

Andover Outing Club Kicks Off Cross-Country Ski Season

By Peter Southworth
Andover Outing Club

The Andover Outing Club (AOC) continues to teach kids aged 4 to 13 to ski, stay active through the winter, and compete in local races. Organized and coached by parents, the focus remains helping kids have fun on skis. Parents are encouraged to participate in any way and are welcome to join us in practices on the trails.

The AOC enjoys the groomed cross-country ski trails at the Blackwater Ski Area, site of our practices and home competitions. Seven kilometers of trails criss-cross the fields, woods, and hills surrounding the Proctor Academy ski area, lodge, and lighted practice area.

Our racers compete in both skating and classic techniques. The AOC offers membership in the New England Nordic Ski Association's Bill Koch Youth Ski League.

Practices are held on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 3:30 to 5:30, starting on December 8. Ski meets are held on weekends throughout the season, from December to early March.

The season ends with the exciting finale, the Bill Koch Youth Ski League Festival that brings young skiers together from all over New England. The Festival happens February 26 and 27 at Notchview Reservation in Windsor, Massachusetts.

Let's Get Started!

Sunday, December 5, from 1 PM to 3 PM is Bill Koch League Day at the Blackwater Ski Area. It's an opportunity for youngsters age four to 13 to learn to cross-country ski, go on a short hike, or play games. Club parents will

be there to help with registration and to organize a gear swap, so bring your skis, boots, and poles to swap or sell.

Cross-country skiing is a great way to spend the winter with friends, so come see what it's all about. The Blackwater Ski Area is just off Lawrence Street in Andover – just follow the signs.

For more information about the Andover Outing Club, contact Peter Southworth at 735-6811 or peter_southworth@proctornet.com or come meet AOC parents on Sunday, December 5 between 1 PM and 3 PM at the Blackwater Ski Area.

AE/MS Winter Sports Program

By Heidi Terwilliger
Beacon staff

The Andover Elementary Middle School will begin their winter sports program in January. The program is sponsored through the town and set up by the Andover Recreation Committee. The cost to parents is \$20 per student, with the remaining costs paid from the Andover Recreation Committee's budget.

The winter sports program is offered to all children in the town of Andover from kindergarten through eighth grade. It runs every Friday for five weeks, beginning on January 7, 2005 and ending on February 4.

All students who are participating should have signed up at the school during the designated signup periods, or at the Blackwater Ski Shop. If you have not signed up, please contact Ed

Dansereau at the Blackwater Ski Shop at 735-5437 as soon as possible.

The program includes downhill skiing and snowboarding at Ragged Mountain Resort and cross-country skiing is offered at Blackwater Ski Area. Kindergarteners participating in program at Ragged Mountain Resort must be accompanied by a parent.

Transportation is provided to Ragged Mountain Resort via school buses. The buses depart from AE/MS at approximately 12:30 PM and return at approximately 4:30 PM. The buses will not provide a ride home from AE/MS after skiing; parents must pick up their children at the school.

Transportation to and from Blackwater Ski Area is also provided. Younger children do not need to be accompanied by a parent, but parents are more than welcome to join the fun and learn to ski. Students leave AE/MS at 12:30 PM and return by 2:45 PM to ride home on the buses. Those who would like to stay and ski for a longer period of time are welcome to do so until 3:30 PM when parents must pick up their children at the Blackwater Ski Area.

Equipment is available to rent through the Blackwater Ski Shop for all programs and from Don and Lorraine Cline for the cross-country ski program. The cost is \$45 for snowboarding and downhill equipment and \$25 for cross-country equipment. This price covers all five sessions.

The equipment is taken for the children to either Blackwater Ski Area or Ragged Mountain Resort, depending upon their chosen program. If your child has his or her own equipment, it can be dropped off in front of the school in the morning, and it will be taken to the appropriate mountain and back to AE/MS for them.

Children should dress for winter
See Winter on page 21

Cross-Country Skiing - Kids Love It!

By Hallie Southworth

I've been skiing with the Andover Outing Club since I was three years old. I am eight now! That's five years of practicing and racing. I like being outside in the winter, even on frigid cold days.

Some practices are easy and silly, like when our coach scatters chocolate-covered raisins on the snow in the woods. He tells us they are deer poops, but we eat them anyway.

On hard days our coach makes us do the big hill and says, "No duck feet! Keep sliding those skis!"

At the end of the practices we play games like British Bulldog, tag with a rubber chicken, and soccer – all on skis, but not with our poles. Sometimes our coach has us do relay races and obstacle courses.

At the end of practice, we all go in the ski lodge and write in our ski journals about what we did that day. And our coach always gives us a lollypop!

By Andrew Young
AE/MS Fifth Grade

Hi, I am Andrew Young. I ski in the Andover Outing Club. It is very fun to ski on the trails. You also play games.

There is a big hill you can ski on. It is huge and fun! You also get to race in your age group.

I have had so much fun the past two years! There are two different types of cross-country skiing. One is classic. It is like running. The other is skating. It is like skating.

If I were you I would join us and have some fun!



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