to the ground and grasping the pole under the basket at a 90 degree angle with ski boots on. It's a good idea to have the coach or pole technician check the length.

Use the same method for Giant Slalom poles. However add 5cm to the length. For example-If Junior racer is in 100 cm slalom pole, racer should be in 105cm Giant Slalom pole. Put the Junior racer in a tuck position with hands in front of the face. The pole bend should be parallel with the hips.

Looking forward to seeing everyone at the upcoming fit days.
Contribution by Jerry Murphy

Additional Tips

BOOTS - when shell fitting there should be no more than 2 fingers fitting behind the heel for juniors, and as kids mature and try to race on the bigger skis fit behind the heel should be 1 finger. If needed stretch the boot at a shop with an experienced boot fitter.

For all youth skiers a trim-to-fit footbed, if not a custom, is very helpful in getting the foot to the right position.

It's important to get bindings installed and adjusted **by a shop** so everything is ready to go for those first days of skiing.

It is important not to rush into buying equipment. Be sure to leave the shop or fit day with equipment that you feel confident about purchasing.

Size Charts

Most companies should have a sizing chart on their race site, below is a link to Blizzard's chart.
[Blizzard Sizing Link](#)

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