



BEAR VALLEY

MOUNTAIN RESORT

TEAM HANDBOOK 2025 / 2026



1. Program Mission

- a. The mission of the Bear Valley Team Program is to develop recreational and racing skiing/boarding skills in a positive and encouraging atmosphere while developing a lifelong passion for snow sports.

2. Program Management

- a. **Jeff Millar**, Team Program Supervisor
jeffm@bearvalley.com
209-753-8614
- b. **Nick Shawkey**, Head Race Team Coach
nikolais@bearvalley.com
209-402-1645
- c. **Todd Berg**, Head Freeride Team Coach
tberg@bergwerx.com
760-880-9631

3. Program Overview

- a. The Bear Valley Team Program provides an opportunity for skiers and snowboarders who desire to improve their recreational or racing skiing/boarding skills in a team environment. The program focuses on developing and improving the fundamental skills necessary for a strong skiing/boarding foundation. Bear Valley's coaching staff strive to provide individual training so each athlete may reach their full potential and train on a variety of slopes with the goal of being able to successfully navigate all terrain and snow conditions in a safe, confident manner. The season long program also helps to foster lasting relationships and builds community in our mountain environment.
- b. Our Teams Program curriculum is based on the Professional Ski instructors of America (PSIA), American Association of Snowboard Instructors (AASI), and U.S. Ski and Snowboard (USSS) Training Systems. These systems are focused on age-appropriate content based on cognitive and physical stages of development.

4. About the Teams

- a. **Kodiak Team:** Is a ski development program for children who are at least 5 years of age and are at a minimum strong beginner level with successful chairlift loading and unloading experience. Kodiak Team members train for 2 hours per day on Saturdays and Sundays, every other weekend, including a holiday training camp between Christmas and New Year's. This schedule allows parents who are snow enthusiasts an opportunity to get a few hours of skiing or boarding while their children are safe and learning new skills in a team environment. Parents are also welcome to join training, especially early in the season, to provide additional

support for the chairlift loading and unloading procedure. For effective instruction, coach/student ratios are from 1:5

- b. **Youth All-Mountain Teams (Ski & Snowboard):** Are for skiers and riders between 6-17 years of age who seek to improve their ski/boarding techniques in a team setting. All-Mountain Teams train four hours per day on Saturdays and Sundays, every other weekend, including a holiday training camp between Christmas and New Year's. Participants work on a variety of skill development in all snow conditions and terrain, building skills and confidence under the direction of a professional instructor. The emphasis is on fun while developing mountain safety and teamwork skills. Team members will also be introduced to Freestyle features and elements as appropriate. All-Mountain Teams require a minimum skill level of advanced beginner to intermediate skiing or riding ability and all members must be capable of riding a chairlift without assistance.
- c. **Adult All-Mountain Teams (Ski & Snowboard):** Are the best and most affordable way for adults to improve their skiing and riding technique in a fun, friendly and supportive and low-pressure environment. Open to strong beginner through advanced skiers, teams focus on improving specific skills with Bear Valley's professional and friendly coaching staff. Participants work on a variety of skill development in all snow conditions and terrain, building skills and confidence under the direction of a professional instructor. Adult All-Mountain Teams train two hours per day on Saturdays and Sundays, every other weekend, including a holiday training camp between Christmas and New Year's.
- d. **Freeride Team:** The Freeride team is a program focused on developing highly skilled athletes ready for freeride competitions in International Freeskiers & Snowboarders Association (IFSA) sanctioned events. Our goal is to travel, compete, and obtain rankings in the regional freeride tour. Freeride athletes will utilize the technique and fitness gained through other Bear Valley instructional and team programs. Freeride teams train four hours per day, with a morning and afternoon session in the steep, big mountain terrain of Grizzly Bowl. **To join the Freeride team, athletes must progress through the Bear Valley Resort All Mountain Team program or qualify through open tryouts.** Tryouts are held in the last week of December and the first week in April. The Freeride team also offers a non-travelling option, for athletes who desire to work on freeride skills at Bear Valley.
- e. **Race Development Ski Team:** This team is for skiers aged 6-17, who are considering ski racing while enjoying the Mountain and improving their technique. Race Development teams train four hours per day on Saturdays and Sundays, every other weekend, including a holiday training camp between Christmas and New Year's. An important component of this program is the introduction to the technical skills needed to transition to the Bear Valley Race Team. The program includes drills, free skiing, race techniques and an introduction to giant slalom and slalom racecourses, while emphasizing skill development in all snow conditions and terrain in a safe and confidence building environment. This team requires a minimum skill level of intermediate skiing; athletes that are not at this level will be referred to the All-Mountain Team, on a space available basis. Development Race Team members may race in the Central Series and Far West races at Bear Valley and other resorts with the agreement of the Head Race Team Coach.

- f. **Race Team:** This is a competitive ski race team for strong intermediate to advanced skier athletes aged 6-19 years old who are looking to improve their racing skills, have a passion for racing, and are ready to compete at a top level. Ideal for committed young athletes who want to train and compete with the support of a team of enthusiastic coaches. The Race Team trains for four hours each day during every weekend of the winter season and includes a holiday training camp between Christmas and New Year's. The Race Team participates in Bear Valley's Rasmussen Classic race and travels to other Central Sierra resorts for 3 other races during the season along with the Championships typically hosted in Lake Tahoe or Mammoth Mountain. The focus of this team is on developing fundamental technical skills to improve racing techniques. This team requires a minimum skill level of intermediate skiing.

5. 2025/26 Training Days & Times

- a. Team Orientation & Welcome Meeting - ALL Teams **TBD**
- b. Training Times: Kodiak and Adult All-Mountain Teams train from 9:00-11:00 each scheduled day. All other teams train from 9:00-11:00 and 12:00-2:00 each scheduled day.
- c. Training Dates:

All-Mountain, Race Development & Freeride Teams	
Month	Scheduled Training Days
December	13-14, 27-30 (Holiday Camp)
January	10-11, 24-25
February	7-8, 21-22
March	7-8, 21-22

Race Team	
Month	Scheduled Training Days*
December	6-7 and every weekend day thereafter, 27-30 (Holiday Camp)
January	Every weekend day
February	Every weekend day
March	Every weekend day

* Plus additional weekdays, TBA by Race Team Staff

6. Required Equipment

In addition to ski clothing, all youth skiers and boarders need the following equipment:

- a. Season Pass
- b. Team Pass
- c. Skis/Snowboard
- d. Boots
- e. Poles (skiers only)
- f. Helmet (Mandatory)
- g. Goggles/Sunglasses
- h. Powder cords
- i. Team Jacket – ordered through the Team Store. The Adult All-Mountain Team will have a team jacket the 25/26 season.

7. Race Team members may want to consider additional equipment which is specified in the Race Team handbook ([Handbooks – TeamBV](#))

8. Team Communications

- a. Email Updates - please ensure we have an accurate email address so that you may receive program information in a timely manner.
- b. BYGA App - The BYGA app is our communication and roster management tool. BYGA is our primary source for team messaging and daily updates. The app will show your athlete's team assignment and coach contact information. Rosters will be updated by coaches in real time to reflect the team assignments.

9. Social Media

Social Media provides several options to keep up to date with Team information. TeamBV on multiple social media sites, only one of the following is required to receive all information. We recommend you like/follow:

- **Team BV Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/Team-BV-209256452434966/>
- **Bear Valley Race:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/195115033845069>
- **Bear Valley Mountain:** <https://www.facebook.com/BearValleyMountain/>

10. General Information

Team BV Website – the [TeamBV website \(http://www.teambv.com/\)](http://www.teambv.com/) is the website of the Bear Valley Snowsports Foundation. It is a comprehensive resource for news, events, equipment selection and maintenance, snow safety, training and conditioning. It is a mobile friendly site that can be accessed from a variety of devices.

11. Coach Communications

We value your input and parents are encouraged to discuss the progress of their athlete with their coach before and after training sessions. We understand that every athlete is unique; keep your coach informed regarding any specific issues he/she may need to know about your child. Any concern that cannot be resolved directly with your coach should be brought to the attention of the Head Race Team Coach or the All Mountain Team Supervisor. Parents are encouraged to “**shadow**” the team whenever they desire, however please maintain a respectful distance so that your athlete is not distracted by your presence.

12. Important Information for Parents

- a. Safety - The safety of your athlete is our number one priority. We will push your athlete and stretch their abilities by SAFELY challenging them on appropriate terrain and conditions. Our goal is to build lifetime ski and boarding skills in a safe, caring and fun environment. Please encourage your athlete to always follow the directions of their coach.
- b. Emergencies - Coaches will report all injuries to Ski Patrol for assessment, treatment and transport to the medical clinic if required. Please ensure that your emergency contact information includes a contact number where you can be reached while at the mountain.
- c. Medical Evacuation Services - The Bear Valley Snow Sports Foundation has negotiated a group rate with AirMedCare which includes CalStar, Reach Air, and PHI CARES. These are the three air ambulance operators serving Bear Valley and the Highway 4 corridor. Any one of these companies may respond based on availability at the time of the emergency. Memberships in these programs provide the assurance that there will be no additional charge to you beyond what your insurance company covers in the event you require air ambulance services, provided by the organizations with which you are a member. Please visit the BVSF [website](#) for additional information.

13. Team Assignments

Team placement is important, and we strive to place your athlete on a team that is appropriate to their skill level while considering age and social relationships. To maximize team skill development, athletes are evaluated and placed on teams with similar skill levels. While efforts will be made to include siblings and/or friends on the same team, their skill levels must be similar. Experienced coaches will evaluate athletes and determine skill appropriate team groupings, while considering age and maturity level. The first team weekend and the holiday training camp are critical times for team placement, and **every effort should be made to have your athlete present on these dates (Dec. 13-14, 27-30)**. Team rosters are typically finalized by the end of the holiday team camp. Throughout the season, athletes will progress at different speeds and there will always be movement between teams – please trust your coach’s assessment of your athlete’s ability.

14. Attendance

While attendance at every team session is not mandatory, it is highly encouraged. Like any sport, proficiency in skiing and boarding is based upon the acquisition and development of skills that build upon one another. Athletes who do not attend training sessions may miss important progressions and can fall behind their teammates.

15. Drop Off/Pick Up Times and Location

- a. At the beginning of the season, each team will be assigned a team number. On training days, signs with a team number will be posted in the meeting area, in the area between the Sun Deck and Koala Chair. All athletes should meet at their team sign **at least ten (10) minutes before the scheduled start time**.
- b. Pick Up/Drop Off Time - Timeliness is critically important to maximize our training time. All teams meet at their team sign in the area between the Sun Deck and Koala Chair and depart the meeting area at **9:00 and 12:00 sharp**. Plan to arrive early so that your child is fully geared up and ready to ski/board at the scheduled departure times. Teams return to the meeting area at **11:00 and 2:00**. Please be present at these times to pick up your athletes so that coaches can be released. If you are comfortable with your athlete being released from training sessions without a parent present, please advise your athlete's coach.
- c. Late Arrivals - Teams train all over the mountain as determined by weather and snow conditions; it can be difficult to locate your athlete's team if you are late. **Coaches will not wait for late arrivals**, as this reduces valuable training time and is unfair to those who arrive on time. To assist late arriving athletes in finding their team, each team has a designated chairlift where they will usually take their first run of the day. Please consult with your coach to determine which chairlift they will utilize on their first run. Coaches are not obligated to make more than one run on their designated chairlift.

16. Minimum Skills

The team descriptions in Section 2 identify the minimum required ski/board skills for each team. With the exception of the Kodiak team, all team members should also possess the following minimum skills:

- a. ability to put on their jacket/helmet/gloves without assistance
- b. ability to put on their skis/boots without assistance (flat and sloped terrain)
- c. **ability to load on a chairlift without assistance** and be comfortable riding alone on the chair if required.

17. Pre-training Preparation

Team members learn best when they arrive well prepared and ready for training. Please feed your athlete a light meal prior to morning training and ensure that their bathroom needs are addressed before arriving at the team meeting area. Team members are released to their parent/guardian for lunch and athletes are encouraged to fuel up before returning for the afternoon session.

18. Weather

Skiing and boarding are winter sports, and we will train in all conditions. If the lifts are running, teams will go out. Be sure your athlete is properly equipped and ready for the elements.

19. Helmets

Helmet use is mandatory and must always be worn when participating in team activities.

20. Clothing

Athletes who are not prepared for winter conditions cannot concentrate on learning and having fun. Team jackets are available for order and provide excellent protection from the inclement weather. Skiers and boarders should also be dressed in layers to keep them warm and protected from adverse weather while allowing athletes to shed clothing during warmer conditions. Athletes should also have access to multiple pairs of warm gloves/mittens to switch out during adverse weather. Eye protection in the form of sunglasses and goggles should always be available. Accessories such as hand warmers, neck gaiters and face protectors are also recommended. Skin protection such as sunscreen and lip balm should also be used regularly.

21. Equipment

- a. To protect your athlete's safety, ski and board equipment should be in good condition and bindings should be inspected annually for functionality by a certified technician. Release settings should be checked prior to skiing with the team; coaches are not allowed to adjust bindings. To improve the learning experience, skis and boards should be tuned and waxed regularly. Boots should fit well to maximize skier/boarder comfort and performance. **Please have your athletes try on their gear prior to the first day of the season – children frequently outgrow their equipment over the summer.** Skiers should also have access to powder cords to prevent the loss of skis during powder conditions.
- b. Reba Sports located at the resort has a full line of gear and apparel for all your equipment needs including skis, snowboards, boots, helmets, goggles, equipment leases and more.

22. Athlete Attitude

A positive attitude and willingness to learn are the most important things that your athlete can bring each day. Training sessions are designed to be fun and it is essential that your child wants to be part of the program. Things change frequently; weather, snow quality/condition, and training plans are highly variable, so encourage your athlete to have a flexible attitude and be ready for last-minute changes.

23. Behavior

The development of good sportsmanship skills and lasting social relationships are important components of the Team experience. Athletes are expected to support their teammates in a positive manner and follow the direction of their coaches at all times. Team members represent Bear Valley and are ambassadors of the Snow Sports Program; they shall treat the public, the coaching staff, Bear Valley employees, and each other with courtesy and respect. The safety of our athletes and other mountain guests is paramount and team members shall ski/board safely and under control, follow all posted warning signs/boundary restrictions, and shall not cut under rope lines or in front of resort guests. Athletes must understand that utilizing the ski school line is a privilege and is only utilized during training sessions under the supervision of a coach. Failure to behave in a manner that is consistent with these principles can result in suspension or dismissal from the team.

24. Issue Resolution

We value your input and expect that every parent will have an open dialogue with their athlete's coach. Any concern that cannot be resolved directly with your coach should be brought to the attention of the Head Race Team Coach or the All Mountain Team Supervisor.

25. Training Curriculum

All Mountain Team coaches follow standard PSIA/AASI coaching progressions to develop strong skiing and boarding skills. The goal of this program is to develop skiers and boarders who can enjoy all terrain and snow conditions in a safe, confident manner. These progressions include an emphasis on improving body awareness, along with introducing specific edging, rotary, and pressure movements.

All-Mountain Team skiers move through a progression of instruction that allows them to move from wedge turns on beginner and low intermediate terrain, to wedge-christy or skidded parallel turns on intermediate terrain and ultimately mastering carved turns on intermediate and expert terrain. An emphasis will be placed on varying turn shape in response to changing conditions as well as developing proficiency skiing a variety of conditions such as moguls, powder, and trees. There will also be opportunity to be introduced to our Cub or Kodiak Terrain Parks, with an emphasis on learning [SMART STYLE](#) terrain park etiquette.

All-Mountain Team snowboarders progress from using basic "S" turns to more dynamic turns focusing on turn shape and turn size to create different outcomes on the board. Using different techniques riders will learn how to safely navigate a variety of terrain including groomers, powder, steeps and trees. Riders will also be encouraged to be creative in their riding and find out what their individual style is. There will also be opportunity to be introduced to our Cub or Kodiak Terrain Parks, with an emphasis on learning [SMART STYLE](#) terrain park etiquette.

26. Competitive / Race Opportunities

- a. NASTAR – is the acronym for the NAional STandard Race and is the largest public grassroots ski race program in the world. Participants compete within their age and gender groups to win platinum, gold, silver and bronze medals. In addition, participants are ranked in their medal group and the top ranked racers qualify to compete in the NASTAR National Championships.
- b. To compete in NASTAR events, you must register with NASTAR and obtain a NASTAR number. NASTAR numbers are permanent, so your number is good for as long as you want to race. If you are unsure, check the NASTAR website for your ID. You can check your account or register with NASTAR at <http://www.nastar.com/>
- c. For 2025-26, the Nastar program has changed. Team members will be able to compete in NASTAR for an additional fee. NASTAR is working on a season pass for Team members which will have a nominal fee. NASTAR is tentatively planned to run from 11AM-3PM to enable team members to race once their training session is over. More NASTAR information will be coming soon.
- d. Rasmussen Classic - The Rasmussen Classic is the yearly USSA sanctioned Youth GS and/or SL race held at Bear Valley. The Rasmussen Classic is a great opportunity for any Devo team member to experience a fun and truly competitive youth ski race. This event is usually held the first or second weekend in January and is part of the USSA Far West Central Race Series. Racers come from the Central Sierra resorts of Dodge Ridge, Yosemite, and China Peak. The race is open to racers between the ages of 7 and 15 with racers competing in their age classification. The event includes races on both Saturday and Sunday with each day's race comprising 2 runs. The Saturday evening Award Dinner is a fun event

for racers, their families and anyone else who wishes to attend. All racers must have current memberships in USSS to register for the race.

27. USSA Membership

- a. All Race Program Team members (including Devo Race Team members who want to race in United States Ski and Snowboard Association (USSS) sanctioned races), including the Central Sierra Series and Far West Races must have a current USSS Competitor membership. Memberships can be obtained at: www.uskiandsnowboard.org/membership
- b. Typically, racers obtain annual memberships if they intend to participate in more than one or two races. Single day memberships are available if a racer wishes to participate in a single race.
- c. USSS membership fees vary per age class and the Far West Division also assesses a Divisional fee when registering for USSS.

28. Bear Valley Snowsports Foundation

- a. Background - The Bear Valley Snowsports Foundation (BVSF) was originally founded as Bear Valley Race Team Foundation with the purpose of supporting Alpine racing at Bear Valley. The Foundation has been run predominantly by parents of current and former racers who have worked closely with Bear Valley Mountain Resort to organize alpine races and support the race team. Over the years BVSF has expanded its Mission to support all BV Teams plus the Adaptive Program.
- b. Mission - The Bear Valley Snowsports Foundation (BVSF) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the support of Bear Valley's snow sports athletes in achieving their athletic, academic and personal goals. The programs we support promote the development of essential skills; stimulate interest in competitive events and the positive values of sportsmanship, self-discipline, goal setting, character building and the pursuit of healthy lifestyle activities.
- c. What BVSF Does - BVSF assists Bear Valley's Competitive and All-Mountain Teams in many ways including team communication and administrative tasks. We support the professional development of coaches and support their efforts in providing the best possible skills development for our athletes. Our members assist coaches with training set up, safety monitoring, team communication and administrative tasks. Through fundraising and on- mountain volunteer work, we provide Bear Valley with the necessary parent and community support to develop highly competitive ski and snow sports teams. Through these efforts Bear Valley's programs are among the most affordable in the Sierras. This enables more youth snow sports athletes to participate in a sport that would otherwise not be affordable.
- d. BVSF also:
 - i. Maintains the TeamBV website Manages and funds the Nastar Race Program
 - ii. Organizes the USSA Central Series Rasmussen Cup Race
 - iii. Subsidizes professional development for coaches
 - iv. Purchases equipment for the Adaptive Program
 - v. Organizes fundraising events and solicits sponsorships to fund its activities

- e. Supporting BVSF - In order for BVSF to accomplish its Mission and achieve its goals, funds must be raised on an ongoing basis. In recent years, BVSF funded scholarships, coach's education, video equipment, computer and video analysis software, radios, safety equipment and race gates. Our funds typically are generated from donations, sponsorships, fund raising events and USSS race activities at Bear Valley which are organized by BVSF. Our ability to realize our vision to see Bear Valley acknowledged as one of the top snow sports development destination in the Sierras is only limited by the number of members willing to assist in our efforts.
- f. BVSF Supporter Program - enables individuals to financially support BVSF and be acknowledged with a Supporter Pin and be listed on the website Supporter page. We have set contribution levels as follows; Contributor – \$100; Supporter – \$250; Patron – \$500. Click [HERE](#) to donate. For corporate sponsors, BVSF Sponsorship will not only help the Foundation tremendously, but sponsor companies will be widely promoted to our membership and potentially all Bear Valley's guests. To become a BVSF Sponsor, click [HERE](#) for information. And last, but certainly not least, is supporting BVSF through your volunteer efforts. The more members who contribute their time and/or expertise, the more we can accomplish. If you are interested in helping the BV Teams, or have a special expertise or a unique way to support BVSF we would love to hear from you. To volunteer, just send an email to info@bvsef.org with how you would like to help.
- g. Social Events/Volunteer Opportunities - The Bear Valley Snow Sports Teams, often in collaboration with BVSF, organize and host social events throughout the year including occasional off-season events. The goal of these events is to provide a fun, enjoyable experience while building relationships among the members and family of the Teams as well as the Bear Valley community at large. This community spirit sets Bear Valley apart from many other snow sports programs in the Sierra.