



U.S. Collegiate Ski & Snowboard Association

Starting a Ski & Snowboard Team

Useful Information & Recommendations for New Teams

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1. Welcome

Starting a team can seem like an overwhelming task. However, many students have done this before you and while the process can be difficult, it can also be extremely rewarding. With 450+ different registered teams at 170+ institutions, there is a large community of snowsports athletes for you to engage with.

The information within this document will guide you to create a successful team that will hopefully endure for many years to come. It is however, recommendations based solely on experiences of successful USCSA teams in the past. It is critical that you ensure all team actions fall within the rules and regulations of your College/University and the appropriate offices therein. For additional resources and/or support, please contact the National Office by emailing registration@uscsa.com or by visiting our website: www.uscsa.com

2. Securing University Recognition

Each university operates differently, however, the majority of the collegiate sports teams of this nature fall under recreation departments (student run organizations), not NCAA sports departments. Check to see if your institution has “Registered Student Organization” or “Recreational Sports” department. While they say ‘clubs’, this is a misnomer. The recreation department will include non-traditional intercollegiate teams, recreational clubs, and intramural activities. Regardless of what the title is, your ski and snowboard teams will be competing in **sanctioned intercollegiate competition**.

Once you have located this department, you will want to make an appointment or drop in to see the department director. This person will be able to let you know what specific steps you must take to get a team running. 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 school funding is the best way to ensure the long-term success of your new ski/snowboard team****



3. Selection of Officers & Duties

The selection of officers and their duties is critical for team success. Before assigning duties to the officers of your team, you should determine the complete descriptions of each of the officers.

Common officer positions are:

President/Team Captain
Vice President/Co-Captain
Treasurer
Pro-Deal Officer
Coach

- If you expect to have a large team, you will want more people to help out with the administration and logistics of team operations.
- Establishing the decision-making process is essential for team officers to work in a 'business' without jeopardizing friendships made prior to the establishment of the team. Consider reviewing "Robert's Rules of Order" for a standardized way of conducting business.
- The most difficult aspect of running a team can be clearly separating team issues from personal issues. Working with friends can be taxing on relationships, but as long as each member understands that there is a difference between friendship and business, then disagreements will not be taken as personal attacks, and just the course of pursuing what is best for the team.
- Most efficiently, team decisions should be made only by the elected officers, NOT put out to a vote by the whole team. If there are dissenting views from the members they should consider running for officer positions in the future.

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, then 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 University Codes of Conduct for Student Organizations.

Tips to Good Team Budgets

- Include built-in emergency funds (Approx. 5% of Total) that is set aside
- Clearly document all expenditures and incomes; save all receipts
- Make budgets based on projected costs; re-evaluate with actual figures
- Explore ways to reduce out-of-pocket expenses for members (fundraising, outside grants, school funding etc.)
- Consider outside costs: Travel, Lodging, National Office Dues, Conference Dues, Lift Passes, Equipment, Uniforms etc.

Based on the projected number of teammates, the total budget can be divided evenly among the participants to determine an acceptable amount for 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/subsidized perks to your members. Some schools have structured fundraising opportunities, so check with your NCAA, Sports Clubs, or Recreation advisors to see what might be available.

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.

5. Registering with a USCSA Conference

After setting up a institution-recognized team, your next step is to contact the USCSA Conference Coordinator in your region and confirm your team in the upcoming season. Many Conferences require captains to attend a fall meeting to register, please reference the USCSA Website for current meeting and contact information.

Each conference has their own method of determining conference dues. It is best to reach out in the Spring or Summer ahead of the Fall registration to give you the best chance at securing funds for the upcoming season.

6. Registering with the USCSA National Office

Along with registering with your Conference, your team will need to register with the National Office. This involves submitting proper academic eligibility paperwork by the USCSA deadline and paying Team (Discipline), Institution & Individual Member Dues.

Contact the National Office at help@uscsa.com



The dues structure for the USCSA is determined by the number of team disciplines that are at your university. A discipline is defined as a single-sex sport: i.e. Men's Alpine, Women's Alpine, Men's Snowboard etc.

Costs:

- USCSA Individual Member Dues: Annual Due per Member Athlete
- USCSA Institution Dues: Annual Due**
- USCSA Team Dues: Annual Due per discipline
- Conference Dues: Determined by Conference Coordinator

*New Institutions may request a waiver from institution fees for their first year. Team Captains/Coaches MUST send a formal request detailing why they should be eligible with any supporting documents for the National Office to render a decision. *

Institution & Team Dues generally increase year-to-year to adjust for inflationary costs

Academic Eligibility documents will automatically be sent to the Team Captain/Coach weekly as athletes register throughout the fall. Captains MUST provide these documents to the Registrar for verification, with instructions for the registrar to send back to the USCSA National Office.

7. Recruiting Team Members and 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. However, 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

Now more than ever it is important to have a strong online presence. Having a team website or Facebook page to host information, calendars & team updates is important to providing information for potential new members. Having a generic information email is another good idea; either set up through the school or a free Gmail account. This is a great platform to showcase how much fun it is to be a part of the school's ski/snowboard team.

Freshmen Orientation Meetings

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

Freshmen Orientation Booklets/Handouts

Many schools 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 back to school in the fall, as all students are looking to find out what they can get involved with during the year. This makes meeting room space 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. (Up to 70% off some brands!)
- Cheap housing when traveling
- Lots of chances to meet other racers from Northwest schools, not to mention the chance to get in a lot of skiing and boarding!!



Before posting around campus, secure any university approval needed otherwise you will waste time and resources from posters/flyers being removed. 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
- On campus designated posting kiosks
- On-and off-campus dorms
- Sorority/Fraternity houses
- Classrooms
- Bathrooms
- University Center
- ATM machines
- Campus libraries
- Off campus – Restaurants, Shops
- 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: all abilities of skiers and snowboarders are welcome, the team's meeting time, day and location. A contact name, number and email address should also be included.

Newspaper Advertisements

Student Activities Section of the Newspaper: Some college newspapers have a special section at the beginning of each week that is devoted to all of the student club activities that is 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 date, time, location, email and website address.

Display Ads: These are big ads (1/8 page to full page) that can be expensive to run depending on your student newspaper. However, these ads can also be a lot 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 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 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 two to three team members sit at a table at least three times a week during peak student traffic times such as 10-2pm.

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 would really like to join the team instead. You could offer discounted memberships for students who want to participate in both, or consider merging both the club and 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 being on the team is. Host a event directly after the first team meeting so that everyone can go over together. Having a pizza night at a local restaurant to promote the event to potential new members is another idea.

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, outgoing but 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 (through website or FB Site)
- 3rd Party Rentals & Travel Companies

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, you'd be surprised at the number of companies & mountains willing to offer discounts to your members. The USCSA maintains corporate partnerships to take advantage of, but feel free to contact some companies and local mountains directly.

Potential Discounts:

- Mountain Lift Tickets & Season Passes
- Team Uniforms
- Team Equipment (Helmets, skis, boards etc.)
- Partnerships w/ industry brands
- Partnerships w/ 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. Closing

Throughout the entire process, please remember that the USCSA National Office and your Conference Coordinators are both here to help out in any way possible. Don't be afraid to ask any questions or for help as we have all gone through the same experience you are about to embark upon. Collegiate competition and experiencing team life are things that will have a lifelong impact. Many racers in our program have developed stronger friendships competing with USCSA than in any other event in their life; and some have even ended up meeting their future spouses. Through all of your hard work creating a team, the lessons you will learn are invaluable. See you on the slopes.