



2014-2015 Ski Program FAQs

How does one get into this program?

Selection of athletes for this program is based on a combination of performance criteria and a written application. Applicants will be expected to meet at least one of the following performance criteria:

- Top 20 EISA Ranking for the current year (or last year that skier raced EISA races)
- Top 10 USSA birth year ranking (on the most recent ranking list)
- Top 20 NENSA overall point list (current year)
- There will be some discretionary allowances made for cases where injury, location, or other challenges exist.

The written application will cover past experience and will also ask the applicant to explain why they think this program is a good match for them and what skills or interests they would bring to the green/sustainable aspect of the program.

Applications are due by April 1, 2014. Leading candidates may be invited for interviews. Acceptances will be announced April 15.

Why is there a written application – why not just take the fastest skiers?

This program aims to offer top-notch coaching, training and race support while also supplying participants with a meaningful non-skiing experience and meeting the mission of its host, the Craftsbury Outdoor Center. It will be important that participating athletes see the value of this approach and have interests or skills outside of skiing that will make them a valuable member of the Craftsbury community. Treat this as a job application: one part of the “job” will be training effectively and skiing your fastest; the other part will be making a meaningful contribution to the Outdoor Center and the broader community.

Who is supporting this project?

Primarily the Craftsbury Outdoor Center, with the support of a growing collection of sponsors from the ski world and beyond. The Craftsbury Outdoor Center was purchased in November '08 and restructured into a non-profit organization with the following mission:

- 1) to support and promote participation and excellence in lifelong sports with a special focus on rowing, running Nordic skiing and biathlon.
- 2) to use and teach sustainable practices; and
- 3) to protect and manage the surrounding land, lake and trails.

The Green Racing Project fits well with this mission, and Craftsbury is excited to provide this programming opportunity. Craftsbury will be providing housing, meals (when dining hall is open – about 10 months of the year), coaching, part-time work, access to health insurance, and race support.

Who is the target audience for this program?

The Craftsbury program is designed primarily to fill the gap that exists after collegiate skiing, and serve as a bridge from collegiate racing to national and international level competition. Most skiers won't reach their peak performance levels until their mid to late 20's, yet it's hard to graduate from college and tell your parents that

you're "just going to train" for the next 3-5 years. This program works to provide athletes a long-term training situation that also allows them to develop and use other skills, specifically those related to the mission of the Craftsbury Outdoor Center, on a part-time basis. The athlete will likely not have time to earn a lot of extra money, but with housing and meals provided along with the skiing supports, at least they have a chance to keep their heads above water.

What is the time commitment for this program?

One does not become a faster skier overnight. It's generally at least a 3-5 year proposition and thus requires a long-term commitment, with periodic review to be sure the goal is reasonable and the progress is good. This program asks for a minimum one-year commitment, generally at least two years—with regular coach-athlete review to agree on goals and monitor progress toward them. The plan is to add several athletes to the program each year.

Is there a prerequisite in terms of training?

It is expected that applicants will have been training at a serious level on a regular basis. As part of the application process you will be asked to submit your training log for the past several years. The program coach will also want to talk with your most recent coach(es) to get a sense of your level of training, as well as to prepare for as smooth a transition as possible to the new training program.

Will skiers be paid for the part-time work, or is it an unpaid expectation of the program?

Program participants will be expected to do a certain amount of work for the Center in exchange for their lodging, meals and coaching. The Center will also cover health insurance, after the initial two months. There will be the possibility of working additional hours for take-home pay either at the Center, or at area businesses, as time allows. With prior approval, community service may also count toward some of the work requirement, such as offering ski clinics for local kids, coaching local sports teams, or volunteering for other non-profits.

What will the Center provided work opportunities be?

The projects for each year are determined through a joint brainstorming and prioritization process that gives skiers the chance to suggest and design projects that align with the Center's mission. Here are some examples from the past years:

- Various projects related to helping Craftsbury become more sustainable. These included analysis of current heating/power systems, improved management of property, production of local food on property
- Management of the team itself: uniform design and acquisition, press releases, blogging for interested media, travel planning, work with sponsors
- Projects supporting the broader Craftsbury ski program in general: helping coach juniors, helping run training camps, improving trails to ensure early skiing, etc.
- Meeting needs of the Outdoor Center: support for rowing programs as needed, caretaking of facilities, helping with non-skiing programs.

What approach will be taken to ensure as smooth a transition as possible from my current program and coach?

Transitions are always challenging. This program will use all of the following approaches to try to make the transition as smooth as possible for athletes:

- Communication: Head Coach Pepa Miloucheva will want to discuss each athlete with her/his previous coach or coaches. She will also want to maintain communication as needed when questions or problems arise.
- Physiological testing: Craftsbury has VO2 testing equipment on site, as well as lactate testing equipment. Pepa also uses other testing methods as well, such as timed runs and strength tests. All of this data helps her assess each individual athlete's needs and current state.
- Individualized approach: The program's and Pepa's philosophy is that different athletes have different needs. The exact same training program will most likely not be optimal for all the athletes in the program. Therefore, training schedules will be tailored to each individual skier as is necessary.

What does Craftsbury offer in terms of training facilities and opportunities?

Craftsbury offers an extensive trail network for skiing, as well as trail running, bounding and mountain biking in the summer. There are also many dirt roads, which make for great long runs or rides. Mountains aren't far away for more vertical challenges: Jay Peak, Mt. Mansfield and others. There are quite a few options for rollerskiing as well, all within 10-30 min drive of the Center. A track in Morrisville is used for timed runs. Craftsbury has a well-equipped strength training room, as well as a couple spinning bikes, multiple Concept2 SkiErgs and Indoor Rowers. Our new lodge & fitness facility will be opening in May, offering even better indoor training conditions than before! Sculling on the water will be offered for its excellent cross-training, along with kayaking, canoeing and swimming. The Center also has two biathlon ranges: a larger one with 6 points, with room for 10, and a smaller range on the snowmaking loop with four points for early season workouts.

What is the expected housing arrangement?

Housing is currently provided for the entire team in a large farmhouse at the edge of the Craftsbury trail network. It's a 1k jog/bike/ski to the Center; or 2 miles by dirt road.

Is there any social life in Craftsbury?

Ok, this is probably the most important question! There are some excellent restaurants in Hardwick, West Glover and Stowe, as well as a great coffee house with frequent music in Morrisville. Stowe of course offers all the usual après-ski kind of entertainment as well. The Outdoor Center itself is far from dead, with a steady stream of guests, campers and coaches of all ages coming through. The Green Racing Project's Rowing team currently includes 17 oarsmen and women, so there's a good bunch of fellow athletes with whom you'll share work and fun. For days off further, there's Burlington or Hanover, both about 90 minutes away or Montreal, 2 hours away.