

Dear all

I just wanted to give you some idea of the plans for the next few months in the run-up to next winter.

Firstly, a big welcome to all new team members, and I'm also delighted to welcome back quite a number of old hands. The old hands will have some idea as to how the system works, but I just wanted to give you all a bit of an overview.

Gareth Trayner (Gar), former BCST member, Scottish and then British Team member, and Olympian, is our Head Coach. We have been very fortunate to secure him to work full-time with the team. Following his retirement as an athlete, he has been working in the USA for a number of years, and I know they remain very keen to entice him back. Don't worry, we have a firm grip!

On behalf of SnowsportGB, Gar will be employing a number of well qualified coaches to work with him on each of the various camps. I will manage as many of the camps as I can fit in with my day job.

Susan Murrin is our trusty and truly efficient admin assistant. She is based in SnowsportGB's head office in Edinburgh, and in office hours will be able to answer any queries about planning and travel arrangements. Tel 0131 335 5678 susan@snowsportgb.com

We are delighted that Lawrence Buchwiser's father Klaus, as in the last two seasons, will be on hand at some of the camps to provide us with the benefit of his technical and ski tuning expertise.

You will all be aware of the enormous support that Roger de Haan continues to give in support of British children's ski racing. This is allowing us to work to develop the system for the future – Duncan Freshwater, Performance & Pathway Manager, is in charge of this side of the work, with Gar (whose salary and costs are also covered by this fund) very much at his right hand. One of Duncan's major aims is to increase participation in the sport, and he is working on this through a 'Talent Trail' partnership with many ski schools in the Alps with already considerable success.

This funding has already allowed us to develop the programme and professional support that we are able to offer to all of you, but has not been set up to directly reduce costs for parents, other than providing us with a full-time Head Coach. My work as Manager and Coordinator of the team over the years (16 years of involvement, 10 as overall manager – too many!) has been very much focussed on reducing costs for parents as this is how I became involved. Unfortunately costs have inevitably increased, especially over the last few months, and I am working very hard to set a new budget for 2009-2010, keeping costs as low as possible.

Over the years, we have very much come to rely on the support of parents as a source of ideas and contacts to enable us to raise funds to support the team. So if any of you have any good fund-raising ideas, or any suggestions for possible sponsors that we could approach, please do let me know.

We will be running a raffle through the year to raise funds – every pound that comes in from outside the sport is a bonus – and I would be delighted if anyone would like to offer a prize. Last year's draw didn't quite get off the ground, and I am holding on to some promises of prizes from parents who are still involved, for which I am very grateful. In particular it would be good to have a holiday or

similar grand top prize to make selling tickets easy, so do please come up with any possibilities/suggestions/contacts – many thanks!

As far as the costs of trips and camps are concerned, I am planning to offer the first fitness camp on 17th May (now to be held at Brunel University) free of charge (no overnight stay). We are once again extremely grateful to Lord and Lady Moynihan for offering to host the second camp (13th-14th June) at their lovely home near Tunbridge Wells. We owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Colin and Gaynor for all their help and support over recent years. Thanks to the Headmaster of nearby Holmewood House School, our overnight accommodation for this camp is very reasonably priced, and this weekend too will be extremely good value (as well as great fun!). We suggest that as many as possible of you should try to come to this second fitness camp.

We continue to work very hard to find support for the Team, and there is a possibility that we will find external funding to cover the cost of the remaining fitness camps. However, until this is confirmed, I will have to charge the actual costs of the events. Again, I am hoping that I may have found a little support for the summer camp (which is to be in Saas Fee, as last summer), but otherwise all costs will need to be covered. All I can do is assure you that we will do our very best to keep the costs as low as possible for each and every event.

I try to set a single standard price for the winter race camps, though all vary a little in number of days, content, etc. Last season the events cost £280 – this cost was exclusive of flights and of overnight airport stays prior to departure. These will be charged separately, and you may be asked, as last year, to book your own flights. I'm afraid inevitably the price of the race camps will rise next season unless we can find another source of support. We will plan ahead and let you know which flights will have adults travelling to escort young athletes. Last season we used mainstream airlines wherever possible, and found them much more sympathetic to our inevitable excess baggage problems!

I know that those of you who are based in Europe, or who have other commitments, will be wondering how best to manage the team commitments. The latest selection policy demands a minimum participation of two fitness camps, and a level 3 pass is expected in order to remain in the team. Don't be too worried, there will be at least four chances to do these tests, and provided you maintain a reasonable all round fitness level, this standard is not too difficult to achieve. Indeed it is pretty essential that you do work on your fitness – of all sports, Alpine ski racing is the most demanding, and in order to do the best that you can, you need to be extremely fit!

We aim to run a morning session for parents during the second fitness camp in June (on Saturday, 13th June, to be confirmed), and will be inviting speakers to talk about various aspects of the programme. Topics will include nutrition, and the most important topic of raising personal sponsorship. It will be a good chance to meet you all, and a very good opportunity for you to ask questions.

Of course we are hoping that as many of you as possible will be able to attend *all* our pre-season training events. Gar very much wants to prepare you in the best possible way for the international races next winter. Incidentally, the first of these, in Andorra, is *provisionally* scheduled for 10-12th December, the first time we will have had to be ready to compete internationally before the GBR Christmas races.

On another note, all team members need to be working now to build up a portfolio of press cuttings, school magazine entries, etc that can be used to attract sponsors.

I would like to ask that you all send me/Susan Murrin copies of any publicity you attract in your local press – this will help us to build up a picture of broad nationwide coverage of team members, and will go a long way to interest new potential Team sponsors! You will be reminded of this from time to time, so please do start now, perhaps just sending a note to your local paper to tell them of your selection – mention the BCST, and name your school – the schools will be more supportive when it comes to asking for time off to race if they are aware of this publicity!!

If any of you think you may get support from your local council I will be happy to write letters in support of your applications. Several Medway based athletes gained support last season after my contact and reply to their request for information, and quite a number of athletes in other areas received awards from their local authorities. Please do not hesitate to ask!

I am always happy to answer questions; probably email is the best approach. Alternatively please feel free to phone me in the evenings (not too late!). I work pretty much full time as a GP when I'm not doing ski work, so you will not often catch me by phone during the day.

Later in the year, Susan will be able to give you information about team clothing. We are delighted that Trespass continues to support the team – thanks to their great generosity over the last 8 years we have very much gained a brand identity. Trespass supplies all our outer clothing (jackets, fleeces, etc) free of charge to Team members. Trespass does not make or supply catsuits, so these are sourced elsewhere and branded with the Trespass logo – you will be asked to pay for these, but we will get the best possible deal on your behalf.

Finally, to summarise a rather wordy letter:

1. Work on fitness
2. Come to all our planned events if at all possible – and parents make a note now re 13th June!
3. Work on local press publicity
4. Look for personal support from your local authority
5. Send details of possible potential team sponsors
6. All fund-raising ideas are very welcome!
7. Raffle prizes?
8. Have a great summer, and play lots of sport of any/all kinds!!

We are very much looking forward to the coming year! Keep up with Team news by visiting the latest news page on www.gbjuniorski.com

With very best regards to all,

Jenny Shute

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