

A Guide
to the
Rules of Ski Racing
for
Racers, Coaches and Race Officials

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The rules for ski racing in Britain are based on the International rules published by the FIS. Different rules are put in place only when there is a very good reason (for example, FIS rules do not encompass plastic slope racing). The reason for keeping as close to FIS rules as possible is to make it easier for racers to turn up at any venue and know what they have to do.

OK, so you're going to take part in a ski race, which basic rules do you really need to know and why? This guide shows the rules which are common to racing on all surfaces and highlights the differences, where relevant. They represent the minimum that you need to know.

Before the Race

You need to ensure that your equipment conforms to the rules for ski shape and length, binding height, and boot design. These rules are there for your safety and to ensure fairness. You can find those rules on the web at <http://www.gbski.com/rules.php>

You need a helmet designed and approved for ski racing.

Your ski poles need to have a diameter at the tip of at least 15mm (plastic slope only). This is to minimise the risk of a penetration injury in the event of a fall.

(Plastic slope only) You need to ensure that your race clothing covers your body from ankles to wrists. You must also wear gloves at all times on the slope. This is to minimise the risk of abrasion injury in the event a fall.

During inspection you need to wear or carry your bib so that it is visible. This is to show that you are entitled to be in the course area.

During inspection you may not ski the course at speed nor shadow its characteristics from the side. You may snowplough or sideslip **SLOWLY** through the course. You may not do practice starts (although you can view the course from the start gate). However, the Jury decides the method of inspection and, depending on the circumstances, may forbid snowploughing or sliding the course. In such circumstances, you must inspect the course from the side.

You can inspect on skis (or snowblades on a plastic slope) but not on foot. This is to prevent deterioration of the surface.

At the Start

Be at the start in good time. It gives you time to get yourself ready and prepare your gear.

You may be denied a start if you have illegal equipment or if you behave in an unsportsmanlike manner in the start area.

Ski preparation must take place well away from the start gate. This is to protect the start officials from inhaling potentially harmful substances (plastic slope only).

On plastic slopes, you may carry your skis into the start gate and put them on there.

For an artificial slope race, you must be ready to enter the start gate as soon as the racer before you has started. If you are late, you may be sanctioned. The 'one minute rule' does not apply in artificial slope races. In outdoor snow slalom, you must be ready to start within one minute of being called.

You must wear the bib issued to you with the number clearly visible.

For a slalom, the start happens like this:

You will be called into the gate.

You will be given a reasonable but limited time to put on your skis (plastic slope only) and get ready.

The starter will say 'Ready'. This is not a question; it is information that the course is clear for you and that you will get the start order very soon.

The starter will say 'Go'. You must start no more than 10 seconds after this order or you will have committed a false start. Similarly, if you start before the word 'Go', you will have committed a false start.

For DH, SG and GS starts are at a fixed interval and will be preceded by a countdown either verbally by the Starter or by 'beeps' from a clock adjacent to the start gate. The start sequence happens like this:

10 seconds before the start interval: a verbal warning "10 seconds" or one short beep from the clock.

5 seconds before the start interval: the start of a verbal countdown "5, 4, 3, 2, 1, GO" or a series of 5 short beeps followed by one longer one.

You may start any time after the 5 second countdown starts until 5 seconds after the word "GO" or the longer beep. If you start before the countdown or more than 5 seconds after the word "GO" or the longer beep, you will have committed a false start.

On the Course

You must go through each gate with the tips of both skis and both boots.

If you do not go through the gate correctly in DH, SG and GS, you must stop, not going through further gates or climb back to correct the fault. You must leave the course as soon as you safely can.

In a slalom, you may correct the fault providing you do not interfere with the run of the next competitor or are passed by the next competitor. To correct the fault, you must:

Normal (2 pole gate) Course. Cross the imaginary line between the 2 poles that make up the gate.

Single Pole Course. Where there is no outside pole, pass around the missed turning pole. Where there is an outside pole, cross the imaginary line between the 2 poles that make up the gate.

You may ask an official if a fault has been committed and the official must inform you if a fault has been committed that could lead to disqualification. You cannot receive any other assistance. Irrespective of the advice received, you alone are responsible for your actions and you cannot hold the official responsible in this regard.

Once you have left the course, you may not re-enter it, nor should you cross the finish line. This is on safety grounds; when officials see a racer leave the course, they may start course repair activity, or they may start the next racer. If you go back into the course, an accident may happen. If you do, you may be sanctioned.

If you commit a fault very close to the finish, it may be impossible to leave the course safely without crossing the finish line. It would be unreasonable to sanction you in such circumstances; racer safety is paramount but the Jury will decide.

The finish line is different from all other gates; you can go through it on both skis, or one ski, or with no skis at all. For example, if you lose both skis between the last gate and the finish without committing a fault, the momentum of the fall must carry you across the line. You are not allowed to fall, stop, get up and cross the line on foot.

You are entitled to a clear, safe course. If you want to claim a rerun because you think that you have been impeded at any time on the course (for instance by an official repairing a gate or by an animal running across the course), you must stop immediately. You should report to the nearest official and tell him/her what happened. You will then be sent to the Finish Referee (Do NOT cross the finish line) who will contact the Jury for consideration of a re-run. If you are given a re-run, it will be what is known as a provisional start, and the Jury will decide later whether the re-run will count.

If you are given a re-run, get back to the start as soon as you can. You will be given time to prepare yourself and then be slotted into the running order at the earliest opportunity. The race will not be delayed unreasonably for you, so don't delay or you may not get the re-run. This is because it would be unfair to keep other racers waiting and because of the pressure to get the race finished in reasonable time/conditions.

If you cross the finish line (other than because you cannot stop as outlined above), you are considered to have accepted the run and you will not be granted a re-run.

After the Run

After the run, the officials will collate all available information and the Referee will prepare and publish a Report (sometimes known as 'the Protocol'). The report lists those who did not start (DNS), those who did not finish (DNF) and those who committed a fault leading to disqualification (DSQ).

The contents of the Report will also normally be read out over the PA.

A copy of the Report will be placed on the Official Notice Board. You need to read the report. If you are on the list and you do not think that you committed the fault, you are entitled to protest the decision but you must do this within 15 minutes of the Report being published.

If you want to protest, you must contact the race office and tell an official (preferably the Race Secretary), complete a form and pay a fee that is refundable if the Jury agree with you. The Jury will look at the incident and consider all the evidence including any statement you make. They may overturn or uphold the decision on the Report.

If you are DSQ or DNF you may at the discretion of the Jury be allowed a further run on the course. This will take place as directed by the Jury. You are no longer in the competition but all the rules still apply. You must treat this run in exactly the same way you would any other.