



Pacific Northwest Ski Association A Division of USSA

Other Alpine Options to continue Competitive Skiing Involvement after High School:

1. PSIA (Ski Instructor)
2. Masters
3. NASTAR
4. Post Graduate "PG" Ski Clubs or Ski Academies
5. Race Coach
6. City League

1. **PSIA: Become a ski instructor** (<http://www.thesnowpros.org/>)

The Professional Ski Instructors of America (PSIA) and American Association of Snowboard Instructors (AASI) are nonprofit associations dedicated to promoting the sports of skiing and snowboarding through instruction. With more than 30,000 members, PSIA-AASI establishes certification standards for snow sports instructors and develops education materials to be used as the core components of instructor training.

For those wishing to keep skiing during college but not interested in continuing to race, employment as a professional ski instructor is a great way to earn a free pass, continue to develop your skiing skills, share your love of the sport and meet and ski with other high-level skiers in your area. The Professional Ski Instructors of America offer education and certification programs which allow you to develop into a "professional instructor" or coach. To become a ski instructor at most major resorts, PSIA membership is not required of new hires, nor is instructor certification. However, EVERY ski resort ties its hiring, promotion and compensation rates to PSIA certification. Applying as a PSIA member with at least Level I certification, will give you a great advantage especially with your race experience! Attaining your Level I your last year of racing is very doable.

If you get hired as a non-certified instructor you have lots of opportunities for development that will be offered by your employer. Most resorts will offer a training program to their staff that helps them to prepare for instructor certification. Ski School training programs are generally free to employees. PSIA membership is required to become a certified member. However, membership is not required until you pass your Level I certification. Upon passing, you pay your membership dues along with submitting the membership application and your Level I test results.

PSIA membership fees include a Divisional and National fee, so the fee varies by area. In general annual dues come in around \$100. Being a member has many great benefits including access to the National Newsletter, Website, educational events, certification events, discounted equipment, clothing and discounted lift tickets at ski areas throughout the country. To become a Level I instructor you must take a written test, pass a skiing test

over beginner level skills, have 10+ hours of supervised independent teaching time. Time spent as a Junior working with Mighty Mites, as is common practice in many race programs, can meet the 10 hour criteria. The written test is no fail, but requires studying the Core Concepts manual (available for purchase through PSIA) and will reference the Alpine Technical manual and Children's Manual. The three books can be purchased as a starter set for about \$60. The skiing tasks required for the Level I vary by division but cover skiing skills and technical knowledge regarding teaching skiers first-time beginner through beginning parallel.

Level II PSIA certification is much more rigorous and requires either 1 -2 years teaching experience or growing-up in a race program which focuses on skill development lead by strong coaches who model good teaching, to have acquired the necessary skills to pass the exam. Level II certification can be taken the same season as the Level I certification is taken. The exam has three parts, taken over 3 days. It includes a written exam which must be successfully completed before taking the skiing and teaching/technical modules. To earn your Level II you must pass all three modules.

The Level III certification exam cannot be taken until 1 season after successful completion of the Level II exam. In most cases to meet the PSIA Level III certification standard you must have 3-5 years fulltime teaching experience at all levels...first-time beginners to racing, to have acquired the minimum level of competency required in teaching, skiing, movement analysis and technical understanding. It is also a 3 part exam, with a written test which must be completed prior to taking the 2 on-snow components.

As an experienced racer, you can move through PSIA certification at a faster speed than the average. What you have learned about skiing through your racing experience gives you a real leg-up.

2. NASTAR: Participate in NASTAR racing circuit where offered at ski resorts with racers of all ages (<http://www.nastar.com/>)

Developed by SKI Magazine in 1968, NASTAR (NAtional STAndard Race) is the largest recreational ski and snowboard race program in the world. Since the program's inception, more than 6 million skier and snowboarder racer days have been recorded. Our mission is simple - to provide a fun, competitive and easily accessible racing program that, through the development of a handicap system, allows racers of all ages and abilities a means to compare their race results to other competitors across the country regardless of when and where they race.

This is accomplished by establishing a National Standard for all races. The National Standard is the Par Time or the "0" handicap which every racer competes against when they race Nature Valley NASTAR. The "0" handicap is set at the Nature Valley NASTAR National Championships and is the fastest time possible on a Nature Valley NASTAR course.

3. Masters Racing (<http://ussamasters.org/>)

USSA Alpine Masters organize age group alpine ski racing for competitors 20 and up. Competition is organized under the rules of the United States Ski Association (USSA), the national governing body for skiing and snowboarding, in the alpine ski disciplines of SL, GS, SG, and DH. Visit the Masters section of the ussa.org web site for information, forms, and news from the national headquarters.

Each winter, ski racing events are organized by masters groups in the USSA divisions throughout the US. In addition to races held within each division, the season includes regional and national competitions as well as opportunities to compete in the FIS International Masters Cup (IMC) events. See the Contacts page for links to division web sites for details on their programs and events.

4. Ski Clubs or Ski Academies (Post Graduate)

Continue to belong to a local club program for training and racing (up to 3rd year J1) or affiliate with a Ski Academy to continue Junior racing or beyond. There are approximately 20 ski academies in the country where you can take a post-graduate year. PG options can be combined with continuing education depending on the program or the racer's interests. Many racers take PG years to lower their points prior to going to college or to improve their chances of making USST.

5. Race Coach:

If your goal is to become a professional race coach, PSIA membership, education and certification is your best avenue to develop yourself toward that goal. However, many race clubs will hire a few untrained coaches to work with their lowest-level athletes based upon a letter of recommendation from their home coach. USSA offers coaching certification. Certification represents a commitment to furthering one's skills as a coach. It also represents a level of professional development and recognition within the coaching community, indicative of one's experience and expertise. Maintaining one's certification is indicative of a coach that never stops learning. No matter one's level of responsibility within the sport, a coach should always seek better methods of teaching skills, new and innovative drills, and ways to make skiing and competition a more enjoyable overall experience for everyone. Of course, certification isn't the only way to learn, and a member coach of USSA still does not have to be certified. However, a greater number of clubs are requiring at least a Level 100 certification for employment, as well as ski areas for liability considerations. The certification curriculum represents the most current material available from the U.S. Ski Team, and the USSA departments of Sport Education and Sport Science. All coaches should take advantage of the educational content available, whether they desire or need certification or not.

The first step in the coach education progression is the Level 100 Ski Fundamentals clinic. This clinic is the starting point for coaches new to coaching as well as veterans who have

not attended a clinic for several years. To obtain Level 100 certification, there are three requirements:

- (1) **Pass a certified First Aid/CPR course:** For example, the American Sport Education Program (ASEP) [Sport First Aid course](#) or a local [American Red Cross course](#).
- (2) **Pass the ASEP Coaching Principles Course:** This course is offered [on-line](#) and covers all aspects of general coaching; a wealth of information covering all bases.
- (3) **Level 100 Alpine Ski Fundamentals course:** This course is a day and a half on-snow and an evening classroom session. The content is based on the two U.S. Ski Team Alpine Fundamentals CD-ROMs. There is both a written open book exam, as well as an on-snow skiing evaluation requirement.

Many clubs use USSA coach certification as hiring and compensation criteria. To become certified, you must have a current USSA Coach, Athlete or Officials membership.

6. City Leagues (<http://www.cityleague.com/>)

Your team of up to 12 adults of all abilities compete for seven weeks. Six people on your team race two runs per night and are paired with opponents of equal speed and ability. It's drag racing at its best. CityLeague Team Ski Racing is a seven-week series, including Qualifying Night, running in January through early March. Each team member races opponents on other teams of equal speed and ability. Teams are made up of mixed ability skiers and can have up to 12 members. Six members on each team race each week and are "pre-paired" prior to racing. Racers ski two runs each. Once on each dual course. Your team may have up to twelve members so that you're sure to field six per week. The best way is to have six "core" members with several alternates. We'll guarantee at least six weeks of racing with two make-up nights for possible weather postponements.