



Community Coaching Fundamentals

Step 1: Introduction



Reference Material



PARTNERS IN COACH EDUCATION

The National Coaching Certification Program is a collaborative program of the Government of Canada, provincial/territorial governments, national/provincial/territorial sport organizations, and the Coaching Association of Canada.



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1.1 Why Choose Cross-Country Skiing?

Cross-country skiing is an ideal “lifestyle” sport for individuals of all ages and abilities. Everyone can and should participate, whether they do so casually during the winter to enjoy the outdoors, or train all year round and aspire to become a World Cup champion.

The sport has a strong family orientation. Skiers range in age from three to 100 years, and clubs traditionally focus on events/activities in which the entire family can participate. Many high performance competitions encourage family participation as well, with categories ranging from seven and under to 70 plus.

This is a sport that is low impact and very easy on the joints. It is almost injury free. It activates all the body’s major muscle groups, and is an excellent developer of the cardiovascular system. Physically, cross-country skiing is an ideal activity!!

For most Canadians, cross-country skiing is accessible. Facilities are available in many areas of Canada, and individuals can move from one community to another and continue their involvement with the sport. Moreover, due to the nature of the sport, anyone can enjoy some level of activity without costly lessons or months of training. Most important of all, this is an outdoor winter activity that allows people to appreciate our long Canadian winters and the beautiful country in which we live.

Cross Country Canada believes and teaches that sport is an ethical pursuit, one which builds character and shapes attitudes.

1.2 The Role of the Community Coach

The Community Coach is trained to lead a skill development program at the club level. They are responsible for:

- Teaching an effective series of skill development sessions for children in the FUNdamentals stage of athlete development (e.g. CCC's Jackrabbit Program).
- Providing a learning environment for participants that is:
 - ✓ **Comfortable.** Incorporates a proper understanding of equipment, clothing and other requirements for participating in outdoor winter activities.
 - ✓ **Educational.** Provides the opportunity for progressive improvement;
 - ✓ **Enjoyable.** Is fun and motivating through the provision of activities that: are stimulating and novel and contain an appropriate degree of challenge.
 - ✓ **Safe.** Incorporates appropriate safety and risk management procedures, including the development of an appropriate Emergency Action Plan (EAP).
 - ✓ **Age Appropriate.** Adheres to the principles of CCC's Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) model.
 - ✓ **Ethical.** Ascribes to the NCCP Code of Ethics.
 - ✓ **Parent Supported.** Parents are engaged and supportive of the objectives and methodology of the program.
- Providing leadership that will:
 - ✓ motivate children to learn more, ski more and continue in the sport; and
 - ✓ meet the approval of the parents.

1.2.1 Major Functions and Tasks of a Community Coach

Responsibilities include the following:

- providing leadership with regard to sport equipment - guidance regarding clothing and equipment selection, teaching good ski care habits, teaching ski preparation skills (refer to section 7 of this document and section 3 of the Introduction to Community Coaching Reference Material);
- ensuring a suitable setting for practice sessions - appropriate signage and boundaries, age/ skill and lesson-appropriate terrain, appropriate grooming, etc. (refer to section 4.1 of this document and section 4.1 of the Introduction to Community Coaching Reference Material);
- educating parents to help ensure positive sport experiences for the children in the program;
- developing a comprehensive and effective seasonal plan;
- planning and delivering effective practice sessions (dryland, on-snow and classroom sessions);

- teaching and evaluating technique;
- tracking progress and providing technique awards, report cards, etc.;
- tracking progress and/or providing opportunities for skiers to achieve program awards;
- recruiting parents for various roles (coaches, officials, administrators, etc.);
- mentoring developing coaches;
- liaising with the club head coach and the leaders of the skill development groups above and below the skill level you are working with;
- providing inspiration and enthusiasm;

Additional Coaching Tips:

- Refer to section 8.1.4 of the Introduction to Community Coaching Reference Material for a detailed checklist of common tasks; and
- Refer to section 8.4 of this Reference Material for detailed checklists of tasks relating to competitions.

1.2.2 Skill Development Program (SDP) Coaches

SDP coaches lead group sessions. If a group of children are in the Active Start stage of development this role may be filled by community coaches “in training”, but if the group is in the FUNdamentals stage of development, they must be “trained” community coaches - technically competent, good role models and able to present the program well. General responsibilities might include the following:

- planning and conducting activity/practice sessions for their own group of children (dryland, on-snow and classroom sessions);
- teaching and evaluating ski technique;
- teaching ski preparation skills and respect for ski equipment; and
- providing inspiration and enthusiasm.

If your club SDP is large, it may be necessary for one of the coaches to take the role of team leader in order to oversee the planning and coordination of all the group sessions. This person requires a good understanding of the program. Responsibilities might include the following:

- coordinating the training and development of all the coaches working with SDP program, including new coaches recruited to replace retiring coaches;
- ensuring suitable substitutes for coaches who cannot make an activity/practice session;

- ❑ liaising with the club head coach and the next level of athlete development program above the SDP;
- ❑ ensuring the provision of current information on equipment selection, ski preparation etc.;
- ❑ ensuring the coordination of games when the various SDP groups assemble together, as well as the coordination of appropriate equipment; hoops, soccer balls etc.;
- ❑ coordinating the regular involvement of appropriate “role models”; and
- ❑ coordinating use of the ski area to suit the needs of the different ages/skill levels within the groups.

Skill development during the FUNdamentals stage of athlete development should be well-structured, positive and FUN!

1.3 Glossary of Terms

- **Adolescence** is a difficult period to define in terms of onset and termination. During this period, most bodily systems become adult both structurally and functionally. Structurally, adolescence begins with an acceleration of the rate of growth in stature, which marks the onset of the adolescent growth spurt. The rate of statural growth reaches a peak, begins a slower or decelerative phase, and finally terminates with the attainment of adult stature. Functionally, adolescence is usually viewed in terms of sexual maturation, which begins with changes in the neuroendocrine system prior to overt physical changes and terminates with the attainment of mature reproductive functions.
- **Ancillary capacities** refer to the knowledge and experience base of an athlete and includes warm-up and cool-down procedures, stretching, nutrition, hydration, rest, recovery, restoration, regeneration, mental preparation, and taper and peak. The more athletes know about these training and performance factors, the more they can enhance their training and performance levels. When athletes reach their genetic potential and physiologically cannot improve any more, performance can be improved by using the ancillary capacities to full advantage.
- **Childhood** ordinarily spans the end of infancy – the first birthday – to the start of adolescence and is characterized by relatively steady progress in growth and maturation and rapid progress in neuromuscular or motor development. It is often divided into early childhood, which includes pre-school children aged one to five years, and late childhood, which includes elementary school-age children aged six through to the onset of adolescence.
- **Chronological age** refers to the number of years and days elapsed since birth. Growth, development, and maturation operate in a time framework; that is, the child's chronological age. Children of the same chronological age can differ by several years in their level of biological maturation. The integrated nature of growth and maturation is achieved by the interaction of genes, hormones, nutrients and the physical and psychosocial environments in which the individual lives. This complex interaction regulates the child's growth, neuromuscular maturation, sexual maturation and general physical metamorphosis during the first two decades of life.
- **Developmental Age** refers to the interrelationship between growth and maturation in relation to the passage of time. The concept of development also includes the social, emotional, intellectual, and motor realms of the child. Developmental age reflects the true overall situation of an individual's growth and maturation and may be thought of as an index of development stated as the age in years of an individual and determined by specified standardized measurements such as motor and mental tests and body measurements. The terms "growth" and "maturation" are often used together and sometimes synonymously. However, each refers to specific biological activities. Growth refers to observable, step-by-step, measurable changes in body size such as height, weight, and percentage of body fat. Maturation refers to qualitative system changes, both structural and functional in nature, in the organism's progress toward maturity; for example, the change of cartilage to bone in the skeleton.

- ❑ **Peak height velocity (PHV)** is the maximum rate of growth in stature during growth spurt. The age of maximum velocity of growth is called the age at PHV.
- ❑ **Periodization** is time management. As a planning technique it provides the framework for arranging the complex array of training processes into a logical and scientifically based schedule to bring about optimal improvements in performance.
- ❑ **Physical Literacy** refers to the mastering of fundamental motor skills and fundamental sport skills.
- ❑ **Post-natal growth** is commonly, although sometimes arbitrarily, divided into three or four age periods, including infancy, childhood, adolescence and puberty.
- ❑ **Puberty** refers to the point at which an individual is sexually mature and able to reproduce.
- ❑ **Skeletal age** refers to the maturity of the skeleton determined by the degree of ossification of the bone structure. It is a measure of age that takes into consideration how far given bones have progressed toward maturity, not in size, but with respect to shape and position to one another.
- ❑ **Speed** may be thought of as the ability to move a limb, limbs, or the whole body at the greatest possible velocity. In addition, speed involves the capability to react to a stimulus or signal (such as a starting signal, stumble, or fake/deke) in the shortest possible time.
- ❑ **Trainability** refers to the generic endowment of athletes as they respond individually to specific stimuli and adapt to it accordingly. Malina and Bouchard (1991) defined trainability as “the responsiveness of developing individuals at different stages of growth and maturation to the training stimulus.”
- ❑ **Window of Optimal Trainability** refers to a point in the development of a specific behaviour when experience or training has an optimal effect on development. The same experience, introduced at an earlier or later time, has no effect on or retards later skill acquisition.

REFERENCES

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