



Championship slalom skier, Sam Ingram.

Water Ski Team Calls Deep Creek Lake Home

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Several mornings a week on the placid waters of Deep Creek Lake, a team of dedicated water skiers gathers just after dawn to get a jump on the summer vacationers and local residents who will flock to the lake later in the day. These skiers are members of the Deep Creek Lake Water Sports Club Ski Team, a group of skiers who practice on the lake and compete across the country in a sport that is very challenging to master.

“We really have a dedicated group of skiers who work very hard,” says Sam Ingram, President of the Deep Creek Lake Water Sports Club. “We have about 130 families on our mailing list and we have a core group of about 15 to 20 active members.” He says most members live in the region, but several are from out of state, using the club’s slalom courses when they are on vacation at the lake.

Ingram is a seasoned water skier who finished in the top 10 at the Water Skiing Nationals last year. He is also the current Eastern regional record holder for Men’s Division III (35-45) slalom competition. Ingram grew up snow skiing in his native Minnesota and didn’t start to ski on water until he was 19 years old.

In addition to his own water skiing career, Ingram works closely with several younger skiers on the team to help them perfect their skills. One skier under his tutelage who has excelled at the sport is 17 year-old Brad Duggan. In July, he competed in the Maryland State Water Skiing Tournament at Lou’s Lake in Vienna, on Maryland’s Eastern shore. When the competition was over, he had won the Men’s Division I (ages 17-24) State Slalom Championship in his first year at the state tournament.

“Brad really likes to ski and he’s very good at it. And I think really he’s going to do well at college and excel in water skiing there,” said Ingram. “I’m glad he has decided to take it to the next level and take advantage of a scholarship in a sport that is rarely seen.” Last December, Ingram and Duggan competed in the Water Skiing Nationals held in Texas. After his exposure in the Nationals, several colleges and universities recruited the Southern Garrett high school graduate. In fact, Brad’s water skiing prowess led to a full scholarship to attend Florida Southern College in Lakeland, Florida, where he will begin his freshman year this September as a member of the water ski team.

Brad’s mother, Tamyra Duggan, credits Ingram with being the driving force behind the ski team. “Sam is the backbone of the team,” says Duggan. “He is qualified to ski professionally and he is one of the best skiers on the East coast.” She also says the kids involved in water skiing with the Deep Creek Lake Water Sports Club are to be commended for their sacrifice and commitment. “It has always impressed me how dedicated these kids are and that’s a very good thing to see. These kids are motivated and show great self-discipline, which speaks a lot for these young kids.” But, she says, very few people know about them and their passion for water skiing.

Ingram admits the club’s dawn ski time is very early but it is necessary for the right conditions. “The lake is very peaceful at 6 a.m. and it’s perfect for slalom skiing because you need smooth water. You really can’t have other boats on the water when they are doing the slalom and the only way to do that is to get up early.”

The club maintains three slalom courses on the lake, which are submersible and sit on the bottom of the lake until they are raised by compressed air when they are being used. The club maintains the courses through the donations of its members and is responsible for making sure they are being used in a safe manner. Through a special permit from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, the club is responsible for maintaining the slalom courses and keeping them in operating condition.

The Deep Creek Lake Water Sports Club is affiliated with USA Waterski, a national organization of water skiing clubs and enthusiasts. The club conducts clinics and hosts several competitions, including the Appalachian Slalom Jubilee water ski tournament in mid-September. For more information about competitive water skiing, contact the Deep Creek Lake Water Sports Club at 301-387-7683.



17 year-old Brad Duggan

