

Track Attack Equipment Requirements

Track Attack skiers focus on skill refinement, improvement in fitness level, and having fun with friends. They will be encouraged to participate in club races and the Ontario Provincial Midget Championships at the end of the season; however, racing and training are not the focus of this group. Only classic skis are required to participate in Track Attack.

1. Wax skis (additional skate skis optional)
2. Combination boots
3. Poles
4. Breathable layers of clothing

Rationale:

1. Classic skis should be wax skis at this stage of skill development. Basic grip waxing instructions will be given and children will be encouraged to learn to do this themselves. Skate skis are optional for this group. Coaches will provide support to those children who wish to learn and improve their skating technique. It is recommended children at this age to learn and practice skate technique, so it will be a skill they will have for life.
2. Combination boots are a great product and will save you money. They give the child enough lateral support to help them when skate skiing, and at the same time permits the necessary ankle and foot motion for classic technique. The other great thing about these boots is that they are typically a little higher on the ankle than traditional classic boots, which helps keep the snow out of their ankles when they decide to dive into a snow bank 10 minutes before classes start!
3. Poles: Measure the child either standing in his/her ski boots on their skis or standing in socks/shoes slightly up on their toes. Classic poles should be no lower than the child's armpit, but not higher than the shoulder/collarbone. Skate ski poles should come to just below the tip of their nose (upper lip) and not below the chin. Poles that are too long for children are hard to manage and hard to get the timing correct. Poles that are too short may cause back fatigue/pain with a longer skiing distance (anything longer than 1-2 km).
4. Cross-country skiing is a highly aerobic activity that can generate a lot of body heat. Though the weather may be wet and cold, clothing needs to protect your child from the elements while allowing sweat to quickly ventilate away. If it doesn't, your child risks getting chilled (or even hypothermic) once he/she stops. It is good to be able to add or subtract layers as needed during changing conditions instead of waiting to get

back indoors. If you have not already dropped the heavy parka for cross country skiing, this is the year to do it. Now that your skier can really move on their skis, they will be better prepared with the following items:

- a. **Soft Shell Jacket:** Cross-country skiers need a shell layer with exceptional breathability. A soft shell is a great choice for most skiing days. Soft shells are tightly woven jackets typically featuring a durable water repellent (DWR) finish. This repels the moisture of light snow or rain while providing exceptional breathability.
- b. **Hard Shell Jacket:** A soft shell will not prevent heavy moisture from penetrating, so a waterproof/breathable “hard shell” layer is a good item for days when there is heavy snowfall.
- c. **Base Layers:** An outfit of lightweight base layers and light pants is usually sufficient in mild conditions. Avoid bulk when layering. On really cold days, several light layers provide more warmth than a single bulky layer. This creates more “dead air” space between layers to retain warmth. Keep layers snug-fitting; layers must not be bulky to the point of limiting skiing motion, so tight-fitting layers are a better choice. However, don’t go so tight as to limit blood flow or remove the dead air space between the layers.
- d. **Hats and Gloves:** A lightweight and snug fitting hat/toque is usually sufficient. A hat that is too bulky or heavy will cause the skier to overheat and often doesn’t stay in place. Add a headband or buff to cover ears and face when it gets cold or windy. For hands, use the same base layer/insulating layer/shell layer combinations as for the body. A thin glove inside a waterproof mitten is ideal and either can be removed and stuffed into a pocket when necessary. A good supply of hand warmers are a great investment for those really cold days!
- e. **Socks:** A good insulating (wool or synthetic socks) are best. Cotton socks stay wet when feet sweat and this will cause little toes to get cold very quickly. While thick socks can certainly be used to create more warmth, first be aware of how much space is available in the ski boots. A base layer (liner socks) are a good addition on really cold days.
- f. **Sun Protection:** Apply sunscreen to exposed skin. This is also a good age to start wearing sunglasses for overall eye protection. Sunglasses need to be snug fitting; your child will not want to wear them if they slip on his/her nose.

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