



# Alyeska Mighty Mite Ski Racing Program

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Since 1967, the Alyeska Mighty Mites has been a volunteer-operated, weekend ski racing program for children ages 7-12. The goal of the program is to introduce the fundamentals of Alpine Ski racing to young children.

The Mighty Mites strive to promote self-confidence, a sense of accomplishment, good sportsmanship and a FUN, positive racing experiences for children. Many Mighty Mite coaches grew up skiing at Alyeska Resort, and now wish to share their experience with new generations of skiers. Whether the child has a goal of making the Olympics, or just wants to have fun with friends, the Alyeska Mighty Mites provides the foundation for a lifelong love of skiing.

Mighty Mites captures the balance between racing and free skiing, offering 6 races throughout the season, opportunities to train gates, as well as ample time to explore the mountain with their coach and group.

## **ELIGIBILITY:**

1. Children must be between ages 7-12 as of December 31, 2011
2. All participants who were enrolled in the preceding season's program will automatically be eligible to enroll in the current year. All other candidates, referred to as Mighty Mite Hopefuls, must try-out for the program. A basic skills test is administered by the Alyeska Mountain Learning Center (formally known as the Alyeska Ski School). To sign up for the Mighty Mite Hopeful tryouts, call anytime after November 15, at 754-2280.

For more information, click on the "Try Outs" link on the Mighty Mite home page.

## **ENROLLMENT:**

Children must be enrolled in the program to participate. Enrollment can be accomplished by submitting a signed Registration Form, Liability Release Form, Acknowledgement of Risk form. All forms must include the signatures a parent or legal guardian. Payment of the entry fee must accompany the completed forms.

To register, click on the "Registration and Forms" link on the Mighty Mite home page.

### **ENTRY FEE:**

Annual program cost is \$175 per child. Program fee covers race expenses, Alyeska Ski Club membership, liability insurance, t-shirt, trophies, and other awards.

### **TRYOUTS- MIGHTY MITE HOPEFULS:**

All potential Mighty Mites, referred to as Mighty Mite Hopefuls, who have not been enrolled previously in Mighty Mites (MM), are required to try out for the program. The Alyeska Resort Mountain Learning Center (formally known as the Alyeska Ski School) runs the MM Hopeful program the first two weekends of December, both Saturday and Sunday, for all interested children. The fee for this screening process is \$80 per day. The Mountain Learning Center evaluates the basic skills of the Mighty Mite hopeful and at the end of the day, will recommend to the Mighty Mite coaches whether the youngster qualifies for the program or whether he/she needs more time to develop basic skiing skills. The following Sunday the child will join the appropriate MM animal group. They also receive attendance points for the day they skied with the Mountain Learning Center.

This is mandatory for first time Mighty Miters, regardless of skier age or ability. The skills required to pass the Mighty Mite Hopeful test:

- Age 7 -12 years old, as of December 31, 2011
- Can put on their own skis
- Can get on/off all lifts by themselves
- Can ski entire mountain- From top of Chair 6 down the blue star route
- Can stop and turn under control
- Can successfully ski down the Tanaka Hill, or similar terrain, in control and keep up with the group.
- Emotionally mature to be away from parents for a whole day

**Dates:** To schedule your try-out, please select a date:

- Saturday December 3
- Sunday December 4
- Saturday December 10
- Sunday December 11
- The Mountain Learning Center will also offer tryouts for the remainder of the year under their "Powder Blasters" program. The price and criteria remain the same.

**Time:** Meet at Day Lodge at 9:30am to sign-in  
Ski from 10:30am-12:30pm  
Lunch from 12:30pm-1:30pm at Day lodge  
Ski from 1:30pm – 3:30pm  
Mighty Mite evaluation at 3:30pm

**Cost:** The cost is \$80 for the whole day.

**Lunch:** The Mountain Learning Center lunch is from 12:30-1:30pm at the Day Lodge. You will need to either pack a lunch for your child, or give them \$10-15 dollars and their coach will buy them lunch at the Day Lodge Cafeteria. You may meet your child for lunch and eat with them.

**Payment:** You can pay with credit card over the phone, or with check in person at the Mountain Learning Center desk at the Day Lodge the morning of the try-out.

**To Schedule your Mighty Mite tryout:** First select a date, then call the Alyeska Resort Mountain Learning Center anytime after November 15, at 754-2280. Tell them that you want to sign up for the Mighty Mite Hopeful Try-outs.

**Mighty Mite Coach Review:** At the end of the day, a Mighty Mite coach will meet with the Mountain Learning Center Instructor to review the performance of each Hopeful. If your child has mastered all of the skills listed above, then he will be recommended to Mighty Mites and can begin the following Sunday. In the event your child is close to mastering the skills, but simply may need a few more days of skiing under his belt, then Mighty Mites will recommend that he skis one or two more sessions with the Mountain Learning Center, or perhaps on his own with his parents, and then tryout again later in December. There is no limit on the number of times your child may try out, and tryouts are available throughout the year.

**Further Questions:** You may also call Garth McPhie, head of the Alyeska Resort Mountain Learning Center at 754-2539, or Mighty Mite Program Director Natasha Von Imhof at 344-9301, if you have any further questions.

### **MINI MITE PROGRAM:**

For Children ages 5 and 6 years old as of 12/31/11, the program available is called the Mini Mites, offered through the Alyeska Resort. The Mini Mite program will introduce young racers to skiing around gates and will be offered every Sunday for the entire season, similar to Mighty Mites. Please call the Alyeska Resort Mountain Learning Center anytime at 754-2280 for additional information or visit their website at

<http://www.alyeskaresort.com/mountain/learning-center-mini-mite-program.aspx>

### **SCHEDULE:**

Mighty Mites meets every Sunday from 10:15am – 3pm starting Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2011, and will continue each Sunday through March 25, 2012. This includes a two-day Mighty Mite Weekend on Saturday and Sunday, 3/24 – 3/25, 2012. Lunch is generally one hour from 12noon – 1pm.

For a complete schedule, click on the “Schedule” link on the Mighty Mite home page.

### **VOLUNTEERS:**

Parent volunteers are always needed every Sunday. We encourage parents to ski with their kids in their animal groups on free-ski/ training days, keeping in mind to defer to the coach at all times regarding where to ski, performing on the hill drills, gate training, etc.

For race days, parents are strongly encouraged to get involved by volunteering to help with registration, bib distribution and collection, gatekeeping, timing, and course preparation. Mighty Mites will email parents a week prior to a race with volunteer opportunities. Parents can reply to the emails stating their availability and preference for jobs. On race day, if there are still job openings, there will be signup sheets at the RTC for people to sign up for the remaining jobs. Race days are especially important that we have parent participation as it's difficult to run an efficient race without a lot of help.

All parent volunteers are required to sign a Acknowledgment of Risk and Release form from the Alyeska Ski Club.

**CHECK-IN PROCEDURES:**

Skiers should be ready to ski at 10:15 am each Sunday. We will ski rain, snow or shine if at least the lower mountain lifts are in operation. Skiers MUST check in with their coach in the morning and the afternoon to obtain one attendance point for each session (for a total of two points per day). Coaches will be waiting in front of the Race Training Center next to their animal group sign. If the weather (or temperature) is questionable, call the Mighty Mite hotline at 783-2160, Press #1, to get updated information for that day.

**DISMISSAL:**

Generally, Mighty Mites is over for the day at 3:00 p.m. Coaches should release their Mighty Mites at the Race Training Center. We ask that you meet the skiers at this time to make sure that they have come off the mountain safely.

**ANIMAL GROUPS:**

Skiers will be placed in divisions for both training and races. Placement will be commensurate with ability, which will be determined by initial training sessions, grouping races, coaches' recommendations, and age. The divisions, ranked in ascending order of ability, are as follows:

Ages 7, 8, & 9:

Chipmunks

Otters

Beavers

Lynx

Tigers

Ages 10, 11 & 12:

Cougars

Wildcats

Junior Hopefuls

Children will race throughout the season in the division to which they are assigned following the grouping races.

## **MOVING UP GROUPS:**

1. Coach observes mastery of fundamentals.
2. Skier finishes a race with a time in the midrange of the next highest group.
3. At age 10, unless already a Jr. Hopeful or Wildcat, the racer becomes a Cougar.

Upward mobility in Mighty Mite ability groups is based on the mastery of ski racing fundamentals in free skiing, gate training and race results. The first race of the season is a combo- grouping race. After this race, the groups are set for the remainder of the season. If a child misses the grouping races, then group placement will be based on coaches recommendation. Skiers can still fulfill criteria for the next highest group and receive recognition but they will stay in place until the following season.

## **ATTENDANCE:**

There are many ways to achieve success in Mighty Mites. Winning races is one way. Showing up every Sunday rain or shine is another way. Skiers demonstrating a full season of dedication by showing up morning and afternoon, each and every training or race day will earn a plaque at the end of the season for perfect attendance. Also, overall season trophies are awarded based on race results together with attendance points. Skiers can receive one attendance point for the morning and one attendance point for the afternoon. Here's how to make sure that skiers receive their points:

1. Mighty Mites should meet their group on time in the morning and after lunch
2. If a Mighty Mite loses his group on the mountain there are two ways to keep your attendance points:
  - a. If he knows which chair his group is skiing on, wait at the bottom of the lift to rejoin his buddies.
  - b. Find another group to ski with and tell his coach who he skied with.
3. Always ski where his group is heading. Never ski off by himself and hope that they will follow.
4. Check the master attendance list periodically and discuss errors with your coach.

## **AWARDS:**

There are a total of six races throughout the season and award pins are given to the three fastest girls and three fastest boys in each animal group, with recognition given to the top 5 finishers. Points will be awarded in point races for the first through fifth positions respectively: 10-7-5-4-3. Season trophies are based on the four pointed race finishes AND training day attendance.

The Tanaka Award, given at the end of the year banquet, is awarded to the boy and girl that the coaches believe exemplify excellence in sportsmanship. Good sportsmanship is marked by a

positive attitude no matter what the weather, encouragement given to fellow racers, helpfulness to coaches and volunteers, politeness, and respectfulness of authority.

The Most Improved Award, also given at the end of the year banquet, goes to the Mighty Miter who has shown the most improvement for that year.

For skiers who have perfect attendance, their names will be announced at the end of the year banquet, and they will also receive a plaque with their name engraved on it.

Finally, each racer is awarded a T-shirt and season trophy for just participating! Above all, the Mighty Mite experience is meant to be fun!

### **RACE RULES:**

Mighty Mite race rules can be found in the Coaches Manual, which is posted on the website on the Home page of the Mighty Mite website. Please click on the following link:

<http://alyeskamightymites.org/>

### **SAFETY AND CONDUCT:**

Safe behavior and good conduct are expected at all times while Mighty Mites is in session. Rude and unsafe behavior is discouraged and not tolerated. The Mighty Mites are examples to all young skiers as role models. Therefore, at the coaches' discretion, a Mighty Mite engaging in unsafe or rude behavior may be asked to sit out the program for the remainder of the day. If the Mighty Mite is asked to leave early, he/she will forfeit the afternoon attendance point. In addition, all Mighty Mite participants will be asked to review and sign the following documents:

1. Read and sign "Know the Code" (Alyeska Resort skier responsibility code)
2. Read the sign "Safety Violation Enforcement Guidelines"
3. The Alyeska Resort has asked that each family with children in the ski club complete the Alyeska Resort Mountain Education Test. All results will be kept with the Alyeska Ski Patrol. To take the test, go to website:

<http://www.alyeskaresort.com/mountain/alyeska-ski-patrol-take-test.aspx>

### **PROPER DRESS AND EQUIPMENT:**

Children should come to Mighty Mites dressed for the weather! On very cold days, hand and toe warming pouches could mean the difference between skiing and sitting in the lodge. Mittens tend to be warmer than gloves. On rainy days, wear rain jackets AND rain pants. Helmets, though not required, are strongly recommended! There are so many options available today in the area of children's ski gear, so the best advice is to "Keep It Simple and Affordable". Ski swaps and used gear are a great way to meet the needs of young skiers. Find your comfort zone (\$) while paying attention to ski length, boot flexibility and pole height.

**Skis** should reach between the skier's chin and nose. If in doubt, go shorter. Shorter skis are

easier to handle. Look for sidecut! Wide tip and tail, narrow waist.

**Boots** need to fit and be flexible. To determine if a boot fits lengthwise, take the bladder out, have child put his foot in the shell and slide toes to the front. He should have 1/2 - 1 inch of space between the back of his heel and the back of the shell. Put the bladder back in and try on boot for comfort. Have child flex the boot- this should be easy!

**Pole Height** Have child hold a ski pole upside down and grip just below the basket. You are looking for a 90 degree angle bend in the skier's elbow while the lower arm is parallel to the ground.

**Contact Us:**

Hotline: 783-2160 #1 for Mighty Mites  
Mailing: PO Box 112322 Anchorage, AK 99511  
Email: [Alyeskamightymites@gmail.com](mailto:Alyeskamightymites@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.alyeskamightymites.org](http://www.alyeskamightymites.org)  
Program Director: Natasha Von Imhof Hm 344-9301, or find her at the Race Training Center  
on Sunday's  
Head Coach: Clint Lentfer