



2018 Freestyle Ski Coaches Guide

This guide has been created by the Beaver Valley Coaching Staff to develop, deliver and evaluate daily plans that contribute to athlete development in the following areas:

- Ski safety
- Collaboration
- Individuality
- Listening skills
- Self-confidence
- Goal-setting
- Group/peer learning
- Task focused activities

The planning tips in this guide address the physical, mental, emotional, cognitive as well as the technical and tactical needs. These essential considerations follow closely the phases of athlete development, as per the CFSA LTAD document. This guide references the CFSA, CSIA and LTAD.

Staff Roles

Freestyle Head and Assistance Head Coach

The Head Coach brings an overall vision for the Freestyle program and sees that it is implemented over the season. In order to ensure this happens the Head Coach will train all the coaches both on snow and through indoor sessions. The Head Coach focuses on a quality program being provided at each level and skills are being learned during the correct “windows of opportunity”. The Head Coach will support staff on hill as a mentor in coaching situations. The Head Coach will manage the majority of electronic parent communication along with the Alpine Programs Coordinator which will include sending parent updates on Sundays with highlights of the weekend and plans for the upcoming weekend. On Wednesdays the Head Coach will send results from the previous weekend and race event notices for all events that coming weekend.

Program Leads

A Program Lead will be assigned to each of programs and will support their coaches specifically when it comes to athlete development and feedback. The Head Coach will ask the Program Leads to lead smaller, targeted sessions with the coaches to focus on specific skill development applicable each LTAD level. Program Leads and the Head Coach will help coaches with mid and end of season assessments so

they are completed with consistency and the correct amount of feedback. At the end of season athletes will be rated through a scale developed with the Head Coach and Program Leads that will help in group placement for the next winter.

Coaches

Coaches are to focus on the teams they are assigned and support other freestyle coaches where needed. Coaches will follow and implement the seasonal plan laid out in this document as well as helping where needed with course builds or maintenance and safety etc.

Team Managers

Team Managers are parent volunteers who assist the coaches and program leads in delivering the overall coaching philosophy to other parents, help with event day organization, support event day as bib collectors, and manage athletes while the coach is focused on the event. Team managers are involved to support the team and help in the smooth implementation of the season.

Coaches Availability

Beaver Valley's competitive programs are at minimum 25 days over the season and when filling coaching positions we are looking for a commitment to the full season. Consistent coaching is key to team building and an athlete's success which is why this commitment is so important. We will be asking for coaching availability prior to the beginning of the season and will place coaches who can work the entire season first and fill in with "floating" staff.

Friday training will be sold on a first come first serve basis. We will run Fridays on a 1 – 8 ratio, if we do not have coaches available to accommodate athletes they will be put on a waiting list in case another coach becomes available. When providing your availability please include Fridays. If you become available on a Friday please let the Assistant or Head Coach know by the Sunday before at the latest so we will open up more spots to our athletes.

Coaches Daily Schedule

Coaches' daily attendance for the morning sessions during the season is crucial in the delivery of a consistent, quality program for you athletes. A coach session schedule will be made available well in advance. The goal will be to focus on the various skill sets that are outlined in the weekly plans and have a progression throughout the session. Other aspects that will be addressed are; coaches' personal performance of exercises, free skiing, video analysis. With this being said, the head coach intends to remain inclusive with the coaching staff and provide a fun learning experience during each session.

- 8:15 – Coaches Meeting
- 8:25 – Coaches Session On-Snow or Indoor
- 9:25 – Program Meeting Area to Pick Up Group
- 12:25 – Return to Meeting Area to Drop Off Group
- 1:25 – Pick Up Group for Afternoon Session
- 3:25 – Drop Off Athletes for the Day

LTAD- Long Term Athlete Development and Where Freestyle Skiing Fits

Active Start ages 0-6 – Development Programs (Recreational or Intro to Freestyle)

An Active Start is key to a child's healthy athletic development, starting as an infant all the way through their early school years. Parents need to provide opportunity for daily activity.

FUNdamentals, Females 6-8, Males 6-9 – Jumps and Bumps, Mogul Development Freestylerz, Intro to Freestyle

During the Fundamentals stage children should develop fundamental movement skills, including ABC's of Agility, Balance, Coordination and Speed. Children should participate in a fun and challenging multi-sport environment. Early elementary school age children need to participate in a variety of well-structured activities that develop basic skills. However, activities and programs need to maintain a focus on fun and formal competition should only be minimally introduced.

Learn to Train, Females 8-11, Males 9-12 – Freestylerz, Moguls, Jumps and Bumps

During the Learn to Train stage children should be covering their fundamental movement skills. This stage is "The Golden Age Of Learning" for specific sport skills. Children in this stage are ready to begin training according to more formalized methods. However, the emphasis should still be on general sport skills suitable to a number of activities.

Train to Train, Females 11-15, Males 12-16 – Freestylerz, Moguls, Jumps and Bumps

During the Train to Train stage young athletes need to build an aerobic base and consolidate their sport specific skills. Towards the end of the stage, they need to focus on strength and the anaerobic alactic energy system. Increased training hours are needed at this stage to develop each athletes long-term potential.

Train to Compete, Females 15-21, Males 16-23 – U16/U18

In the Train to Compete stage athletes choose one sport in which they will train to excel. Athletes will train to solidify their sport-specific skills and all of their physical capacities. These athletes are aiming to compete in national and international events. This is where competition becomes serious.

Train to Win, Females 18+, Males 19+

The Train to Win stage is the final stage of the LTAD high performance stream. Medals and podium performances are the primary focus. In the train to win stage of LTAD, athletes with identified talent pursue high-intensity training to win international events. They are now full time athletes.

Coaches Daily Check List

- Always have the guide on hand
- Use this guide to progress and modify daily training plans for your group. Include warm up, activation and cool down phases
- Set daily goals for your group, individual athletes and yourself. When appropriate, communicate and co-develop goals with your group, parents of athletes , co-coaches and supervisor
- Prepare for and participate in coach training sessions
- Communicate one on one with each athlete daily. Provide positive, descriptive and relevant feedback
- Continuously remind your group of safe practices, including a daily reminder of EAP's for separated or injured athletes. Always follow the Alpine Responsibility Code
- Perform visual equipment checks prior to loading for the first run and throughout the day
- Record goals, successes and areas for growth in this guide
- Remember you are part of a team! Share concerns and ideas with peers, Supervisor, Head Coach or Alpine Programs Manager in a professional manner.

Early Season Thoughts

- Assess the skills of your group and notify your Head Coach of any necessary changes. Record your observations whenever possible.
- Make sure equipment is correct for the athlete's skill level.
- It takes a number of days on snow to relearn skills acquired in the previous season. Take your time and start small.
- Use natural terrain and terrain environments to target specific technical and tactical skill development. Be safe, creative and fun.
- A visual is worth a thousand words! Commit to demonstrating skills and drills for your group. Reach out to your peers if you need help.
- Apply the principles outlined in the initiation, acquisition consolidation and refinement phases of skill development. Consider the needs of each athlete and the learning momentum of your group before moving on to a new skill.
- Assess athletes from the feet up. Many issues that Coaches struggle with can be remedied with stance and balance work.
- Technical free ski with athletes as much as possible and encourage playful experimentation with extremes from day one.
- Expect change, but remember athletes at this phase of development will often demonstrate regression as part of their learning progression. Skill development is fluid and it is your responsibility to guide long term athleticism.
- Familiarize yourself with the reference materials listed at the end of this guide, in particular, the Jumps and Bumps or Freestylerz document.
- Be engaged.

- Incorporate fun, competitive activities in your daily plan to promote a healthy atmosphere of freestyle skiing.
- If you are having fun, your athletes will certainly absorb your enthusiasm and become lifelong skiers.

Basic Skiing Skills Defined

Stance & Balance

- Stance describes a skier's natural position
- Balance involves forward, backward, vertical, lateral and rotational planes

Focus on developing:

A natural, athletic posture in varied environments

- Arms open and at chest height, shoulders ahead of the knees, width of stance to suit snow conditions and build of athlete
- Use of all joints
- Upper body slightly rolled through the spine, engage hips for power, knees for steering direction and ankles for edging Balance is felt through the arch of the foot

Timing & Coordination

- Timing describes the skier's ability to determine the precise moment for initiating or completing an action
- Coordination brings all motor movements into a common movement or action pattern

Focus on developing:

Pole plant at turn initiation, pressure building and release through turn and on features, varied turn shapes and sizes, sequence of movements

Steering & Edging

- Steering describes the athlete's ability to use the lower leg and feet to help guide the skis in a specific direction
- Edging combines inclination and angulation to place the ski on edge

Focus on developing:

Upper and lower body separation and use of all joints

Pressure Control & Absorption

- Pressure control describes the athlete's use of extension/flexion in the legs to maintain, increase or decrease the pressure through the arc on varied terrain and conditions
- Carving requires the athletes to engage the edge of the ski at the appropriate time

Focus on developing:

Maintaining weight over the outside ski and use of all joints

Event Day

Event day can be a very stressful for athletes. Here are a few tools to help with event day stressors

- Establish a meeting place with athletes and parents.
- Attend Coaches meeting.
- Arrive early - there is nothing worse than rushing before an event. Give yourself and the competitors enough time to inspect and practice without the stress.
- Let the parents know the plan well in advance.
- Hand out bibs and remind athletes to have them visible at all times.
- Inspect the course.
- Have warm up runs prior to race to gain confidence.
- Recruit parents to help manage athletes, and watch kids inside while you attend to athletes with later numbers.
- Congratulate the team on a great day.
- Ski the resort the whole day.
- Attend awards and model good sportsmanship and professionalism at all times.
- Have a meeting place and time for parents to meet athletes for pick up. Remember Duty of Care.
- Communicate event day rules.
- Discuss what to do when athletes falls or puts a hand down.
- All athletes are different. Manage nerves individually.

Basic Decision Training and Tools

- Variable Practice: Require the athlete to learn a number of variations of a skill in a competitive setting
- Random Practice : Combine different skills of the sport within game-like drills that simulate competition
- Bandwidth feedback : Feedback is gradually reduced or faded requiring the athlete to function more independently of external guidance
- Questioning: Ask questions that probe what the athlete understands about the drill, tactic or skill being trained
- Hard-first instruction: Complex technical and tactical information is present early in the season rather than later
- Modeling : Athletes view an expert or other athlete in order to learn what is required to perform; this allows the athlete to learn to analyze skills and strategies relevant to their sport

Team Building 101

One of the most valuable roles as a Coach working with young athletes is to nurture team spirit within your training group. Communicate and role model behavioural expectations with athletes and parents from the get go, and incorporate team building activities throughout each day. Always present an attitude of approachability to your team and parents. Your efforts will decrease the amount of time spent addressing behavioural and group management issues allowing you to focus on skill development.

Team Building Cycle

Remember, one of our basic human needs is to feel we belong to something bigger than ourselves, and for kids that need is often met by being part of a team. Have fun and work hard - your team will follow your lead.

Skill Development is enhanced by

- Free skiing for many miles, in all conditions, both supervised and unsupervised
- Skillful selection of specific training environments (jump line, mogul jump etc.) to enhance a specific skill
- Athlete's knowledge of sport specific skills
- Utilizing mental training techniques
- A well planned training program with specific goals and objectives
- Terrain selection to challenge the skier at the skier's ability
- Training on features 80% of the time that allow athletes to acquire new skills as opposed to training on larger features athletes struggle to perform basic maneuvers over
- Coaching the performance of a movement vs coaching the look of a movement

Free Skiing as much as possible is the most simple and effective method to encourage skill development at the entry level.

Skill development

- Utilizing proper terrain for skill acquisition
- Utilizing a variety of terrain and snow conditions to build confidence and challenge the athletes
- Train all freestyle disciplines (moguls and terrain park) along with general ski skills
- Utilizing mental skill training techniques (breathing, goal-setting, focus, activation control, visualization)
- Knowledge of the planes of balance and movement
- Awareness of the children's abilities at the current level they are working on
- Terrain selection to enhance skill acquisition
- Drill selection (drill/skill matching)

Jumps and Bumps

The Jumps and Bumps program is aimed at providing athletes the “FUNdamentals” level of skiing in the park, moguls and across the mountain. Jumps and Bumps is focused on the skill development of freestyle park and mogul skills while continuing to promote the development of overall skiing skills. This fosters the development of overall skills while maintaining participant enjoyment, focusing on the FUN of learning. The focus will be skill development through course environments while working on basic skills.

- Safety
- Control
- Experimentation of vertical movement
- Intro to freestyle awareness
- Line Selection in bumps
- Popping on to boxes
- 50/50 and ski slides on boxes
- Air skills including spread eagles, grabs, intro to rotation etc.
- Experimentation of fore aft movement
- Intro to switch skiing
- Experimentation of steering and sliding

After Jumps and Bumps athletes should be able to ski through a mogul line and navigate a small or medium terrain park and perform basic tricks on features. When using these bench marks we must keep in mind the number of days on snow, fitness level and commitment level.

Freestylarz

The Freestylarz program is aimed at providing athletes the “FUNdamentals” and Learn to Train level of skiing in the park and across the mountain. Freestylarz is focused on the skill development of freestyle park skills and grassroots competition while continuing to promote the development of overall skiing skills. This fosters the development of overall skills while maintaining participant enjoyment, focusing on the FUN of learning. The focus will be skill development through course environments while working on basic skills.

- Safety
- Control
- Experimentation of vertical movement
- Intro to freestyle awareness
- Sliding natural and unnatural on rails and boxes
- Air skills rotation in various directions up to 540's.
- Experimentation of fore aft movement
- Switch skiing

- Experimentation of steering and sliding

After Freestylerz athletes should be able to ski through a park and perform rotations on jump features and slide multiple directions on boxes and rails. When using these bench marks we must keep in mind the number of days on snow, fitness level and commitment level.

Training to Event Start Ratio: 7 training days per 1 event start

Moguls

The Mogul Development program is aimed at providing athletes the “FUNdamentals” and Learn to Train levels of skiing in the moguls and across the mountain. The Mogul Development is focused on the skill development of freestyle mogul skills and entry level competition while continuing to promote the development of overall skiing skills. This fosters the development of overall skills while maintaining participant enjoyment, focusing on the FUN of learning. The focus will be skill development through course environments while working on basic skills.

- Safety
- Control
- Experimentation of vertical movement
- Intro to freestyle awareness
- Line Selection in bumps
- Popping skills on mogul jumps
- Air skills including spread eagles, twister, twister spread, iron cross etc.
- Timing of pole plant in the bumps
- Intro to terrain park skiing
- Experimentation of fore aft movement
- Intro to switch skiing
- Experimentation of steering and sliding
- Maintaining fore aft movement
- Spinning both ways off mogul jump
- Psychological skills
- Spin 360's and beyond
- Catch air in bumpy terrain and maintain a turn
- Ski parallel switch
- Timing, coordination, rhythm
- Rotational stability
- Competitive spirit

After Moguls athletes should be able to ski parallel through a mogul line the ability to perform two different tricks off a mogul jump in the line. When using these bench marks we must keep in mind the number of days on snow, fitness level and commitment level.

Training to Event Start Ratio: 7 training days per 1 event start

Seasonal Training Plan

Day 1 - 7: Stance and Balance

Goal: Focus on stance and balance, look to make sure the athlete has a natural stance. Focus on technical free skiing to get athlete comfortable on skis. Identify and improve technical problems.

Include the following daily throughout the 9 week program:

- Morning warm up
- Technical free ski and drills(supervised and unsupervised)
- Training environment to achieve skill acquisition
- Use appropriate terrain
- Keep it fun
- Maintain safety at all times
- Force outcomes with external cues
- Use decision training to include the athlete in their skiing progression
- Use visualization and focus

Correct body position will enable the athlete to maintain balance and allow proper range of motion throughout all skiing movements. It should be natural and athletic with flexion in the three lower body joints; ankle, knee and hip. Weight is spread throughout the foot centered towards the ball to arch. The shoulders and hips should be on top of the feet with the knees over the toes. As a result of ankle flexion the athlete will feel shin pressure. The upper body should be aligned over the feet. Arms are held comfortably in front with the hands at approximately mid torso height. The head is in a natural position with the vision looking ahead to read the upcoming terrain. The body position can vary according to specific skiing situations.

- Stance is the way a skier aligns the body over the skis.
- Balance can be adjusted if the skier's stance is mobile
- Balance is the skiers ability to use structure and musculature to keep from falling down

For Skiing Balance is broken down into 4 Planes of Movement:

These movements help the skier to maintain balance in motion.

- Lateral

The ability to adjust width of stance and body movement to balance in a side to side manner.

- Fore aft

The ability to maintain alignment with the feet and the center of mass in a forward and backward motion.

- Rotational

The control and adjustment of rotational movements between and within the upper and lower body segments.

(Starting a turn with the upper body, e.g. Hips or shoulders is an example of being out of balance in the rotational plane.

- Vertical

The ability to bend and extend the joints to control pressure and snow contact.

Drills

- Absorption and Extension
- Pop On Take Off
- Position through Slides on Features
- Position while Grabbing
- Extremes/Airplane Turns
- Boots Undone
- Hop Turn
- Pole Drag

Day 8 - 14: Timing and Coordination

Goal: Continue working on stance and balance. By this time athletes should be comfortable and well balanced ready to move to other skills such as timing and coordination. Athletes need to understand how and when to pop as well as timing movement patterns through moguls.

Athletes need to bring motor movements into a common movement or action.

Include the following:

Continue with morning warm up

- Technical free ski and drills (supervised and unsupervised)
- Training environment to achieve skill acquisition
- Use appropriate terrain
- Keep it fun
- Maintain safety at all times

Timing is the skier's ability to choose and use an action at the appropriate moment.

It is a key skill as it ties the skills to the phases of the turn, and jumping. Therefore effective timing will allow skiers to perform to their skill potential. However, execution error of the above mention skills can prevent the skier from having good timing as they are not in a good position to execute a well carved turn, proper take off or mogul turn.

The effectiveness of timing is related to the loading and unloading of the ski (pressure control). This is achieved through specific movements (refer to turn phases for specific movements) at specific time are required.

Coordination is the ability to sequence multiple movements, with appropriate timing

Drills

- Double Pole Plant
- Hop, Plant, Turn
- Texas 2 Step
- Crab Walk

Day 15 – 20: Pressure and Carving

Goal: Continue working on stance and balance along with timing. By this time the athletes should be comfortable and well balanced ready to move to other skills.

Athletes will be at different skill levels. Continue to individualize coaching to maximize skill acquisition.

Include the following:

- Continue with morning warm up
- Technical free ski and drills (supervised and unsupervised)
- Training environment to achieve skill acquisition
- Use appropriate terrain
- Keep it fun
- Maintain safety at all times

Drills and Training Environments

Drills have one major purpose: to isolate skills that need to be patterned, adapted and then refined in order to enhance performance. Remember use the proper terrain to further develop the athlete's skills.

Drills:

- 360 on snow
- Rollerblade turns
- High Mark
- Hockey Stops
- Mogul Traverse
- Big Turn in Varied Terrain

Courses and Environments

- Jump take offs
- Boxes
- Wave tanks

- Basic mogul runs,

Tactics

- Turn shape and set up turns
- Speed
- Environment
- Video,
- Mental training
- Visualization
- End of the day debrief with athletes.

Day 21 – 25: Steering and Edging

Goal: Continue working on stance and balance, timing and coordination and pressure control. By this time the athletes should be comfortable and well balanced and be ready to move to other skills.

Athlete in a natural stance, understanding of pole plant, being able to bring motor movements into a common movement or action, with the combination of inclination and angulation to place the ski on edge, using the feet to steer along with the side cut of the ski.

Athletes may be at different skill levels. Continue to individualize feedback to maximize skill acquisition.

Include the following:

- Continue with morning warm up
- Technical free ski and drills (supervised and unsupervised)
- Training environment to achieve skill acquisition
- Use appropriate terrain
- Keep it fun
- Maintain safety at all times

Steering is the use of the legs and feet to help guide the skis in a specific direction.

Edging is the ability to balance against the edge of the ski in a way that will utilize the side cut of the ski.

Edging prepares the skier to control direction and speed.

Use of inclination to develop an angle between the surface of the snow and the base of ski is required for the skier to set and maintain direction in a turn or to control speed.

Carving is well timed steering and edging

Drills

- Corridor
- 360's
- Cross Fall Line Edging
- Spaghetti Legs

- Rollerblade Turns
- One Ski

March Break to End of Season

At this point we are coming into the final weekend. Athletes should be well balanced and moving through the skills you have coached all season. Don't be frustrated if some athletes have not come as far as you thought. As we have said athletes are not alike, and everyone develops at different points based on a number of reasons. Continue to work hard and instill the love of skiing into all athletes you coach.

Use video as much as possible. Show athletes video and detect and correct. Show pro skiers on video to show a perfect picture. Show video of athletes in the park and free skiing.

- Athletes should warm up on own, depending on age (supervise at first and allow for the athlete to warm up on own)
- Activities and drills needs to be fun and varied to keep athletes interested
- Consolidate and refine skills
- Work towards next season
- Use lots of fun & competition
- Ski bumps
- Focus on rotation if as the snow conditions soften late season