

## Tips for Individuals - From Dr. Bones (Eddie Johnson)

It's April, a good month to be thinking about and practicing transitions between stages of the PPP.. Only solo-racers, including those in the elite category, are allowed to have two support persons help them at transitions. One support person will initially be at Mt. Bachelor and the other will be at the bike-to-run transition at the Athletic Club of Bend off Century Drive. Individual racers should start securing their support people this month.

The most complicated transition for individuals doing the race as solo-racers - or anyone doing the downhill and then cross-country sections of the race - is the first transition. The racers needs to ski/ snowboard down the race course on Leeway, enter a shoot and switch to cross-country equipment (skate or classic boots, skis and poles). This is where a support person is critical. The support person needs to keep track of the racer's start time and be at the gate well before that. The support people are allowed into the shoot-area in waves, based on racers' start times. The support person will be carrying the cross-country equipment in and setting it up in the designated shoot (see the race packet for those details). All support people should try to line up on the same side of the shoot, so racers can slide up to her/his support without any obstacles in the way. I suggest each support person have a towel or something similar for the racers to step onto so s/he is not slipping around during the transition out of downhill equipment and into cross-country equipment. Then the fun begins. Let's face it, the racer is trying to get on the cross-country course as soon as possible. Some racers accelerate this by already having their skate-ski boots inside their downhill boots, or in place of their snowboard boots, but all racers need assistance from their support person. This transition should be practiced at home between the two of you multiple times, so you can figure out what works best for you. Don't forget, skate-ski poles have a left grip and a right grip - practice how best to get the correct pole to each hand of the racer. It won't be pretty if you just go to the mountain without having practiced all that goes into this transition.

Once the racer is on her/his way, the support person must pick up the downhill equipment, helmet (unless the racer kept it on), and towel, as quickly as possible and get out of the shoot, because there will be another wave of support people coming in before you know it. The support person then will need to drop that stuff off at the vehicle and head over to the ski-bike transition to help the racer there. More on that next time...

You will receive a 2-ride lift ticket in your packet, so that you have the opportunity to try out the course - which has giant-slalom gates along it - before you do it for real. The practice runs end at about 9am (first wave of elite racers is 9:15am). The Pine Martin lift to get there takes about 10 minutes. If you are not familiar with how the race starts, there will be "waves" starting every five minutes. A volunteer holds a pole with the upcoming bib range (like the numbers of for the first set of coed pairs), so you'll know when you're allowed to place your downhill equipment (skis or snowboards) at that start line and YOU go downhill (about 50 feet?) to your start line. A countdown and horn gets you running up (don't forget you may want "Pam" on the bottom of your ski boots for certain snow conditions) to jump into your equipment.

When do you want to get up there? Remember, the Pine Martin lift takes about 10 minutes, it also is loading non-PPP riders; it could stop for a few minutes if there is a mishap. Here is a suggestion: Plan on getting up to the start about 30 minutes before your start time. You'll see the layout and also get to watch and cheer on those before you as they run up the hill and get into their gear. After all of your preparation for the race, you probably don't want to miss your start time.

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Depending on when you go up, you may be waiting at the top of the red chair lift for a while. Of course, if it is a cold, and maybe even snowy, morning, but as a racer you don't want to be all bulked up in winter gear, what can you do? One idea is to wear something expendable that you can leave at the top of red chair when your wave is called to start. I, and others have worn old jackets or sweaters. If you don't have an old sweater, you could buy one at Goodwill for just a few bucks. Racers have worn something extra like this a number of "inclement" years, and guess what? MBSEF staff/volunteers bring the stuff down and there's a chance you'll be able to pick it up at MBSEF headquarters the following week (so you have it for the next PPP). Because MBSEF gives us so many bibs, you might even decide to attach one to that jacket or sweater of yours, so it's easier to identify.