



Starting a USCSA Ski or Snowboard Team

Useful Information & Recommendations for New Teams

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Securing Institutional Recognition
3. Selection of Officers & Duties
4. Budget Setting & Finance Tracking
5. Registering with a USCSA Conference
6. Registering with the USCSA National Office
7. Recruiting Team Members & Team Advertising
8. Transportation Logistics & Lodging
9. Team Discounts
10. Maintaining a Successful Team
11. Conclusion

1. Introduction

Students enrolled in college sometimes do not realize that there is a place for them to compete in intercollegiate competition in skiing and snowboarding. Many colleges and universities offer collegiate programs that do not always fall under the department of athletics, so they may go unnoticed until after you have entered college. More than 180 colleges across North America have established USCSA programs in alpine skiing, cross-country skiing, freestyle skiing and/or snowboarding, and snowboard competition. If your institution does not yet have a team, we can help you start one! (Please note that you must be on a team to compete with the USCSA; we do not allow individual/independent competitors.)

This document will guide you in creating a successful team that can last for many years to come. Our recommendations are based on the experiences of successful USCSA teams in the past; it is critical that you also follow the rules and regulations of your institution, and the appropriate offices within your school. The USCSA and the National Office are here to help you as well, in addition to our 180+ institutions and 5,000+ members.



For additional resources and information, please visit our website (www.uscsa.org), including our Start a Team (www.uscsa.org/start-a-team) and Forms & Guides (www.uscsa.org/forms--guides) pages. You may email the National Office at any time with questions (help@uscsa.org).

2. Securing Institutional Recognition

Start by checking to see if your school is already a member of USCSA. Visit the Member Institutions webpage (www.uscsa.org/member-institutions) to see if your institution had a team the previous season. If you attend an institution that is not listed as a member institution or does not have a team in your discipline, you can easily start a team!

There are three common areas where ski and snowboard teams reside at schools:

1. department of athletics
2. department of recreation (sports clubs)
3. office of student affairs (clubs)

All three levels compete together in the USCSA. View our [Competition and Rules Manual](#) for all competition rules; depending on your institution's rules, there may be additional NCAA rules to follow. The USCSA follows NCAA Division II rules for academic eligibility purposes.

While each institution operates differently, most collegiate sports teams are within the recreation department (as student-run organizations), not NCAA sports departments. Check to see if your school has a "Registered Student Organization" or a "Recreational Sports" department. The recreation department will include non-traditional intercollegiate teams, recreational clubs, and intramural activities. Sometimes the term "club" can be a misnomer; regardless of what the title is, your ski and snowboard teams will be competing in sanctioned intercollegiate competition.

Once you have located this department, make an appointment to meet with the department director. This person will tell you the specific steps to take to establish a team. Requirements for team status vary by institution; some require two years of probationary status, where the team will not receive university funds; some require only one year of this status; some will automatically provide team funds with just the submission of a budget; and still others require a faculty advisor to sponsor the team. ****Securing institution funding is the best way to ensure the long-term success of your new ski/snowboard team**** Even if your institution cannot provide funding (or adequate funding), there are many opportunities to fundraise for your team.



3. Selection of Officers & Duties

You will want to select officers and define their duties. This is important for a team's success.

Common officer positions include:

- President/Team Captain
- Vice President/Co-Captain
- Treasurer
- Coach

Make sure you define who the main “team contact” will be with the USCSA– sometimes that is the Team Captain, and sometimes it might be the Co-Captain or another officer. When you register your team with the USCSA, we will ask for the Team Contact’s name and contact information, and that person will be the one to receive all communications from us about registration.

If you expect to have a large team, you will want more people to help out with the administration and logistics of team operations.

Starting and running a team is similar to that of a small business. Establishing the decision-making process is essential for team officers to operate successfully. In general, team decisions should be made by the elected officers and not put to a vote by the whole team. Encourage other team members to run for officer positions to help guide the team and lead its operations.

One of the more challenging aspects of running a team can be the clear separation of team issues from personal issues. Working with friends can be challenging to relationships, but as long as each member understands the difference between friendship and business, you can conduct productive conversations as part of the course of pursuing what is best for the team.

4. Budget Setting & Finance Tracking

The Team should establish a budget based on expected costs of operation throughout the year. The Team Treasurer and President should monitor this budget closely throughout the season. If you are using a team checking account, two people should be on the account at all times. These people should issue checks on behalf of the team, but at no time should they write checks directly to themselves. Make sure your team is abiding by all Codes of Conduct for Student Organizations at your institution.

Tips for good team budgets:



- Make budgets based on projected costs, and re-evaluate with actual figures
- Consider all possible costs: travel, lodging, National Office dues, Conference dues, lift passes, equipment, uniforms etc.
- Include built-in emergency funds (approximately 5% of total) to set aside
- Clearly document all expenditures and incomes and save all receipts
- Explore ways to reduce out-of-pocket expenses for members (fundraising, outside grants, school funding, etc.)

Teams usually charge a fee for each member. Based on the projected number of teammates, the total budget can be divided evenly among the members to determine an acceptable amount for individual team dues. Common team dues range between the high \$200's to the low \$400's for the season.

Fundraising is a great way to ease registration costs or provide added value and/or subsidized perks to your members. There are many potential sources for fundraising: working as security or clean-up crew at a concert, hosting an event at your local student union or pub, or doing a raffle with prizes from donated goods from industry partners/ local sporting goods stores. Some schools have structured fundraising opportunities, so check with your NCAA, Sports Clubs, or Recreation advisors to see what might be available.

5. Registering with a USCSA Conference

After setting up your team with your institution, your next step is to connect with your USCSA Conference Coordinator to confirm your team's participation in the upcoming season. If you are unsure of who your Conference Coordinator is, you can visit our website at www.uscsa.org/conferences or email the National Office at help@uscsa.org, and we will connect you to the right person. Many Conferences require Team Captains to attend a fall meeting to discuss the upcoming season and review the process of registration, so be sure to attend that meeting.

Each USCSA Conference charges Conference dues, and each Conference has their own method of determining their dues. It is best to reach out to your Conference Coordinator in the spring or summer— ahead of fall registration— to allow you to budget and secure funds.

6. Registering with the USCSA National Office

Along with registering with your USCSA Conference, your team will need to register with the USCSA's National Office. This registration has two components:



1. Paying dues (Team Dues for each discipline*, Institution Dues and Individual Competitor Dues)
2. Submitting proper academic eligibility paperwork for each team

*A team is defined by discipline AND by gender, e.g. Women's Alpine, Men's Nordic, Women's Snowboard, Men's Freeski, etc. are all separate teams and need to be registered as such.

USCSA National Office fees:

- Team Fees*: annual dues for each discipline and gender
- Institution Fees**: annual dues (only needs to be paid once for each institution, regardless of the number of teams you have)
- Competitor Fees: annual dues per each student athlete

*New Teams may request a waiver from Team Dues for their first year. They still must register with the USCSA National Office using a discount code that will be provided to waive the fee.

**New Institutions may request a waiver from Institution Dues for their first year. They still must register with the USCSA National Office using a discount code that will be provided to waive the fee.

All academic eligibility documents will be sent automatically to each team's Team Contact every week during registration season. You must designate a Team Contact when you register each team with the USCSA National Office; be sure to register the correct person and that the designated person checks their email regularly. Team Captains MUST provide the academic eligibility documents to the school registrar to complete the certification process, along with instructions for the registrar to return the verified documents back to the USCSA National Office.

For more information on the registration and academic eligibility processes, including where to obtain a waiver, please visit our website at www.uscsa.org/forms--guides and www.uscsa.org/welcome. You can also check out the USCSA Competition and Rules Manual at www.uscsa.org/rules--bylaws.

7. Recruiting Team Members & Team Advertising

There are many different approaches to recruiting team members. The officers should discuss in advance their intentions for the team and its membership. Initially, the team might have no choice but to take everyone who is interested, for nothing more than financial stability. This might also be necessary in order to gain a critical mass of people to disseminate their experiences to other prospective students.

Questions to consider:



- Do you want to be a skier only team? A snowboarder only team? Or have both?
- How competitive will the team be? Will there be try-outs?
- What are the goals of the team? National Champions? Social Club?

Some teams have established criteria for team selection based on a questionnaire to gauge their interests in competition; others have attempted to hold tryouts for their members. The best teams have a healthy mix of the above— responsible athletes interested in competing and having fun in a social atmosphere.

One of the most important groups to target during recruiting is freshmen. A large group of freshmen will ensure that a team remains strong for several years. At the same time, freshmen often are interested in joining many different types of activities so it is important to recruit them early before they commit to another sport/activity.

Team Website, Social Media Page and Email

It is important to have a strong online presence. Having a team website or Facebook page to host information, calendars and team updates is important in order to provide information for potential new (and existing) members. It is also a good idea to have a generic information email— you can set this up through your institution or a free Gmail account. These are great platforms to showcase how much fun it is to be a part of your school's ski and/or snowboard team(s).

Freshmen Orientation Meetings

Many institutions have a freshmen orientation week just before the fall term starts, or periodically throughout the summer. Often, they will include time to discuss sports teams, clubs and campus activities that are available on campus. Since the orientations are held before the term starts in the fall, make sure to discuss with your advisor before the end of the spring term.

Freshmen Orientation Booklets/Handouts

Many institutions also distribute a booklet for all incoming freshmen that feature useful information. Many orientation booklets will accept advertisements, and this can be a cost-effective way to advertise in something the students will have throughout the year.

Reserving On-Campus Meeting Rooms

If you are going to have an informational meeting about the team, it is best that you do this in the first few weeks of the term in the fall, as all students are looking for opportunities and activities to join during the year. Meeting room space can be very competitive during those first few weeks. Discuss with your program advisor about booking.

Posting Banners & Flyers on Campus

Here are some points to *always* include on all of your recruiting materials, depending on what your team offers:



- Discount lift tickets at your local mountain
- Free ski and snowboard race training
- Great prices on all types of ski and snowboard equipment, accessories and clothing
- Cheap housing when traveling
- Lots of chances to meet other racers from other schools
- The chance to get in a lot of skiing and boarding!!

Before posting around campus, secure any institution approval needed, so that you do not waste time and resources on posters/flyers that may be removed. Remember that most flyers are ineffective unless they are seen by someone at least three times.

Here are some good locations to post flyers and banners:

- Team website
- Campus-designated posting kiosks
- On-and off-campus dorms
- Sorority and fraternity houses
- Classrooms
- Bathrooms
- University Center or Student Union
- ATM machines
- Campus libraries
- Off campus – restaurants, shops, cafes, etc.
- Sporting goods shops in the area

Big banners and signs can also be a good way to recruit new members. You can usually buy inexpensive butcher paper at your local campus bookstore. Always list the benefits of being on the team, including the fact that all abilities of skiers and snowboarders are welcome, and the team's meeting time, date and location. A contact name, number and email address should also be included.

Newspaper Advertisements

Student Activities section of the school newspaper: Some institution newspapers have a special section at the beginning of each week that is devoted to all of the student club activities that are going on during the week.

Classified newspaper ads: These ads are usually inexpensive, and campus organizations/clubs may be able to get a discount. It is best to run the ad the day before and the day of the meeting. Make sure to include the meeting time, date and location, as well as a contact email and the website or Facebook address.



Display Ads: These are big ads (1/8 page to full page). They can be expensive to run, depending on your student newspaper, but they also can be more effective than a classified ad and can give you the opportunity to list some of the team benefits.

Activities Fairs

Your school's Activities Fair or Club Day is a great opportunity to distribute information about the team. Make sure to have a table near the end of the aisle or near other sport-related clubs to ensure everyone will see your table/booth.

Tips for an eye-catching booth:

- Bring props such as skis, poles, snowboards, and boots
- Have 2-3 members at your booth at all times engaging students
- Bring plenty of informational handouts, schedules and team pictures
- Be able to register interest and or members at your booth
- Have a large banner to easily be spotted in the crowd

Sports Activities Fairs

Similar to the Activities Fairs, some schools may also have a sports activities fair that features all of the sports and clubs available for students to join.

Booths at the University Center

Most schools will also let you set up a table in front of the Student Union or University Center or other heavily trafficked area. It is a good idea to have 2-3 team members sit at a table at least three times a week during peak student traffic times, such as 10am-2pm.

Ski/Snowboard Club Meetings

If your school has a separate Ski/Snowboard Club, it is a good idea to attend the first informational meeting and discuss a separate competition team. This can be a great recruiting tool, as many students confuse the ski/snowboard club and the ski/snowboard team, and they really would like to join the team instead. You could offer discounted memberships for students who want to participate in both, or consider merging the club and your team together.

Recruiting Events

Another great way to attract potential members is to hold a recruiting event or BBQ to show potential team members how much fun it is to be on the team. Host an event directly after the first team meeting so that everyone can go over together. Another idea is to have a pizza night at a local restaurant to promote the event to potential new members.

Word of mouth... the best form of advertising!

Spreading the word about the ski/snowboard team can be one of the best and easiest recruiting tools you have. Many potential team members may not even know that a team exists at your school. Wear team uniforms or shirts from previous seasons at the start of the semester. Have



members hand out 1/4 page flyers on the way to classes. If you belong to a sorority or fraternity, make an announcement at house meetings and post meeting information at the house. Be loud and outgoing (and also respectful!) to generate a buzz about your team.

8. Transportation, Logistics and Lodging

Getting to the mountain can be made easier in many ways by open communication and planning. Team members from past years have met some of their very best friends through the closeness, camaraderie and challenges of getting to the hill.

Transportation Options:

- Institution sponsored travel vans (request in advance)
- Team-organized carpools (e.g. through website or Facebook site)
- 3rd-party rentals and travel companies (depending on your budget)

Some established teams have the means to rent seasonal condos near preferred mountains; others make use of nearby hotels or family friends' houses or just operate day trips. As with all considerations, plan early and plan often to get the best value for your team.

9. Team Discounts

As a collegiate snowsports organization, the USCSA partners with several key brands to support your training and competition. Be sure to check out the Member Benefits webpage at www.uscsa.org/memberbenefits to learn about our current partnerships that are available to you!

You also may reach out to other companies (that are not already partners of the USCSA at a national level) and local mountains directly to get the best support for your specific team.

Potential discounts:

- Mountain lift tickets
- Season passes
- Team uniforms
- Team equipment (helmets, skis, boards, etc.)
- Partnerships with industry brands
- Partnerships with local sports shops



10. Maintaining a Successful Team

Each team must figure out a set of tactics to keep itself up and running. They will also need to determine what aspects of team life are more important. Creating a comfortable combination of people who are 'hardcore' skiers and snowboarders combined with a group of more socially-minded teammates will provide the depth and breadth your team will need to be successful.

Always be mindful of succession and recruitment; teams survive and grow by making sure they recruit new members each year and keep everyone engaged and having fun. Many of our alumni reminisce on their team days at school and stay engaged because their team provided a safe, fun outlet to make lasting friendships.

11. Conclusion

Throughout the entire process, please remember that the USCSA National Office and your Conference Coordinators are here to help. Ask us questions along the way! Collegiate competition and team life are experiences that will have a lifelong impact. Many competitors in our programs have developed stronger friendships competing with USCSA than in any other event in their life. Through all of your hard work creating a team, the lessons you learn will be invaluable. See you on the slopes!