

Selecting Skis and Boots 101

What do you need? Bunnyrabbits and Jackrabbits Levels 1 and 2

- Classic skis and boots. Waxless classic skis (the “fish scale” pattern on the base) are easiest for Bunnyrabbits to manage. Level 1 and 2 Jackrabbits can use wax or waxless classic skis. Make sure the boots fit the bindings on the skis!
- Bunnyrabbits DO NOT need poles
- Skis, boots and poles can be rented from the park – see below.

Jackrabbits Levels 3 and 4 and Track Attack

- The 1st 4 lessons are classic and the last 4 lessons are skate so both classic and skate skis are needed. Some parents buy one type and rent the other. See rental rates below.
- The classic skis can be wax or waxless. Wax skis perform better, so more advanced skiers will want to make the switch to wax skis at some point; however, they only perform better if they are waxed correctly for the snow temperature. Many parents prefer to stay with waxless skis for Level 3 and 4 Jackrabbits. Skate skis are always waxed and need to be waxed at least once before the first session. One set of “combi” skis can work but will involve cleaning the kick wax area to change from classic to skate skiing. (If you do plan to go this route, you need to have wax skis since you cannot skate ski on “fish scales.”)
- Both skate and classic boots OR “combi” boots (boots that can be used for either technique.)

Classic Skis

- Classic skis can be either **Wax or Waxless**. **No-wax skis** will have “fish scales” on the bottom to give grip and are suitable for Bunnyrabbits and younger Jackrabbits. (They still require a glide wax to protect the base which can be applied with a dabber or as a spray.) **Waxed skis** need to be waxed for grip before each use, and the proper wax must be chosen for the temperature. In general, no-wax skis are easier to use for beginner skiers.
- Classic skis have a softer camber (that is the flex of the ski when you stand on it) than skate skis. When you stand on a classic ski, the part under your foot should contact the ground. Novice skiers usually do better with a ski in the softer/shorter end of the acceptable size range. If your ski is too long or stiff, you will not have any grip.
- Size – depends on your height and weight. A rough check for size is to hold your arm straight up in the air - the tip of the ski should come to about the wrist. You might go up or down 5cm in size depending on whether the skier has a light or heavy build. Skis usually come in 5cm size increments (165, 170, 175 etc.) Newer foam core skis come in shorter lengths than they used to, usually identified by odd number sizing (167, 172...and so on.) This can make things confusing but luckily almost all of these skis have recommended skier weights marked on them. For more accurate sizing, the ski can be tested by having the child stand on it on a sizing board so see if it is a good fit.
- Most new skis do not come with bindings – you need to purchase them separately. There are different types of bindings so if you are buying used skis, **make sure you get skis with bindings that fit your boots!** (see below) Bindings can be changed from one ski to another, but you will probably need a ski shop to do this for you.

Skate Skis

- Skate skis are shorter than classic skis (typically 10-15cm shorter) and have a stiffer camber. They should come to the top of the person's head or a bit taller. Many skis come marked with recommended skier weight ranges. When fitting more advanced skiers it is important to consider body weight because higher end skis often come in different flexes for the same length (soft, medium and hard as indicated on the side or top of the ski).

Poles

- **Classic ski poles** should come from the middle to the **top of the shoulder**.
- **Skating poles** should come to **between the chin and the mouth**.
- Lighter poles with more carbon content are more efficient and more expensive! Cork grips are preferable for warmth and grip, and more expensive poles have straps designed to better fit around the hand. If buying a second hand pole, check for stress cracks by examining the shaft for white fibers.

Boots - there are 3 types:

Classic boots tend to be lower and the sole is more flexible than a skate boot so the heel can lift.

Skate boots need good lateral support and the sole is more rigid. They have a stiff ankle cuff to provide ankle support and a more pronounced forward leaning stance. You cannot classic ski well in a skate boot.

Combi boots (high ankle cuff like a skate boot but soft sole for lifting the heel) can be used for both classic and skate skiing. However more serious skate skiers will want skate boots.

All boots should fit with space at the end of the boot. The toe should not touch the end. Boots will always stretch a little wider but they can never get longer. Boots tend to come in European sizes (31, 33, 35 etc.)

Each type of book can come in one of 3 types of bindings. For example, a skate boot could be an SNS Pilot, SNS Profil, or NNN/Prolink system boot. **Your boot and your ski binding must match!**

Bindings – Read carefully! There are three different systems:

The **SNS Profil system** is most common in the Huntsville area. The boots have one wide groove on the bottom and one bar at the toe.

A special type of SNS system is the **SNS Pilot system** with **2 bars** at the toe. (Most Pilot boots are skate boots, but there are some Pilot classic boots as well.) Pilot boots go with Pilot bindings. You can also use SNS Pilot boots with any newer SNS one bar binding that has a gap in the base plate to clear the second bar on the boot. On the other hand, SNS Profil boots will not work with Pilot bindings - if you have Pilot bindings on your skis, you can only use Pilot boots;

The **NNN/Prolink system** has two narrow grooves on the bottom of the boots and one bar at the toe. Classic and Skate versions of the same type of binding look similar but the Skate version uses a different bumper.

Note: The **three-pin system** is an older system that you might find on used skis and boots. It is not recommended.

- Bindings with a release lever at the toe that you pull up with your hand are generally easier to use than those that require you to push down on the binding to release it. (They can freeze up)
- Bindings on skis can be changed if they do not match your boots. If you have an old pair of skis with good bindings, you can save the bindings to put on another pair of skis.

Where to Buy Skis – Arrowhead Nordic encourages you to support our local businesses!

- **Algonquin Outfitters** – Beginner to advanced equipment. Some used equipment. Offers 10% club discount if you show your membership card (emailed to you when you register for a program.) Will mount bindings on skis.
- **Liv Outside** (Bracebridge)
- **Source for Sports**
- **Sport Chek**
- **Canadian Tire** – sometimes carries beginner packages.

Jackrabbit and Track Attack ski rental rates. Arrowhead Park offers a special flat rate rental fee for Bunnies, Jackrabbits and Track Attack skiers. Rentals **must** be arranged with the Park and paid **in advance** before sessions start.

Group	Type of equipment	Lesson weeks	Cost
Bunnies	Classic boots/skis (no poles)	8 weeks	\$56
Jackrabbits Levels 1 & 2	Classic boots/skis/poles	8 weeks	\$56
Jackrabbits Levels 3 & 4	Classic	Week 1-4	\$28
	Skate	Weeks 5-8	\$40
Track Attack Lynx and Track Attack (winter)	Classic	Week 1-4	\$28
	Skate	Weeks 5-8	\$40