

Pre-race briefing for Middlebury VT race to be held February 12, 2022, *revised 2022-02-11 6:10pm*

1. Safety:

a. Masking

- i. Review here: <https://nerandorace.blogspot.com/p/2021-22-season-mask-requirement.html>
- ii. Executive summary:
 1. ~~Wear a respirator-grade mask upon entering the start area before the race.~~ We have a sidecountry trail all to ourselves, so plenty of room to spread out.
 2. And no, a surgical mask is *not* a respirator-grade mask!
 3. ~~You can remove your mask upon the announcement to do so shortly before the mass start countdown.~~ Moot, given above.
 4. Stowe your mask away *securely* and *not* in a skin pocket (i.e., where removing your skins could cause your mask to inadvertently slip out and contribute to the dreaded Mask Trash).
 5. Anyone finishing on the podium must wear a mask during the pictures for awards. (This is still be required regardless of the masking rule for the start.)
 6. Be respectful of any fellow racers who remain masked at other times and/or want more space from other racers.
- iii. If you forget your mask, extras are available at the start/finish area, inside my Western Economics Association conference black briefcase, in the white & green Powecom plastic bag (with the masks individually repackaged inside ziploc bags), plus some KF94 masks in individually sealed green packaging.
- iv. Venue-specific lodge access rules:
 1. Masks are required for any and all access to the lodge.
 2. Middlebury furthermore has eliminated the all-too-common loophole for eating and drinking: if you're inside the lodge, you must wear a mask, no matter what!
 3. And regardless of venue-specific rules:
 - a. You face a non-negligible chance of becoming infected with the Omicron strain from just a relatively brief maskless duration inside the lodge (even an empty lodge, given the ability of aerosolized covid-contaminated droplets to linger in a poorly ventilated structure) to put on ski boots, use the restroom, eat lunch, etc.
 - b. Although a vaccinated and generally healthy racer is highly unlikely to contract a severe case of covid, you could easily miss an entire week of skiing/training/racing.
 - c. Individual risk-reward/cost-benefit assessments might differ, but spending any maskless time inside a lodge just doesn't seem worthwhile.
 4. Look behind the lodge for a row of portable toilets (i.e., no mask requirement, and probably no wait either).

b. Rules

- i. Race is self-supported: no gear caching or ditching.
- ii. But for medical emergency, must render assistance, especially on any segments off-trail or on closed trails.
- iii. Review here: <http://nerandorace.blogspot.com/p/rules-including-gear.html>
- iv. Also review: <http://nerandorace.blogspot.com/p/course-marking-rules.html>
- v. Concussion safety policy (new for 2021-22 season):
<https://nerandorace.blogspot.com/p/concussion-safety-policy.html>

c. Skiing

- i. On groomers (**probably nonexistent for this venue!**), keep speed within typical ski patrol enforcement limits.
- ii. Under no conditions can you pass Race Director on groomers – this is serious, as my speed = max for such terrain.
- iii. Contenders for the men's podium should NOT be passing each other on the groomers, as you are all capable of skiing fast enough (and more than fast enough) on the groomers.
- iv. Our skimo race community was dealt a big blow when Jay Peak discontinued what had previously been the longest-running Eastern venue, precisely because of such concerns.
- v. If you do bomb down the the descents, you might miss the transitions, and hence will incur a deserved self-inflicted time penalty.

d. Transition Zones

- i. Demarcated by combo of **blue** flagging, alpine race gate shafts, and (possibly) turf paint (on snow).
- ii. All transition activities should be completed within the blue-marked area, but if crowded, can complete transition off to the side (being aware of downhill ski traffic).
- iii. Some zones might have significant pitch and/or icy conditions - use care to prevent runaway gear.
- iv. If a transition zone has multiple painted rectangles that are adjacent, overlapping, concentric, etc. that is merely an artifact of initial course marking on a prior day followed by subsequent course marking the morning of the race, and has no meaning otherwise.

e. Bootpacks

- i. Steep! But still just hiking, not climbing. Although with plenty of trip hazards.

f. **CAUTION** tape

- i. Any yellow tape with **CAUTION** printed in black lettering is exactly that, a warning to apply additional caution, for hazards that could be either natural or human.
- ii. This is not to be confused with yellow surveyor tape/flagging that is used to designate the bootpack segments.

2. Bibs, Pre-Race Briefing, Warm-Up, Start Area, Finish Area

a. Bibs

- i. Your race bib number serves as your resort uphill pass.

- ii. For lycra suit or tights, use safety pins to attach to right thigh.
 - iii. Otherwise, anywhere visible is okay, and feel free to use zip/cable ties instead.
 - iv. If in need of safety pins or zip/cable ties, at the start/finish area, look inside the Western Economics Association conference black briefcase.
 - v. If you forgot to bring one of your seasonal bibs, look in that same briefcase to take a substitute bib, preferably with the same final two digits as your seasonal bib.
- b. Also at the start/finish area:
- i. ~~Hammer Nutrition goodie bags will be in a cardboard box at the finish area for pick-up either before or after the race.~~ Small amount will be in the race briefcase at the start/finish, but the box will have to wait until awards given the distance from the lodge.
 - ii. If in need of a Hagan adjustment plate fine-tuning, look inside the previously mentioned black briefcase for a T-hand Torx 20 driver, which also doubles as a 4mm gap measurement.
 - iii. Also in the black briefcase: duct tape, flat head screwdriver, phillips screwdriver, scissors.
- c. Pre-race briefing:
- i. This document is it!
 - ii. Check your email about a half-hour before the race for any updates via SkiReg.com based on final course marking.
 - iii. Might also provide a few brief announcements immediately before the start.
- d. Warm-up:
- i. The start area is a few minutes of skinning from the base area, so just getting to the start is a warm-up in itself – and be sure to allow for some extra time to make the mass start! (Although everything else about the ski area is very compact and convenient.)
 - ii. For a short warm-up, from the start location, skin & ski the initial approach, then reverse the direction to skin & ski the final deapproach.
 - iii. For a longer warm-up, and to help with setting the bootpack, from the start location, skin & ski the initial approach, start skinning the main circuit's first skintrack segment, but then deviate from the skintrack by staying underneath the lift line to reach the transition for the bootpack, and at the top of the bootpack, if short on time (or energy!), instead of continuing the ascent, ski to your right, across Bailey Traverse, and then onto Voter to return to the main base area.
 - iv. If you arrive early, you might find closure ropes across some of our descents: this is just leftover from Friday (when those descents lacked lift access), and will be removed by patrol before the race.
- e. Start Time & Location:
- i. Start Location = from the base area, look to your left, for the Sheehan double chair, start skinning to your right of that, up the shared runout of the Hadley and Voter trails, branch left on Hadley, then branch right onto an ungroomed sidecountry trail (previously served

by a long-removed poma lift). **You should be able to see the Hammer Nutrition banner in the distance.**

- ii. Start area marking is ~~just a small amount of green, and possibly a Hammer Nutrition banner.~~ **a collection of our sponsor banners.**
- iii. Default start time for all venues = 9:30.
- iv. Assemble in advance of this time, as at 9:30 sharp ~~I will announce that you can remove your masks, then once they are all securely stowed away,~~ **(mask removal unnecessary)** we will have a ten-second countdown.

3. Detailed course description

a. Initial approach

- i. Skinning, marked by **green** mountaineering-style wands, flagging/surveyor tape, and possibly turf paint (on snow): very short, up the ungroomed sidecountry trail.
- ii. Skiing, marked by **red** mountaineering-style wands, flagging/surveyor tape, and possibly turf paint (on snow): down the power line, ungroomed, but very wide, merging at the bottom with a groomed trail.

b. Main circuit, repeated three times:

- i. Near the base of the Bailey Falls triple, **slightly uphill from there, to the ascender's right, at the uphill access sign**, start skinning up underneath the lift, then branch skinner's right, away from the lift line, to continue on Meredith, eventually branch right to stay on Meredith, then left onto Bailey Traverse (a narrow ungroomed trail), soon cutting straight across (caution!) La Force.
- ii. Look for a transition on the skinner's left, then ski down the Lift Line trail (on a portion of the trail that does ***NOT*** follow the actual triple chairlift line, instead deviating to skier's right of the chair line).
- iii. Once the pitch levels off, rejoining the triple chairlift line, cut sharp left, skiing across the trail (caution!) to follow the red wands to ski down the edge of the trail into the woods (for just a couple meters).
- iv. Transition in the woods, to skin up through the woods briefly.
- v. You will see a steep pitch ahead, and just before than, transition to booting, marked by **yellow** flagging/surveyor tape, with skis securely attached to pack (i.e., not held in hands).
- vi. Transition for a third time in the woods, now to skinning.
- vii. Emerge from the woods onto Bailey Traverse, almost exact at the skin > ski transition, but bypass this transition (else you'll be stuck in an endless loop!) to continue on Bailey Traverse, across and underneath the triple chairlift line to continue on Bailey Traverse.
- viii. At the end of Bailey Traverse, branch up to skinner's right to merge into Youngman, then merge back into the triple chairlift line and stay on skinner's left (with that side closed off for us at the top of the trail).

- ix. Just below the lift summit terminal, ski back down where you just skinned up, but always branching right at any forks, so as to continue on Youngman to the base of the Bailey Falls triple.
 - x. Ski around the lift base terminal, skating up a little bit to reach the same ski > skin transition at the uphill access sign that you used when you arrived at the main circuit from the initial approach.
 - c. After three cycles of the main circuit, leave the Bailey Falls triple base via the final depproach = mirror image of initial approach (i.e., up powerline, then down the sidecountry trail), staying tight on skinner's left at the bottom to be off the groomed slope.
4. Options for Shortened Recreational Course
- a. Do all of the above, but only one or two laps of the main circuit, instead of three.
 - b. On the main circuit, bypass the short descent and companion bootpack by continuing on the skintrack to the summit.
 - c. Avoiding the ungroomed skiing: no such option at this venue!
5. Finish and Post-Race:
- a. After the initial skin > ski approach, three cycles of the main circuit, and the final skin > ski depproach, finish by skiing up to the same location on the sidecountry trail that we used for the mass start.
 - b. If you are among the very first finishers:
 - i. Look inside the race briefcase for the ancient iPad timing tablet (inside some protective foil-backed bubble wrap).
 - ii. Password to unlock screen = race date (MMDD format).
 - iii. Find the Webscorer app (bottom of the home screen, only icon that screen), and click on each bib number to record a time.
 - iv. Button should be available at the bottom of the app to display names in addition to bib #s.
 - v. If something goes wrong, try the same thing with the back-up white Samsung Android tablet.
 - c. Self-timing is strongly encouraged as backup to our communal Webscorer tablet timing:
 - i. If recording on a watch uploadable to Strava:
 - 1. Immediately press your "Save" button in addition to just stopping the activity.
 - 2. Set Sport to Backcountry Ski to be included in any Segments.
 - 3. Set Visibility to Everyone to be included in Flyby.
 - ii. Otherwise, just note your finish time of day.
 - d. If you do not finish the course, and nobody is available at the finish to record your DNF, then pls email or text me immediately so that we know you are no longer out on the course.
 - e. If you want any technique tips and transition practice, I'll be hanging out here while I'm timing the race after I finish.
 - f. Course Un-marking:

- i. Might occur while you are still on final cycle, but can keep racing, although ski patrol might indicate a cut-off for their support if they need to get off the mountain.
- ii. Assistance with course unmarking from top finishers is greatly appreciated!
- iii. Surveyor tape/flagging: all of this is to be discarded (garbage cans available near the finish).
- iv. Wands:
 - 1. All wands should be removed from course.
 - 2. No need to sort them by color, as they eventually will be dried out and rebundled.
 - 3. Place at my car: black VW Arteon, sedan/hatchback combo.
- v. Alpine race gates
 - 1. All blue gate shafts should be removed from course.
 - 2. Be careful not to leave shafts unattended on snow, as even small pitches can allow them to take off.
 - 3. Place at my car: black VW Arteon, sedan/hatchback combo.
- g. Post-race:
 - i. Awards scheduled for 1:00 on the outside deck of the lodge.
 - ii. Seven pizzas will be brought out for us at 1:00. (From the cafeteria, as the local options are ... [limited](#).)
 - iii. In addition to major prizes for the podiums (by gender and age category) and other top finishers:
 - 1. Hammer Nutrition goodie bags.
 - 2. Nikwax samples plus some La Sportiva swag.
 - 3. Some discretionary awarding of certain prizes for racers in need of gearing up.
 - iv. For sale, by prior arrangement:
 - 1. Hagan has shipped me two of [the new race outfits](#), one Small and one Large, so you can try on one and buy it on site (either via Venmo @Michael-Hagen-10, or order [HERE](#) and add a note that you picked up your suit at the race).
 - 2. This past summer while on a family trip, I bought out the remaining stock of one-piece race suits at the Boulder factory outlet of our sponsor La Sportiva, details [HERE](#) with payment via Venmo @Jonathan-Shefftz, but should fit anyone on the below-Medium end of the range.