

**Welcome to Waterskiing Spring 2025**

If you, or your child, is interested in Waterskiing, either recreationally or competitively, then have a quick read of our Introduction to Waterskiing. It’s designed to answer some basic questions, and give some insight into how the sport, and competitions, work on a day to day basis.

**The Sport**

There are three disciplines – Slalom, Trick and Jump. Each discipline requires its own unique set of equipment (skis and ropes/handles). You will probably be most familiar with Slalom skiing as that’s the most popular and well known of the three.

To begin with everyone starts on two skis, becoming proficient at getting out of the water, crossing the wakes, and after lots of practice eventually dropping one ski and ‘mono skiing’. After that skiers start to work on ‘running the course’ – a series of 6 buoys and two gates, entry and exit. Beginning at slow speeds the skier trains to ‘run the course’ by entering through the gates, skiing around each buoy, and exiting through the gates. Over time, the speed of the boat increases, and the length of the rope being used decreases.

Trick skiing is the most acrobatic of the three disciples. The ski is a small, oval shape with no fins. Skiers perform a variety of tricks, either holding the ski handle, or by inserting their foot in a special ‘toe hold’ handle and tricking on one foot. Basic tricks include moving the ski to a 90 degree angle, and turning the ski backwards. Trick is a huge amount of fun, but the equally it takes a lot of hours on the water to master new tricks.

Jump skiing is a discipline that needs good preparation, starting with riding a pair of jump skis ( ideally not combi skis) and working towards riding over the ramp when safe techniques and strength are achieved . The ramp is set at 5ft for the youngest, moving up to 6ft for experienced jumpers.

Equipment must include a safe releasing crash helmet and preferably a jumpsuit with flotation. Making sure the crash helmet fits properly, and releases appropriately is key to safety. If you have any questions about jump equipment, or helmets please contact George Hazelwood at georgehaz57@gmail.com.

BWSW is committed to safe sport – this covers both [Safeguarding](https://www.bwsw.org.uk/aboutthesport/safeguarding/) and [Anti Doping](https://www.bwsw.org.uk/anti-doping/) policies. All polices are on the BWSW website with links under the section called ‘The Sport’ here: <https://www.bwsw.org.uk/aboutthesport/>. BWSW has a dedicated Lead Safeguarding Officer, Sarah Wassell. She is available to discuss any concerns, confidentially, and can be contacted by emailing her at safeguarding@bwsf.co.uk or on 07919131671

**Equipment**

The cost of three event skiing is considerable when it comes to equipment. It’s best to start by getting second hand skies in the first instance. Many skiers purchase second hand skies for many years as you can often get very high quality equipment at reduced costs. The one piece of equipment that we don’t recommend buying second hand is jump helmets – but used skies and wetsuits can easily be purchased in the following ways:

FOT – Friends of Tournament run a second hand ski loan system managed by Cora Coster, and Adele Fearn at Hazelwoods Ski World. You can contact them in the following way – Cora Coster on 0700010799, cora@carpolinsurance.co.uk or Adele Fearn.

Facebook – There is an active group selling used waterski equipment called Water Ski Bay UK, you can join the group and see everything other skiers have posted for sale. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/265093056971594>

Word of Mouth – Do let other skiers know you’re in the market for a ski – it’s a small sport and sometimes word of mouth is a great way to find out about equipment.

**Competitions**

All activities are run through the IWWF Event Management System. This is where all competitions and events are listed, and is also the system for entering competitions. You will need to buy an IWWF competition licence, and a BWSW licence, if you wish to enter Ranking competitions. We recommend that you plan your season now, and get your entries in as the competitions are in high demand.

You do need to be a member of BWSW to compete which is our governing body with offices based in Chertsey. The link to the membership page is here: <https://www.bwsw.org.uk/membership/membership-fees/>

The link to the membership benefits document is here: <https://issuu.com/waterskiandwakeboardmagazine/docs/british_water_ski_wakeboard_membership_leaflet_-?fr=xPf81NTU>

The IWWF licence is not required for Development Days, Backyard, or Normal Homologation – only Rankings. Here is the link to the EMS site <https://ems.iwwf.sport/>.

You do not need a BWSW licence to take part in Development Days that are run by FOT (Friends of Tournament).

You must also have a BWSW licence to compete in Rankings competitions. The EMS system allows you to book without a BWSW licence as it’s not set up for National Licences, however you cannot ski in a UK Ranking competition without a BWSW licence.

Get yours here: <https://www.bwsw.org.uk/home/>

If you need any help with registering, please contact Kylie at head office who should be able to help. kylie@bwsf.co.uk

There are several types of waterski competitions – European Ranking, Normal Homologation, National and Grass Roots. When starting out in Waterskiing entering the Grass Roots competitions is the best first step. These competitions are run in a more relaxed format compared to the European Ranking or Normal Homologation competitions and give skiers a chance to compete in fun, relaxed atmosphere. The ‘Normal Homologation’ competitions are a step up with fewer cameras and video equipment than Ranking Competitions and therefore have a limit on the level of scores that can be posted.

European Ranking competitions means that the results are used to create a European ranking by age category. There is no reason not to start with Ranking competitions, and organisers will do everything possible to make the experience fun for the younger skiers.

For all types of competitions there are normally several ‘rounds’ of skiing so if the first ski doesn’t go well, there is another chance to post a good score.

For beginner slalom skiers there is the novice category, where skiers are awarded points for each buoy skied around. This is great for young skiers as it means they can enter competitions without having to ‘run the course’ perfectly the first time.

Children are put into age categories U8, U10, U12, U14, U17 and are typically scheduled so that the youngest ski first. Most competitions start at 8am so its early mornings for the young ones.

To run a competition the ski course has to be checked to ensure that it is set out correctly (homologated) and several drivers and judges present to watch each skier and verify the scores. There are judges in a ‘judges’ tower’, with one ‘boat judge’ as well videoing the skiing. In addition there is a ‘calculator or scorer’ who in in charge of making sure that all the points add up correctly for trick and that the slalom and jump scores are recorded. For trick skiing competitors are also given their ‘sheets’ showing how many judges awarded the trick, and how many didn’t view it as correctly completed.

The jetty is controlled by one or two ‘marshals’ who will call out the skier’s name, start speed and boat setting. At European and Normal Homologation competitions they will also measure the skiers handle to ensure it complies with regulations. All lakes will have approved handles that any skier can use if they don’t have their own.

**Competition Scoring**

In a slalom competition, you select the speed at which you want to try running the course. If successful, the boat speed is increased by 3 kph for the next ‘pass’ and so on until it reaches the maximum speed for the age category of the skier. At that point, the rope is shortened for each subsequent pass. A skier continues to ski until s/he fails to run the course. The score is then the number of buoys successfully rounded combined with the boat speed or line length.

In a trick competition you will have created, along with your coach, two ‘trick runs’ consisting of a series of tricks that you will attempt to complete during a 20-second run behind the boat. The two runs will include different tricks, each of which has an internationally recognised score. The judges will decide whether each trick has been completed successfully and score it accordingly. A majority of the judges have to score a trick for it to count. This is the most frustrating of the three disciplines for skiers from a scoring point of view.

Jump scoring is simple. As long as you land the jump, keep hold of the rope and ski away, your score will be the distance covered. No points for elegance (or lack of it), distance is all.

**Competition Etiquette**

Arrive early and familiarise yourself with the lake – it’s a good idea to book a practice set the day before, or a few days before if it’s convenient. Each lake is different and the water can have a very different ‘feel’ to it, and the run up can be long, short, or include skiing around a small island. As a parent remember – your child is unlikely to ski as well in a competition as they do at the home lake during practice.

The running order for each competition will be published on line (http://www.iwwfed-ea.org/classic/competitions/2025) and a print-out will be posted on site. Check it the day/night before to make sure it hasn’t change. Waterskiing is weather dependent and last minute changes happen all the time. This is especially the case when Jump skiing is taking place as wind conditions will dictate when it’s safe to jump. Be prepared for change. Take a note of the organisers phone number on the competition details found on the competition details found on (<https://ems.iwwf.sport/>) so that you can be in touch if needed. Aim to arrive at the lake a minimum of 45 minutes before your child is scheduled to ski.

Find the club owners when you arrive and introduce yourself. Don’t expect a long conversation as they will be frantically running around getting things ready. There will be lots of people standing around, but no official ‘greeter’ so do introduce yourself and your child. People will be friendly, or a bit distracted as they are thinking about the competition. At European Ranking competitions some skiers will be skiing for a place on the European Team so the pressure will be on.

It is your responsibility to get yourself, or your child, to the dock on time, changed, warmed up, and in vest and gloves. Plan to be ready and on the jetty three skiers before your turn. On the jetty wish the other competitors well, but keep the noise to a minimum. Skiers are trying to concentrate and prepare. Some skiers are chatty before they ski, some very focused. Respect each choice and behave accordingly. Don’t let your child run around or ‘play’ on the jetty. It’s a preparation space and you will be asked to quiet down if you’re not respectful of that.

The Jetty Marshal will ask you what speed you want for your /your child’s first pass of the course and what boat setting you want – don’t worry, you’ll learn about boat settings before you start competing. It is worth asking the Jetty Marshal whether skiers are being dropped after each pass, or whether they are spinning (going around and coming back for the next pass without stopping) at one end.

Most lakes will have tea/coffee/cakes and simple food like sandwiches and wraps on sale. Many people will drive to the local supermarket to grab a sandwich or salad or bring a picnic and chairs/rugs to sit on. Over the weekend people either camp on site, or stay at the local Travel Lodge or Premier Inn. Due to the frequency of running order change competitors are expected to be on site whether they are scheduled to ski or not. If you leave because you think you aren’t skiing, and the running order changes, nobody will phone you to tell you. You need to be logging on and checking the results and running order regularly if you leave – if change happens with little notice and you are too far away to make it back in time, the competition will continue without you. There is a reason why the Tournament Rules require skiers to stay on site, so leaving is your risk to take.

Some competitions will be one day Slalom competitions, others will be a combination of two or three events over a weekend. Any competition with Jump will be more subject to change, as the wind speed and direction dictates when it is safe to jump. Safety is, naturally, the first consideration.

Parents need to be involved, nobody will come to get you or your child to ski. So listen, watch and be aware of when you are due down at the jetty. If in doubt – ask. Don’t wait around wondering or worrying, people will be happy to help and answer your questions but you do need to be proactive. Everyone will be welcoming, but everyone is also distracted and thinking about the competition.

Things go wrong at competitions. Boats and cameras are finicky things and there will be delays as things are tinkered with. Breathe deep and remember that everyone wants the competition to run smoothly and is working towards that.

The weather is a big part of any competition. The wind will blow up, calm down, rain will arrive and dissipate. The skiers ski in the order of the competition – some days the weather will benefit your child, some days they will be the ones skiing in a downpour. It’s okay to express frustration, but an attitude of ‘that’s the way the cookie crumbles’ will be better for you, and your child. Your child will get the good weather at some stage. Skiing may be halted if the rain is too heavy for the driver to see properly, or if the wind too strong for safe skiing.

Skiers can get reruns if there is a distraction on the course – typically birds on the course, or if the driver makes an error and takes the skier out at the wrong speed. This happens in competitions – drivers are in the boat for hours on end doing a continuous cycle of start speed, boat setting, rope length, so it’s only to be expected that mistakes will happen. Your child will be offered a re-run if something goes wrong.

Do teach your child to ‘protest’ if a bird gets in their way during a run. The skier raises their ski in the air to indicate that they want to protest. A judgement will be made if a rerun is justified. If the answer is ‘no’ rerun do not argue with the judges as their decision will be based on video review so they really do have a better chance of understanding what happened than either you, or your child.

If your child falls during their ski then they will be expected to swim to the bank. Check with the Jetty Marshall about what the protocol is before they ski and make sure they understand what to do.

There will also be a first aider at the competition to assess any injuries that happen during the competition.

For Trick skiing there are master sheets that show each trick and how it was scored are available for review for 30 minutes. The judges may comment on why they didn’t score a trick. Do check these sheets – they may show what needs to be done to score the trick but will always show which tricks weren’t done to the required standard. It’s a good idea to understand the points, and how they are awarded so that if a mistake is made you can ask for a correction. Some tricks have to be done in a certain order to score, make sure you understand which ones.

Do download, and read the rules <http://www.tournamentwaterskiing.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/British-Waterski-Additional-Rules-2024-Final-1.pdf>

There are a wide variety of documents available on the [www.tournamentwaterskiing.org.uk](http://www.tournamentwaterskiing.org.uk) website and the <https://www.bwsw.org.uk/home/> website including information about Rules, Waterski News, Inclusion and Diversity, Doping, and Safeguarding.

**Skiing at European Championships**

Britain sends teams of skiers to both European and World Championships. Despite the limitations with our weather we have a great international reputation and have produced some of the best skiers in the world, past and present.

There are several ways for your child to qualify to ski at European or World, level.

**The Team**

Team selection is based on putting together the team that is likely to gain the most combined points.

To have a realistic chance of making the U14, U17 or U21 teams, skiers need to compete in 2 disciplines as a minimum. Four team skiers are taken in each of U14 and U17 age groups and 6 are in the U21 team at the Europeans, with there being a mix of boys and girls.

The top three scores from each discipline combine to create the team score, so it’s important to have multiple entrants into each discipline to maximize the team score

The scoring system for European Teams is based on 1,000 points per discipline, with each skier being awarded a percentage of 1,000 points based on their score v the winning score. For example – if the winning score is 2 buoys at 12m, 52kph, then the score of 1 buoy at 13m, 52kph will be awarded 860 points, with the winning score getting 1,000. The same system is used for Trick and Jump. Team scores are then added up for the Team Rankings. Within each discipline, each skier is also ranked. There are medals for each discipline, as well as team medals.

**Individual Performance**

Every year the European Waterski Council posts a list of those skiers that qualify as an Individual to ski at European Championships. Typically it’s those skiers that rank in the top 10-12 places in Europe although this is adjusted each year. If an individual qualifies, then they will travel with the team, and be treated as part of the team, although their score won’t count towards the team performance.

**Wild Cards**

Each year the organising lake for European and World Championships may choose to offer Wild Card places. This allows the Selection Committee to send skiers from the squad and occasionally others outside the squad depending on their performances that are not selected for the team, or qualified as Individuals. Normally, Wild Card skiers compete in one discipline. Again they travel with the team and are treated as part of the team.

**Guardians**

Every skier under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a Guardian. BWSW will send a Team Captain who will attend competition meetings, and get the skiers to the dock on time. It is parents responsibility get their children to the lake, and to take overall responsibility for their behavior**.**

**The BWSW Federation**

This is the governing body of the sport, with the head office in Chertsey. While there is a team of full time staff working at The Federation, the judges, boat drivers, homologators and people running the competitions are volunteers giving their time freely. Offer to help if you can, it’s always appreciated.

The sport is managed by a group of volunteer committees, and fundraising to help support International Teams is managed by the Friends of Tournament Committee. Details of all the committees and members can be found here: <http://www.tournamentwaterskiing.org.uk/tournament-committees/>

**Finally**

**If you have any questions please do get in touch either with Ali White 07921 844682** **ali.white@hotmail.co.uk** **who is on the Waterski Committee or Dush Lukic FOT Committee** **dushylukic@hotmail.com**