



Alpine Program Planning-Message from the Alpine Director

As the school year begins, that means the ski season is right around the corner. Planning for the 2018-19 alpine season began last April. Before we start let's review where we came from and where we are headed.

New Beginnings

Six years ago Justin Chandler and I started a dialogue about how to reboot the alpine program here in Telluride. We discussed what it would take to rebuild the alpine program. Over the course of time we identified areas of importance;

- How to grow alpine membership numbers.**
- Create an alpine culture in a town full of other options.**
- What kind of coaches we would need given the profile of the membership and the Telluride environment.**
- How to rebuild a FIS program.**
- Host more races here in Telluride.**
- How to provide better communication.**
- Create a time line to address all of these issues and more.**

In September 2014 Justin and I agreed to a plan for me to return as the Alpine Director starting for the 2015-16 season. In March 2015 we stated our vision of what the next one to eight years would look like moving forward. We outlined a three point plan as an overview:

- 1) **Grow Alpine Membership.** From 2001-2015 Alpine never had more than 40 athletes in any given year. We set target numbers to achieve; 50 alpine athletes by year three, 2017-18, and to get to over 100 by year eight, 2022-23. To do so we would need a coaching staff that would have to be well educated and trained to ensure the Telluride alpine kids were being given a foundation for good skiing and have fun doing so. A skills based program was needed for success and improved results on race day.

- 2) **Keep Ski Racers in the Sport through their senior year in High School.** Get as many athletes ski racing through their senior year in high school, and if so desired, ski race in college. Almost 200 college and universities have competitive alpine programs. There is a college or university that fits every student athletes' academic and ski skill sets.
- 3) **Support all racers to the highest level including the elite athlete.** Provide a program that accommodates everyone's skiing/racing needs. The TSSC alpine Program is a community based program as opposed to destination programs (i.e. Ski Academies and recruiting programs). We needed to build a program that would allow everyone to achieve their own personal potential and support the talented athlete all the way to the door of the US Ski Team Development Pipeline. Eventually, the younger athletes, given a strong skiing foundation, would matriculate to the FIS level and grow success from within.

Execution

In 2015-16 we inherited 34 alpine athletes. In 2016-17 we grew to 64 athletes; in 2017-18 we had a total of 84 athletes. This has far surpassed the targets we set in March 2015.

We have seen improved race results. For example; in 2013 we had less than ten athletes race at the age class race in Beaver Creek. This year we had over fifty participates at age class races. We had countless top ten results and a multitude of podiums in the three different age classes.

As we progressed, various components needed to grow a successful program have been implemented. We added Spring and Fall Camps. In 2016-17 we added the use of Milk Run, which is one of the premier training/competition venues in the country. For 2017-18 we pushed the program access down an age group and created the Gravity Alpine Focus group for third graders. This past June we added a summer camp in Mt. Hood.

Two years ago Anne-Britt, the Club Administrator, instituted the Team Unity website. The website is an accounting software program and a multi-platform

communications resource. For better race day communication, we now provide a parent meeting on the morning of the first race.

In year two of the reboot, 2016-17, we created a formal **Coaches Education Program**, and provided parents with the **Alpine Curriculum Outline**. The TSSC Alpine Curriculum is the foundation for our program content. We lean on the USSA ATS Matrix for training opportunity volumes by age group.

We created an **Alpine Parent Handbook** designed specifically for the Ski Racing Parent. We also have given parents additional resources to better understand the Sport of Ski Racing and how best to support young ski racers. Dr. Jim Taylor's and other ski racing professionals' articles have been provided when appropriate. We have created an **Alpine Tuning Program** which includes a tuning education aspect.

This Season

As preparations for 2018-19 began in April, we continued to add components to the program to accommodate growth and athlete development. We knew three years ago, if we grew the program as planned, we would need more training opportunities. At the end of the 2015-16 season, we began discussions with Telski about additional training opportunities for the future. We will have over twenty U-14's and ten U-16-19's this season.

Recognizing that these groups need consistent training access throughout the season, we will be adding an additional day of training after Ski PE ends.

Beginning February 6, U14-19's will have training on Competition Hill Wednesdays from 3:30-5:30 through the end of the season. We will also add more video and timing to our weekly training.

In 2015-16 we had four coaches. This year we will have ten coaches. Recruiting and retaining coaches is one of the most important tasks an Alpine Program has. To that end Justin has done a remarkable job by adding a coach housing resource. He has leased a long term, three bedroom condo in town. From May thru September Justin and his wife, Corie, manage the condo as a short term rental. That offsets to some extent the high monthly rental cost so we can offer a few coaches an affordable housing option from October thru April.

We target coaches who we think can assimilate into the Telluride culture and help us improve our program. New and returning coaches are put into a rigorous on-going educational program with USSA and in-house training and certification.

We are also upgrading the entire club's proficiencies, while we pursue the **USSA Podium Level Certification**. Justin began this process in 2014. Spring of 2018 we created a Podium Level Certification committee, and plan to sign the USSA Podium Level Application Contract during the 2018-19 season.

To further improve communication; we will add parent text messaging for each age group.

The Future

Beyond the 2018-19 season, we understand what the necessary resources our athletes will need for continued development and future success. The following components will be added to support our high school aged athletes:

- A second Ability Class Coach.** This will allow us to have two separate dedicated Ability Class focuses. 1) SYNC USSA U16-19 race focus. 2) Colorado Cup FIS U-19 race focus.

- Additional in-season training sessions.** As our U-16-19 groups grow, they will need more training opportunities to be competitive at a higher level race series.

- Additional off-season training opportunities.** Lengthier Fall and Spring Camps. An October Mt. Hood Camp and a Southern Hemisphere Camp. These additional opportunities will be phased in as needed to assist our athletes at higher competition levels

- **A dedicated fitness coach.** As athletes develop, they must be stronger and fit to support on-snow technical improvements.

- Upgraded training equipment.** We are a growing program and will need to constantly add new, improved equipment both on and off snow. New larger vehicles will be necessary to transport the older athletes to competitions.

- Bid for and host SYNC/USSA and Colorado Cup/FIS races.** This will allow for less travel for the older groups, and provides the younger groups to witness high level ski racing at home.

Finally, I would like to thank and acknowledge our closest working business partner and supporter. The support and backing Telski has provided is immeasurable. They have assisted us in every step of making our Alpine program successful. The Telski leadership has helped us with redefining our training venues. Although it was a challenging snow year last season, Telski did everything possible to help us. They provide training on Polar Queen, Competition Hill, Middle Misty Maiden, Milk Run and any other venue we would like to use. Telski is on board with our efforts to bring back high level ski racing here. We do not exist without the Telluride Ski Resort.

We are committed to improving our program for the benefit of our young ski racers. **All of this costs money**, and that is Justin's monstrous job. Please help us to provide the best program possible. Donations, fundraisers and volunteering are the best way for you to help your kids. With gratitude and thanks...pray for a good snow year.