



IS MY CHILD READY FOR PARA?

AS PARENTS, ARE YOU READY FOR PARA?

On Sunday, March 8th, BMR invites Mountaineer athletes considering joining PARA or Cross Team next year to be evaluated for skier readiness. Any Mountaineer athlete born in 2011 or before who is considering training with PARA or Cross Team next season is welcome to join us. After the “PARA Candidate Evaluation” event, the coaches will get together to discuss each athlete’s readiness to enter Competition for next season. We will contact parents in the following two weeks to discuss our observations and recommendations for next year’s training season.

Pre-registration is required. If your child would like to participate, please RSVP to racing@skibluemt.com by 9am Friday, March 6th.

If your child is participating, he or she should meet the coaches Sunday morning at 9am on the top of Widowmaker. There will be some U10 and U12 PARA athletes available to guide the groups from the lodge. Please be ready to go on snow by 8:45am. Those not presently enrolled in a BMR program MUST check-in between 8:00a-8:30a at the Summit Race Registration counter to sign a release. A lift ticket or season pass is required to access the lifts.

Please be sure your child eats a good breakfast and has a snack in his or her pocket for training time. We anticipate the event taking approximately three hours.

After the on-snow session, we will hold a MEETING for both parents and athletes who participate in the event. Please plan to attend and bring your questions about what to expect next year if your child takes the step to train with PARA.

Please read the information below to learn more about the PARA program, training and expectations for parents and athletes.

Ages – U-10 (age 9 as of 12/31/20) and U-12 (age 10 and 11 as of 12/31/20) athletes will be permitted to train with BMR PARA once they have completed at least one year of Mountaineer training and have the recommendation of their Mountaineer coach, based on the athletes’ skiing skills and level of maturity. No child age 8 or younger as of 12/31/20 is permitted to train with PARA. Athletes with a birth year of 2011 or earlier may participate in the evaluation.

Skiing Ability – PARA athletes must be able to ski every trail on Blue Mountain with confidence in a parallel athletic stance. Your child’s coach will be able to give you the best assessment of his or her skills, and whether he or she is ready from that aspect. However, skiing skills are not the only important factor in assessing an athletes’ readiness for PARA.

USSA Membership and Races – All PARA athletes must join USSA and PARA PRIOR to the start of the training season. No PARA athletes will be permitted to train with BMR until they have joined USSA and PARA.

If you are the parent of one of these athletes and are not sure if training with PARA next year is the right thing for your child, please consider the following and talk with your child's coach about his or her readiness for PARA.

But first ask yourself if YOU (the parent) are ready for your child to join PARA:

Training - BMR PARA training is every Saturday and Sunday from 8am to 1pm, from the beginning of December through the end of February. Training is more intense than Mountaineers and an athlete's training time on the snow is much more critical to his or her improvement and ability to keep up with his/her group. **If your child is unable to attend training every weekend from the start of the season, PARA is not for you.** There is also BMR Skills Camp (between Christmas and New Year's) and mid-week training, which is not required, but highly recommended.

NOTE for Holiday Camps: **BMR Skills Camp is held at Blue Mountain and is open to all Mountaineers and PARA Racers. **BMR Sunday River Competition Camp** is open only to PARA racers age U-14 and older who have participated in the BMR program for at least one season and have the recommendation of the coaches.

Races – PARA athletes are expected to travel to away races and compete in ALL qualifying races. **NO TRAINING takes place for athletes who do not compete on race days,** as all age-group coaches travel to races to coach participating athletes. PARA athletes compete in four races during the season. One race is at Blue Mountain, and the other three may be hosted by Camelback, Elk Mountain, Jack Frost, or Montage (subject to PARA scheduling). Race days are full days and sometimes require an overnight stay.

Financial Commitment – PARA athletes must join USSA and PARA, which is a financial commitment. There is a registration fee for each race. Most PARA athletes wear speed suits and at some point will require special equipment (helmets with hard ears, pole and shin guards, Slalom and Giant Slalom skis). Equipment must be well-maintained and regularly tuned to ensure the athlete's best performance in training and races.

Volunteer Commitment – Parents are required to volunteer their time for the success of BMR, especially on race days. We need gate judges and parents to assist coaches at the start to help the athletes get ready for their race runs and run coats to the finish line, both at Blue Mountain races AND away races.

If you are prepared for the financial and time commitments described above, consider the following in regard to your child:

Commitment - Is your child having fun training with BMR each weekend? Will he or she be excited about getting up early each weekend and giving up other activities (sleepovers, other sports or social activities) to make the time commitment required in PARA?

Emotional Preparedness - Is your child emotionally ready for the competitive aspect of racing in PARA? In most cases, the first year in PARA is about “learning the ropes” that go along with consistent training and competitive races. Most first-year PARA athletes are competing against racers who have previous experience and are therefore better skiers. Not every child wins a medal on race day. Is your child able to manage expectations and understand that their first-year success will most likely not be measured by winning races, but by learning and improving over the course of the season?

Maturity Level - Is my child mature and self-motivated enough to follow instructions without constant supervision? At the start of the season, coaches will meet the athletes on the snow near the lodge and ski together as a group. However, once we begin training in gates on Razor’s Edge, athletes will need to get to Razor’s Edge on their own while coaches set up courses and netting. They will need to know which discipline (slalom or GS) we are training that day so they have the appropriate equipment. They will take several warm-up runs on Razor’s Edge while courses are being set up, and then meet coaches at the start of the course. They will ride the chairlift with their fellow athletes, without a coach’s supervision. Most of our warm-up breaks will be shorter and will be taken as a group in the Valley Lodge. Athletes should carry snacks and/or money in case we take break at the Valley Lodge. Athletes MUST be able to manage themselves and their equipment without the assistance of their parents.

If the answer to all these questions is YES, then please join us for the PARA CANDIDATE EVALUATION DAY event on Sunday, March 8th.

RSVP by Friday, March 6th at 9am to racing@skibluemt.com