

Yeti Ascent Preparation, “Are you up for it?”

Each event has a flavor a taste that is either appealing or not. If the Ascent has tickled your taste buds what goes on your dinner plate needs to be carefully served up. As with all events what happens before the race is just as important as the event itself, “*be prepared*”. Many of you may already have a game plan together but for those who don’t the following information may come in useful.

For Starters

Before I get into discussing gear, what to wear and how to pack is a personal topic, what works for me, may not work for you. Probably one of the most important tips that I could offer up is make your decisions mid week and try out all your gear before race day.

We should *all* be staying on top of the weather forecast as this will provide valuable info about what we are all going to be facing come Sunday morning and how we are going to dress. One of the big challenges with the Ascent is at sea level the temperature will probably be mild 8 or 9 degrees. At 4, 500 feet try maybe 4 to 5 degrees, add a cross wind and you are looking at chilly conditions, again, *be prepared*.

Remember racers, we have a *transition area* in the parking lot on top of Mount Seymour. This is a bonus because if you get organized you now have access to dry clothes or more food & water. So don’t over pack and try to hump the kitchen sink up top, try and go as light as you can and re-load with supplies as you pass through the parking lot area.

The event organizers want you to have access to this, if you drop your vehicle up top a bus will shuttle you back to Deep Cove. Hey, it is a lot easier to have a friend or family member look after your needs for the day, so make that phone call and see if you can get a support person. Remember, once you have finished the race make sure you have dry – warm cloths waiting for you on the finish line or in your car!

What to wear and what to bring

To keep this as simple as possible, I am going to work from the head down. I have included a picture of everything so if at any time you are unsure of what I am talking about, please reference the picture.

Head Wear; I really like running with a running cap, but for some there is nothing more irritating than having something on your head. Advantages are if it’s raining this will help to keep the water from running down your face and it will also provide *some* insulation when the temps drop. I do strongly recommend a light weight *toque* inside the backpack, this is a *must have* item for the upper snowshoe section.



Eyewear: You will not need eyewear on the lower section of the course. If it is a sunny day I *strongly* recommend sunglasses for the transition area. The reflection of the snow will be blinding. Even if it is semi overcast consider sunglasses, besides you can always take them off and put them in your pack if not needed.

Upper body base layer;

One of the best investments you can make is a Helly Hansen long sleeve sport weight Lifa top. I guarantee this will become one of the most versatile pieces of workout clothing you will have.

You may want to have another piece over the base layer. I like to use a cycling jersey, the back pockets provide easy access to bars and gels.

Upper body outer layer

Everyone out on course should have access to a light-weight shell jacket. Stuff that in your pack or for sure you want this in the transition area up top. This is a *must have* item as you start out for Pump Peak!

Backpack

This is one of those pieces of equipment that you want to test before the race. Walking or hiking around is very different than running with a pair of snowshoes. This poses one of the most important questions of the race, “how do I carry my snowshoes?”

My recommendation is to have a pack big enough so that the snowshoes fit inside. You can strap them down to the outside but you run the risk of them coming loose or snagging on branches. If you do strap, trying to undo knots can be tough once your hands are cold and the straps are wet. If the snowshoes are inside the pack they can't come loose or fall out, they are close your body with less flop from side to side and when you need them, you just pull them out.

The backpack should have a hydration system, don't over fill as fluids are heavy. Have enough to get you to the parking lot area and then reload for the final Ascent.

Gloves

This is another *must have* item for the final Ascent. If it is wet the wild chill will shut you hands down, get some light weight gloves on.

Lower Body

Once again, this is a tough one. I would love to run the trails with shorts and then put on some longs for the snowshoe. To avoid the cold leg situation even if it is mild in Deep Cove I am going with a light weight full length running tight. I pre ran the lower section of course on Sunday and it was warm as I started out, but, mid way up it had cooled off and by the time I hit the parking lot it was nice to have full length on. A warm muscle performs better than a tight cold muscle, keep your legs warm.

Socks

I see so many people in a nice pair of trail runners with a crappy cotton sock? I almost pay more attention to my socks than my trail runner, well almost. Invest in a mid weight technical sock that will perform in the wet and cold. I have always said, "if my feet are happy, I'm happy" Look for a pair of Darn Tough socks, their fantastic for cold and wet weather and they're guaranteed for life!

Foot Wear

Speaking of happy feet, this is something that I am excited about. I just picked up from North Shore Athletics, the new **Inov 8** trail runner. It's light weight, low profile hugged the side of Seymour, the aggressive tread pattern is a real bonus out on the trails. I suppose the message hear is go with your trail runners, I think that's a given.

Energy supplies

Another *must have*! This is a big Ascent, stay fueled up with bars, GU gels and GU energy drink. I'm not going to get into how many and when, but have something for the lower section and then re-load for the final Ascent.

Other Safety Supplies

As mentioned it's always a good idea to be prepared, even though Marc and the safety team will be keeping a close eye on you. We all need to take responsibility for our actions when playing outside. It's a good idea to have the following addition supplies just in case.

- Whistler
- Emergency space blanket
- Shell Jacket
- Toque and Gloves
- Food and Water

I hope this information helps you prepare for The 2006 Yeti Ascent, and that is my key message is ***Be Prepared*** and you will have a fun successful day.

I think you *are* up for it!

Dave Howells
Team Yeti Manager
Yeti Snowshoe Academy
Director of Operations