

Prep skiing requires dedication, talent, money

By SUSAN TAUBER KLEIN

Being a member of a high school ski team requires dedication as well as talent. It means being out in the

cold for meets and practices at least four school-nights a week and traveling to the ski slopes by bus. But despite the drawbacks, the teams at Southfield, Southfield-Lathrup, and Farmington Our Lady of Mercy high schools are competing and practicing in full-force during the January-February ski season of the Southeastern Michigan Ski League-Brighton Division.

Last year, the two Southfield high school ski teams had a short two-week season due to budget cutbacks. But this year, both teams are working hard to combat their lack of experience.

At Southfield-Lathrup, the nine-member boys' ski team and the nine-member girls' ski team bus to Mt. Brighton three nights a week after school to practice.

"It takes one hour just to get to the slopes," said Robert Hetherington, Lathrup's first year coach.

"AND BEING a member of the ski team is expensive. The students must have their own equipment and have to buy a \$90 racing pass. But, this year, the school board picked up most of the cost so the members only have to pay \$36," Hetherington continued.

The 18 Southfield-Lathrup members are experienced racers. So the team is working on "learning to compete and sportsmanship. All but three boys and one girl will be back next season," according to the coach.

"Skiing is a demanding sport," Hetherington, a skier for 20 years, said. "In recreational skiing, you do what you want when you want. But in racing, the kids have to learn to move instantaneously. Racing requires constant turning every one-second and in the right direction."

"It all takes timing," he said. During a meet, each skier runs a course twice through the gates and are timed. Lathrup doesn't have the same starting team for each meet. Hetherington believes in having all the racers race for experience. But the two strongest boys' team racers are sophomore Rob Kantor and senior Gregg Diehl. Gail Walsh is the top female.

"THE REST are all steady skiers," Hetherington commented. Hetherington, who teaches mathematics at Lathrup, said he has an excellent co-coach, Jill Ann Perkins, who used to coach the Lathrup team. "She's now a housewife," he said, "and a good coach. She brings expertise to the coaching."

At Southfield high, the ski coaches both teach English and are a husband-and-wife team. Sandy and Roger Davis have skied a number of years and have the psychology of racing from their auto racing experiences. "We do amateur road racing in the central division," Mrs. Davis explained.

Since the Southfield ski members are young, the coaches are drilling the 12-member boys' team and girls' team of six on techniques and basics this season.

"In November, they ran three miles a week, did pre-ski warm-ups and sprints. Now we practice the two nights a week we don't have meets," she said. They concentrate on quick starts, independent leg action vs. parallel, and skiing more on the edges of the skis for quick turns.

Before the meets, the Davis' teams walk along the side of the racing course to become familiar with it.

"THEY AREN'T allowed to ski the course before the race. But by going over it mentally, talking to others, and sometimes drawing it on paper, the racers learn how to ski it before actually doing it," Sandy explained.

The girls' team is composed of mostly new racers. But on the boys' team, "There are two really good men, juniors Jim Kurylo and John Thompson," according to Mrs. Davis.

The coaches try to have everyone participate in the meets although a regulation team for both sexes usually only has six members.

And every Friday night, in addition to other practices, the Southfield teams have the option of taking a ski lesson with an instructor at the Mt.

Brighton Ski School. This was arranged specially by the Davis'. Mrs. Davis pointed out that skiing is an outstanding way to get physical exercise. "It's a sport the team members can carry on into later life."

THE SKI TEAM at Mercy has been coached for the past four years by Lorrie Kusch, a former racer with the Metropolitan Detroit Ski Council.

A business education teacher, she has 14 girls, including only two seniors, on her team.

Kusch thinks her team will do very well this year. Last season, they placed third in the division, sixth in the region. "But it's too early in the season to tell," she said. "In skiing, one girl can do great for two minutes; then something can happen."

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