

7th FIS YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S SEMINAR

Lotte Nogler born on 27/02/1947 in Cermes (Bz), resident in Ortisei

Father: Hermann Nogler; Mother: Paola

After completing my professional training as a hairdresser, I worked in my mother's hair salon until I became a member of the Italian ski team (1965 – 1970).

Italian Juniors downhill champion 1966 - S. Martino di Castrozza

Competitor at the Grenoble Olympics of 1968

Ski instructor from 1970 to 2002 and head of the Ski & Snowboard School of Ortisei since 2002.

I'm delighted that the FIS is aware of the problem regarding young skiers and that it is seeking possible solutions.

What's alarming is that skiing is not as fun as before and that the children in our areas are not as enthusiastic about it anymore.

Today, in ski areas, children can practice many different sports and all the various sport clubs are trying to get them to join.

Climbing, tennis, football, track and field, swimming, volleyball, hockey and judo. All these sports can be practiced during both summer and winter.

What makes a child choose one sport instead of another? One might think that in a ski resort all the children want to either ski or snowboard. For quite some time now this is no longer the case. Of course, parents have a big influence on this decision and since children cannot decide on their own, they need their parents approval and support.

Here is a list of some sports clubs in Val Gardena included number of members and fees:

Football club	kids registered	300	fee € 200,00
Tennis Club	kids registered	50	fee € 40,00
Climbing club	kids registered	50	fee € 150,00 – 400,00
Track & Field	kids registered	80	fee € 180,00

There are also many other leisure activities like music, chess, photography, etc.

Of the 7 ski schools in Val Gardena, 4 offer programs for resident children and each year about 600 children participate in these courses. These schools are aware that the course must be affordable and for years one of the local banks has been providing us with their support.

What does the Ski & Snowboard School of Ortisei do for local children?

Chapter 1 Ski courses for local children (kindergarten and elementary school)

- Age: 3-11 years old
- Period: from 1st January to 20th February
- Costs: price per course for beginners € 33,00 and for advanced € 62,00 and includes 7 afternoons
- Materials: for local children the ski school rents skis and ski boots for the entire winter season for € 80,00 Free helmet
- Ski pass: € 80,00 – 140,00

Chapter 2 Competition courses for local children (FISI courses – Italian Winter Sports Federation) (with support from a local sponsor)

- Age: 6 years and older
- Period: from beginning of December to the end of season
- Costs: from € 280,00 to € 470,00
- Materials: for local children the ski school rents skis and ski boots for the entire winter season for € 120,00 – € 140,00 Free helmet
- Ski pass: € 140,00

During the winter season each ski school organises a competition that is always held on a Saturday. The groups with the best competitive prospects will take part in the various competitions of the Provincial Federation with about 6-8 competitions.

Chapter 3 Fun course for local kids (no competitions)

- Age: 11-14 years old
- Period: from middle December to end of season
- Costs: from € 270,00 to € 470,00 (depending on number of lessons)
- Materials: 2 pairs of skis – skiboats
- Ski pass: € 140,00

For some years now, and with increasingly greater success, we have been proposing this Fun course for children up to 14 years of age. This course is also

quite popular with parents. One or two times a week kids ski in a familiar group instead of staying at home in front of a computer or television .

Skiing in a group is fun – skiing alone is boring – there is no performance anxiety usually associated with competitions – the children continue to enjoy skiing while improving their technique. Many of them are so motivated by this course that some of them continue their training in hopes of one day becoming a ski instructor.

Chapter 4 Ski Club kids registred 80 fee 800,00 – 1.600,00

Just a few years ago parents were devastated if their child, after a very severe tryout, was not admitted to the Ski Club. Sometimes there were even arguments between the selection committee, trainers and parents. Today, all children from age 10 who have taken part in competition courses with ski schools can become part of the Ski Club without the severe tests.

But what's happening today? Parents don't want their kids to race! What is it that makes competitive skiing no longer so attractive to children and parents?

What does it mean for parents if their child wants to get involved with competitive skiing?

Costs for children in the Ski Club in the various categories:

Cuccioli (Cubs) born in 1999

Registration fee including ski pass – summer athletic preparation – transportation – ski club outfit € 800,00

Extra costs: 3 pairs of skis – ski boots – racing suit - helmet

Pocket money for about 5 days of lessons on a glacier

Number of competitions that this children take part in within a radius of about 100 km 8-10

Ragazzi (Children) born in 1997-1998

Registration fee including ski pass – summer athletic preparation-transfers – ski club outfit € 1100,00

Extra costs: 4 pairs of skis – ski boots – racing suit - helmet

Pocket money for about 18-25 days of lessons on a glacier

Number of competitions that this children take part in within a radius of about 100 km: 12-15

Allievi (Cadets) born in 1995-1996

Registration fee including ski pass - summer athletic preparation - transfers - ski club outfit € 1200,00

Extra costs: 5 pairs of skis - ski boots - racing suit - helmet

Pocket money for about 23 days of lessons on a glacier

Number of competitions that this children take part in within a radius of about 100 km: 12-15

Aspiranti (Aspirants) born in 1993-1994 and Juniors born in 1991-1992

Registration fee including ski pass - summer athletic preparation - transfers - ski club outfit € 1600,00

Extra costs: 6-7pairs of skis - ski-boots - racing suit - helmet

Pocket money for about 50-56 days of lessons on a glacier

Number of competitions that young athletes take part in within a radius of about 100 km and more: 20 - 25

For all groups there are potential costs for ski preparation, because not all parents have the time or the experience to prepare skis by themselves.

Apart from the costs, that is rather high for a family with a normal income, there is also a stress factor. Today, many parents are no longer willing to deal with so much stress and don't want their child to have to deal with it either.

Example of a Sunday program for a child that takes part in a competition that will be held within a radius of about 100 km.

- 06:00 wake-up and breakfast
- 07:00 meeting point with the group and departure
- 09:30 competition

Obviously, everyone is happy if the competition was successful. But how can children, parents and trainers deal with defeats? They make many sacrifices and it is very difficult to be so motivated to always find the strength to deal with all this (keep in mind the age of the children involved).

Usually both parents work and during the week they have little time to spend with their children.

Wouldn't it be more gratifying to eat breakfast on Sunday morning together with Mom and Dad?

What are we doing wrong?

Do many choose other sports because they cost less?

Is it because other sports are less demanding?

What changes can be made?

As you can see, the initial costs for the first courses are almost the same in various sports, but the better our children become in skiing, the higher the costs.

Who will be willing in the future to spend so much money for our young skiers? Parents have the chance to choose among many sports and why should they choose the one that costs the most?

Often parents tend to convince their children to take part "only" in the local children's courses even though they would have the skills to participate in our competition courses. I often get the feeling that parents are afraid that their children may become too good and in that case they would have to deal with all the costs, demands and stress.

Many don't even want to take this "risk"!

I feel that the first step in changing the rules should come from the top, in order to assure the survival of this sport and not only at competitive levels.

- We should think about establishing the rule that children up to 10-12 years of age should use only 1 pair of skis per discipline.
- Equal conditions should apply to racing suits, if no one wears one the conditions are the same for everybody.
- I'm convinced that the competitions should not begin before 11:00.
- It is not reasonable to train 10 to 12-year-old children on a glacier, especially considering how bad the average snow conditions are during the summer. A good summer athletic preparation session with a specific objective produces the same results. We are talking about children who live in the mountains where they can already start skiing at the end of November. I believe that they will be able to catch up within one week and parents will save a lot of money.

In recent times, no other sport has generated so many debates about accidents and safety measures as skiing has. Many parents think twice about

sending their children by themselves onto the slopes. Children can find a safe slope only on those few practice slopes in the villages.

There are always new projects to build football pitches, artificial ice rinks, sled tracks and climbing gyms, but for the sport that provides substantial wealth to winter resorts the public administration makes very few investments. We don't need an indoor ski hall but just nice practice slopes in villages, where children can spend an afternoon and have fun by themselves.

During holiday periods, when our villages are full of tourists and our children are on school vacation with their parents working, that slopes like these, near the village, would be very advantageous.

LITTLE TOURIST GUESTS

The idea of offering children up to 8 years of age a free ski pass and skis and free ski school membership, is being talked about more and more.

So how will ski instructors and ski schools survive? 70-80% of all those attending ski schools in the entire Alpine area are children.

We must consider that these are tourists who spend more or less one week of vacation on skis.

In our ski school and ski rental office we offer the following discounts for weekly courses for families with more than one child.

1st child full price

2nd child -10%

3rd child -20%

Ski equipment -10%

Free helmet

Since 1997-1998 Dolomiti Superski offers free ski passes to children up to 8 years of age if the person who accompanies them purchases a ski pass.

From mid March: **Special for Kids** - children under the age of 8 do not pay for accommodation and their ski pass. A 10% discount off weekly courses for all children up to 12 years of age and a 20% discount off ski rentals.

In the Dolomiti Superski Area last year children received 500.000 free ski passes.

I would like to thank FIS, Mr. Zenhauser and Mrs. Fussek, that I had the opportunity to expose the problems from my point of view and to be part of a team that is trying to find possible solutions to make this beautiful sport still possible to be practiced by many children.

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Val Gardena

Zurich, 23-09-2009