



# Community Coaching Fundamentals

## Step 4: Teaching classic technique



**Reference Material**



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Coaching Tip: If children practice a sport incorrectly, they are unable to change and adapt (later), and then they cannot move on. We must have coaches who can teach youngsters the right techniques from the beginning.

Source: Fennell

## Teaching Cross-Country Skiing

Your success as a coach will depend in large part on your understanding of the principles of teaching, adapted to the group that you are coaching. Section 4 (Teaching Classic Technique), section 5 (Designing an Overall Plan for the Season) and section 9 (Teaching Skating Technique) of the Reference Material are intended to provide you with the information you will need to effectively teach ski technique to children in the FUNdamental stage of development. The table below highlights the resource material that will be of highest priority to you.

### Essential Material

- 1. General Factors to Consider When Teaching Technique.** (Section 4.1) Information to help you understand the many factors that will influence your success in teaching technique, regardless of how well you teach it.
- 2. FUNdamentals Practice Plans – Levels 1 to 4.** (Section 5.3 to 5.6) A progression of comprehensive practice plans outlining what to do from the beginning of a practice session to the end of it, for every practice session in a season.
- 3. Ski Exercises for Developing Balance.** (Section 4.1.4) A selection of basic exercises that are age-appropriate and teach balance, agility and coordination. You can draw from this list as needed to modify the recommended practice plans.
- 4. Games for Teaching Technique.** (Section 4.3.9) A selection of games that are age-appropriate and teach balance, agility, coordination and ski technique. You can exchange games from the recommended practice plans if those games do not suit the snow conditions or available terrain, or simply incorporate them to your plan as needed to enhance your practice session.
- 5. FUNdamental Skill Criteria and Evaluation Benchmarks.** (Section 4.3) Tools that explain the technique standard expected for each of the four progressive levels/stages (coordinated with the four levels of practice plans).
- 6. FUNdamental Skill Checklists – Levels 1 to 4.** (Section 4.3) Tools to record the technical skills achieved at each progressive level/stage (coordinated with the four levels used for the practice plans and technique awards).
- 7. Progress Report.** (Section 4.3.12) An example of a report card that summarizes a child's progress at the end of each season.
- 8. Classic Technique Checklist.** (Section 4.2) Information to help you teach the classic techniques.
- 9. Skating Technique Checklist.** (Section 9.1) Information to help you teach the skating techniques.

### 4.1 General Factors to Consider When Teaching Technique

There are many factors that can influence a good learning environment for the acquisition of ski technique. Below are some of the key points that you should keep in mind when you are preparing to teach an on-snow practice session. You should also keep in mind that most of the factors or considerations need to be adapted to the age and skill level of the children you are coaching in order for you to achieve maximum effectiveness.

#### 4.1.1 Checklist of Important Considerations

The following bullets highlight the key considerations that you must address as you prepare to teach children in the FUNdamental stage of athlete development how to ski. Where appropriate, the bullets direct you to the point in the Reference Material where you can find more information on the subject.

- ❑ **Appropriate Clothing.** Refer to section 3 in your Introduction to Community Coaching Reference Material for more information.
- ❑ **Appropriate Ski Equipment.** Refer to section 7 in this manual and section 3 in your Introduction to Community Coaching Reference Material for more information.
- ❑ **Appropriately Prepared Skis.** Refer to section 7 in this manual and section 3 in your Introduction to Community Coaching Reference Material for more information.
- ❑ **Appropriate Terrain/Setting.** Children will learn best at a kid-friendly ski area with a variety of terrain to choose from, adventure-based features such as obstacle courses and/ or adventure trails, and a daylodge/shelter in close proximity to where the majority of their skiing takes place. Refer to section 4 in your Introduction to Community Coaching Reference Material for more information.
- ❑ **Appropriate Grooming.** An appropriately packed and trackset ski area/trail is essential for learning technique.
- ❑ **Good Coaching Methods and Technique Instruction.** Refer to section 4.2 of this reference material for information on teaching classic technique; section 9.1 on teaching skating technique; section 4.3 on teaching cross-country ski skills to children and section 5 on the delivery of effective practice sessions. Refer to sections 4 and 8 of the CCI Learning to Train (On-Snow) Reference Material for more advanced information on teaching skating, classic and downhill techniques.
- ❑ **Use of Effective Role Models.** Refer to section 4.1.2 of this manual for more information.
- ❑ **Use of Relevant Technology.** Refer to section 4.1.2 of this reference material for information on the use of video feedback for error detection and correction. Refer to section 3.3 of the CCI Learning to Train (On-Snow) Reference Material for more detailed information.
- ❑ **Appropriate Use of Games.** Refer to sections 4.3.9 and sections 5.1 of this manual for more information.
- ❑ **Appropriate Level of Physical Fitness.** Skiers must be sufficiently fit to be able to participate in the program
- ❑ **Opportunity to Practice Skills between Practice Sessions.** Refer to section 4.1.3 of this

manual for more information.

### 4.1.2 Role Models/Video Replay

Children like to imitate good technique. It looks fast, smooth and exciting to them. Therefore it is worth your time to recruit technically competent role models to ski with your group occasionally. Some suggestions are: (1) a technically competent skier in the age group just above the group you are working with (the children can identify with the age of the skier and their skills appear more achievable); (2) a successful junior athlete from your club or region; and/or (3) a senior/ master skier they look up to. Children also respond well to learning technique from videos or DVDs, providing the footage is action-packed and fast moving.

Video replay, especially using cameras that feature frame-by-frame replay, is another effective teaching tool. It can be introduced during the FUNdamentals stage, as children love to watch themselves on camera, but it will be more effective with older skiers. If you do use video replay, it is preferable to do so on snow where the children have an opportunity to repeat a technique immediately after seeing themselves on the camera and receiving feedback, and where interaction with the coach is one-on-one, not in front of their peers.

### 4.1.3 Snow Play Goals

It is essential for children to have the opportunity for unstructured play-time on skis in addition to practice sessions if they are going to develop technical competence.

Although exposure to a variety of sports/activities is an important requirement of a child's physical development, coaches should keep in mind that the snow season is short in the context of year-round activity. Therefore, if children are going to develop competence in cross-country skiing, they may have to achieve it in a period as short as 10 to 12 weeks per year. This means that when snow is available, participation in cross-country skiing should be as frequent as four or five times per week, depending on the age of the skier. Generally speaking, children need to ski more than once a week to retain new skills, and four to five times a week if they wish to improve their skill level significantly.

| Age     | # Practice Sessions    | # Play-time on Skis in Addition to Practice Sessions |
|---------|------------------------|--|
| 6 years | 16 on snow; 2 per week | minimum of 2x/wk over 3 months = 24                  |
| 7 years | 16 on snow; 2 per week | minimum of 2x/wk over 3 months = 24                  |
| 8 years | 30 on snow; 2 per week | minimum of 3x/wk over 3 months = 30                  |
| 9 years | 30 on snow; 2 per week | minimum of 3x/wk over 3 months = 30                  |

For children six to nine years of age, the preferred setting for play-time on skis is a ski playground or terrain park. In addition to using a kid-friendly setting, coaches can improve the potential benefit from unstructured play-time on snow if they provide their skiers with some direction during the practice

sessions. A well-prepared coach will give each child specific suggestions as to which skills to work on between sessions, and then follow up at the next practice.

To ensure play-time on skis is time well spent, the importance of kid-appropriate settings/ activities and quality time on skis should be emphasized to parents, as they will have the most influence on their children's skill development outside of practice sessions. Parents should also be encouraged to coordinate transportation and ski playground supervision with other parents, and to give their children an opportunity to use head lamps if they live in a communities where a lit trail system is not accessible.

#### 4.1.4 Ski Exercises

These activities are designed to improve the balance, agility, coordination, rhythm and confidence on skis that will establish the foundation on which ski technique skills can be developed.

The exercises are generally listed in order of difficulty. Some are appropriate for children under six while others are more suitable for older novice skiers. They are presented most effectively when interspersed throughout the practice session. When practising these exercises the skier should be stationary and without poles.

- ❑ **Soldiers.** At a command to stand at "attention", the skiers stand tall with locked knees and straight backs. At a command to stand "at ease", they relax their knees and let their upper body slouch.
- ❑ **Tippy Toes.** The skiers roll onto the balls of their feet until the heels of their feet are about to lift off the ground. They then roll onto their heels until their toes lift against the inside of their boots. Next they do the "Teeter-Totter", rocking back and forth from the balls of their feet to their heels.
- ❑ **Reach for the Sky.** The skiers reach for the sky, first going up on their tiptoes, and then settling back on both feet at the same time.
- ❑ **Touch Your Tongue.** The skiers press their shins against the tongues of their ski boots, experimenting with the use of both slight and strong pressure as they squat down. This exercise teaches them the difference between a knee and an ankle bend. When skiers have mastered this activity, they can try it using one leg/ski at a time.
- ❑ **Flea Leaps.** The skiers jump into the air (on their skis) and land softly in a balanced position.
- ❑ **The Stork Stance.** The skiers practice standing on one leg while remaining balanced. They are allowed to extend their hands sideways to steady themselves. Alternate legs.
- ❑ **Rubber Leg.** The skiers first stand tall on one leg/ski, and then relax it, letting it slump into a flexed position at the ankle and knee. Alternate legs.
- ❑ **One-Legged Pops.** The skiers pop/spring off one leg, which is bent, and then land on it. Alternate legs.
- ❑ **Jackrabbit.** Each letter represents a stretch or activity. Have the participants guess the next letter and/or activity:
  - ✓ **J** Jump and reach for the sky three times.
  - ✓ **A** Arch your back, in all directions, three times.
  - ✓ **C** Crouch and stand five times.

- ✓ **K** Kick each leg out slowly to the front and back, three times each side.
- ✓ **R** Reach to the left and right extending far enough to pull your opposite leg off the ground - five times each side.
- ✓ **A** Achilles tendon stretch – slide your right ski forward and bend your knee parallel to the ground. Keep your left leg straight with your ankle locked. Repeat with the other leg.
- ✓ **B** Bounce on your toes fifteen times.
- ✓ **B** Bend like a tree - left side, front, right side.
- ✓ **I** Itch – scratch each shoulder.
- ✓ **T** Tips - touch the tips of your skis with your hands.
- **Back Leg Lifts.** The skiers extend one leg/ski rearward and off the snow while bending forward at the waist. They then move the same leg/ski forward, without weighting it, and return their upper body to an upright position. Repeat with the opposite leg.
- **Poison Peanut Butter.** The skiers lift one ski and then the other off the snow so that the “poison peanut butter” (i.e. the snow), doesn’t stick to their skis. The coach encourages the skiers to keep moving by saying “quick, don’t let the peanut butter stick!”
- **Stepping Movements.** These movements are the basis of the Side Step and Star Turn. They follow on from the “Poison Peanut Butter” exercise above. This exercise should be introduced on packed snow, but it can also be practised in deeper snow when the skiers are ready for the challenge. Another option is to set several ski tracks parallel to each other. To begin with, have the ski poles lying on each side of the skier, parallel to their skis. The skiers step over the poles going first in one direction, and then the other. As the skiers gain competence, several poles can be lined up for them to step over, or they can be placed farther apart to require a longer step. The skiers can also try to jump over the poles with both feet.
- **Pushaways.** Two skiers (partners) face each other, standing on their skis with their feet wide apart for solid balance. One ski is placed between the partner’s skis, with the tips reaching behind the partners’ heels. The skiers can improve their balance and agility skills by trying to push their partner off balance.
- **Snakes.** Skiers form a line, one after the other, with about two metres between each. The skier at the end of the line weaves between the other skiers until he/she comes to the front of the line and then becomes the new leader. For advanced skiers, this exercise can be practised with all the skiers moving slowly forward while the skier from the end of the line is trying to weave forward to the front of the group. Variations can be done on the flat, on a slight downhill, or by skiing around other skiers or other objects.
- **Rubber Knees.** The skiers descend a slight incline using rubber knees and ankles to help absorb bumps.
- **Tip and Tail Touch.** While skiing down a gentle slope, the skiers alternate between touching the tips and tails of their skis with their hands.
- **Slide Tall and Slide Small.** The skiers descend a slight slope, exerting pressure on the tongues of their boots by bending their legs slightly. They alternate between putting a lot of pressure on the tongues (slide small) and a little pressure (slide tall). Challenge the skiers to touch the ground and lift their arms in the air while coming down the hill. Ask them to throw their mitts in the air and



catch them while coming down the hill. Then ask them to catch a glove and throw it back to you (the coach) when they get to the bottom of the hill.

- **Hinge Hop.** While skiing down a gentle slope, the skiers hop, lifting their ski tails and leaving their tips on the snow.
- **Luge.** While skiing down a gentle slope, the skiers first lie back on their skis. Next they practise squatting on their skis until they almost touch the snow with the seat of their pants.
- **Terrain Leap.** Using their poles, the skiers practise a small upward and forward jump, tucking their knees up towards their chest.

This section is directed primarily at supporting you in your role as a coach working with children in the FUNdamentals stage of development. For a more comprehensive explanation on how to teach classic and downhill techniques to coaches and older athletes, refer to section 8 of the CCI-Learning to Train Reference Material.

## 4.2 Teaching Classic Technique

The development of excellent ski technique is an ongoing challenge for skiers of all ages. Improvements in waxes, equipment and trail grooming allow for faster speeds. The new, higher speeds have in turn allowed techniques to be done differently. For this and other reasons, improving ski technique is a never-ending process.

Fortunately, the tools available to help skiers learn technique are also evolving. Instruction manuals, instruction videos, frame by frame video replay cameras and improved methods of evaluating and correcting technique are increasingly accessible to both coaches and skiers. In addition, an increasing number of clubs are offering skill development programs to a broader age range of skiers than ever before, and the standard of coaching has improved dramatically in recent years. The following is one method to help enthusiasts learn more about technique.

### Characteristics of the “Best” Skiers!

- ❑ The “big three” characteristics are the following:
  - ✓ Good balance.
  - ✓ Good weight shift.
  - ✓ Good rhythm (i.e. correct body positioning, body movements and timing).
- ❑ Other important characteristics are as follows:
  - ✓ Good forward movement – “gains lots of ground”.
  - ✓ Generates and maintains momentum – “keeps the wheels turning”.
  - ✓ Good at creating force in the direction of travel – not up, down or sideways.
  - ✓ Good at changing technique to match terrain, snow and track conditions.
  - ✓ Good physical condition.
  - ✓ Good kinaesthetic feel.

### 4.2.1 Classic Technique Checklists

*To simplify the detection and correction of technique errors when you are out on the snow, a series of checklists has been developed.*

#### Common Checkpoints

The following checkpoints are common to all classic techniques (with notable exceptions for Double Pole technique, in which there is no leg push):

##### □ Overall

- ✓ All techniques originate with the general athletic stance, modified for the specific technique being learned.
- ✓ Weight shifts fully from ski to ski (not applicable in Double Pole).
- ✓ The skier is balanced on the gliding ski, in Diagonal Stride and One-Step Double Pole.
- ✓ Motion of arms and legs is snappy and forceful.

##### □ Lower Body

- ✓ Good angle is maintained at the ankle to permit forward upper body position and correct alignment of hips over the foot at the critical instant of leg and arm push.
- ✓ Leg push is preceded by a pre-load of the gliding leg before it initiates the push.
- ✓ Leg pushes down, into the snow, and slightly back.
- ✓ Leg push is executed quickly and effectively so that power is transferred quickly to the snow and a resulting glide is created.
- ✓ Hip, knee and ankle joints contribute to the leg push in that order, constituting a sequential but very rapid and explosive movement.
- ✓ Hips should rotate slightly to allow body weight to be balanced over the gliding ski.
- ✓ Hips are high and forward over the glide foot (or feet).

##### □ Upper Body

- ✓ Poles are planted close to skis.
- ✓ Skier reaches high and forward with bent arms; the amount of elbow bend and the elbow orientation (i.e. tight to the body or pointing slightly outward) vary with the particular classic technique being executed, the phase of the technique and the pitch of the slope being climbed.
- ✓ The shoulders are parallel to the ground.
- ✓ The shoulder, back, core and arm muscles are engaged in poling action.
- ✓ The back is slightly rounded (no hyper-extension).
- ✓ There is a distinct, but not excessive, forward body lean (achieved through flex in ankles).

## **Diagonal Stride**

### **☐ Most Important**

- ✓ The skier commits weight fully to the gliding/supporting ski in the glide phases.
- ✓ The recovery foot is unweighted until placed on the snow ahead of the other foot (with ankle pushed ahead of knee as upward slope increases).
- ✓ The middle of hips is over toes at initiation of leg push, and further ahead as slope of hill increases.
- ✓ Forward body lean comes from a flexed ankle.
- ✓ Hips rotate slightly during leg push, without twisting the upper body.
- ✓ There is a pre-load and explosive leg push (knee and ankle are momentarily straightened and flexed to load the leg, followed by the forceful extension of the leg push).

### **☐ Very Important**

- ✓ There is complete extension of the leg and arm at the end of their respective pushes.
- ✓ There is a straight line through the upper body and leg as the push leg leaves the snow.
- ✓ The gliding/supporting leg straightens (without the knee locking) during the glide phases.
- ✓ The recovery leg is swung forcefully forward in a pendulum motion.
- ✓ The arm action is generally straight forward and back, hinging as a pendulum from the shoulder.
- ✓ Arm push ends shortly after hands pass legs, with natural follow-through continuing.
- ✓ The shoulder reaches forward on pole plant, hands at or below shoulder height.

### **☐ Important**

- ✓ The pole is generally planted opposite the glide foot; as the slope increases, the pole plants a bit farther back.
- ✓ The flex in the elbow joint increases as the poling action commences.
- ✓ At pole release, the skier extends the wrist/hand, with pressure exclusively on the pole strap.

## **Double Pole**

### **☐ Most Important**

- ✓ The hips, upper body and arms are well forward and high to load the poles on pole plant.
- ✓ The forward body position originates in well flexed ankles.
- ✓ The skier “falls forward” and “hangs on poles”.
- ✓ The skier pulls down on the poles, engaging the back, shoulder, core and arm muscles.

☐ **Very Important**

- ✓ Elbows are moderately flexed on pole plant, with the degree of flex increasing with the amount of force being applied.
- ✓ The elbow flexion increases as the poling action begins.
- ✓ Legs are slightly flexed on pole plant, with flex increasing noticeably – but not excessively – during the poling action.
- ✓ If the skier rises on the balls of feet, motion should be forward, not up.
- ✓ Arm recovery forward (not up) is aggressive, with shoulders leading.

☐ **Important**

- ✓ Upper body compression ends before the horizontal position.
- ✓ The upper body stays down until the arms are finished.
- ✓ The poles are planted in front of the bindings (or at the binding when glide speeds are lower or body position not as far forward).
- ✓ At pole plant, the shafts are nearly vertical, with grips slightly ahead of pole tips.

**One-Step Double Pole**

☐ **Most Important**

- ✓ The leg push, stride and arm reach forward occur simultaneously, and are all snappy/forceful.
- ✓ As the leg push is initiated, the push leg is fully weighted, with weight shifting dynamically to the striding leg as the push ends.
- ✓ The skier is balanced on one fully weighted gliding ski – weight centred over the forefoot – during the free glide phase and as the poling motion is initiated.
- ✓ The poling action is as for Double Pole in several respects:
  - The upper body and arms are well forward and high to load the poles for pole plant.
  - The hips are high and forward, to the extent possible (though they will not be as far forward as in Double Pole).
  - The skier “falls forward” and “hangs on poles”.
  - The skier pulls down on the poles, engaging the back, shoulder, core and arm muscles.

☐ **Very Important**

- ✓ There is a pre-load of the push leg before the push.
- ✓ Elbows are moderately flexed on pole plant, with the degree of flex increasing with the amount of force being applied.
- ✓ The elbow flexion increases as the poling action begins.
- ✓ Legs are slightly flexed on pole plant, with flex increasing noticeably – but not excessively – during the poling action.

- ✓ Arm recovery forward (not up) is uninterrupted, with shoulders leading.

□ **Important**

- ✓ Upper body compression ends well before the horizontal position (i.e. there is less compression than in Double Pole).
- ✓ Relative to the Double Pole, the upper body rises more quickly from its compression (to enable the body to be positioned for the pre-load, leg push and stride that occur at the beginning of the next cycle).
- ✓ The poles are planted well in front of the binding of the gliding ski.
- ✓ At pole plant, the shafts are nearly vertical, with grips slightly ahead of pole tips.

### 4.3 Teaching Cross-Country Ski Skills to Children

The Skill Criteria and Evaluation Benchmarks outlined below go hand in hand with the sample practice plans in section 5 and the Skill Checklists in this section.

#### 4.3.1 Skill Criteria and Evaluation Benchmarks - Level 1

When the skiers you are coaching have completed the recommended program for their age and skill level (for example, the Level 1 practice plans outlined in section 5 of this manual), the next step is to evaluate their skills. Evaluation will determine whether or not they have satisfactorily completed this stage of the program and earned the applicable technique award, or whether they need to do more work on specific skills before they graduate to the next level.

For this task you will require a clipboard, pencil(s) or permanent felt pen(s) and photocopies of the applicable evaluation criteria and checklist. To protect the criteria and checklist from the weather, you will need a paper-size sheet of plastic fastened to the top of your clipboard, or some similar protective measure.

In general, poles should not be used when these skills are introduced. Skiers may rely too much on the poles and not enough on body position for balance.

#### Ready Position

This technique should be practised and assessed on packed, flat terrain.

- The skier stands with arms and hands slightly forward and to the side for balance
- Skis are kept parallel
- Body is upright, but relaxed
- Knees and ankles are relaxed and slightly bent
- The skier remains in this position for several seconds



### Falling and Rising

This technique should be practised and assessed on a gentle slope that is packed but not too hard or icy.

- The skier glides down the hill without poles, and falls to the side and back in a sitting motion
- Skis and legs are kept together
- Skis are brought together, side by side and under the body, on the downhill side of the body and perpendicular to the fall line (the same path a ball would take if it rolled down the hill)
- The skier moves on to his/her hands and knees
- The skier edges skis and stands up with minimal or no assistance
- Once the skier can accomplish the skill effectively without poles, poles should be used. Poles need to be moved parallel to the skis as the skier prepares to rise



### Side Stepping

This technique should be practised and assessed on a gentle slope that is packed but not too hard or icy. Poles could be used, but may make this exercise more difficult to accomplish.

- The skier stands on the flat at the start of a gentle slope, with skis perpendicular to the fall line
- Arms and hands forward and to the side for balance
- The skier places his/her weight on the downhill ski and then lifts the uphill ski, placing it 10 to 20 cm uphill from the original position
- The downhill ski is then placed beside the uphill ski
- Skis are kept parallel
- Repeat for five repetitions
- The skier should also practise going down the slope using five side steps





### Star Turn

This technique should be practised and assessed on packed, flat terrain.

- The skier stands in the Ready Position, in loose snow, with skis parallel and arms away from the body for balance
- The skier places his/her weight on the left ski
- The skier then lifts up the right knee and places the right ski back down with the tips about 20-30 cm apart, keeping the tails together. The skis form a “pizza slice”
- The left ski is then moved parallel to the right ski
- This is repeated until a full circle is completed
- Repeat in the opposite direction
- On flat terrain and packed snow, the skier can repeat the above points, but keeping the tips together and positioning the tails 20-30 cm apart



### Tracking

This technique should be practised and assessed on flat terrain with several metres of clear-cut, set tracks. No poles are used.

- The skier moves forward down the track and steps sideways out of the tracks, without breaking them
- The skier is able to get out of both sides of the track and come back into it easily while moving forward



### Diagonal Stride

In the progression of the Diagonal Stride this is the “running step”. This technique is practised and assessed on flat terrain with set tracks.

- The skier slides his/her skis down the track
- The skier “walks” down the track on the balls of the feet with some ankle and knee bend
- There is some glide onto the forward ski as the skier pushes off
- There is a “jogging-like” action on the balls of the feet, with glide onto the forward ski
- After the skier’s weight is shifted to the gliding ski, the pushing ski momentarily comes off the snow at the end of the push
- Arms swing comfortably (somewhat in opposite time to the leg’s stride)





### Herringbone


This technique should be practised and assessed on a gentle slope that is packed, but not too hard or icy.

- The skier steps up a gentle slope, alternating arms and legs
- The skier maintains the tips quite wide apart (in a “V” shape)
- Arms swing comfortably
- The skier completes five steps with each leg





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| <p><b>Free Glide</b></p> <p>This technique should be practised and assessed on a gentle downhill slope that is packed but not too hard or icy. Ideally, the bottom of the hill should be flat (for emergency landings).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The skier starts at the top of the hill in the Ready Position (the body is generally upright, knees and ankles are relaxed and slightly bent)</li><li>• Hands are kept forward</li><li>• Skis are kept parallel</li><li>• The skier is able to glide three metres down the slope maintaining the Ready Position</li></ul>                      |  A line drawing of a skier in a ready position on a gentle slope. The skier is upright, with knees and ankles slightly bent, and hands held forward. The skis are parallel. The background shows a few trees and a simple horizon line.   |
| <p><b>Snowplow Braking</b></p> <p>If the skier can demonstrate a stable Ready Position moving down a gentle slope, he/she is ready to be introduced to Snowplow Braking on a similar slope.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The skier makes a wedge, by spreading the tails of the skis apart (the tips come together)</li><li>• The skier controls his/her speed by adjusting the size of the wedge and edging their skis</li><li>• The pressure (braking) on each ski is fairly equal, with minimal turning to one side</li><li>• The skier maintains the upper body in the Ready Position</li></ul> |  A line drawing of a skier in a snowplow braking position on a gentle slope. The skier's skis are spread apart at the tails, forming a wedge shape. The skier's upper body is upright, and their hands are held forward. The background shows a few trees and a simple horizon line. |

4.3.2 Skill Checklist – Level 1

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| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>General Comments</b></p>                          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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### 4.3.3 Skill Criteria and Evaluation Benchmarks - Level 2

In general, poles are used when learning/practising the following skills.

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| <p><b>Diagonal Stride</b></p> <p>In the progression of the Diagonal Stride this is called the “gliding step”. It is practised and assessed on flat terrain with set tracks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some glide occurs with each stride</li><li>• The skier lifts skis off the snow when kicking. There is a weight transfer about 50% of the time, and the recovery foot lands beside or in front of the glide foot.</li><li>• The skier can perform five successful strides in a row, but balance may be insecure and unnecessary movements may occur</li><li>• Poles are typically not yet used for propulsion, but are used in an alternating arm action</li><li>• The body is mainly upright in the Ready Position</li></ul> |  A line drawing of a skier in a crouched, ready position on a flat surface. The skier is leaning forward, with their weight on their right leg. Their left leg is lifted and bent at the knee, ready to kick. Both hands are holding ski poles, which are planted on the ground. The background shows a few stylized evergreen trees.  |
| <p><b>Herringbone</b></p> <p>This technique should be practised and assessed on a moderate uphill slope that is packed, but not too hard or icy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The skier steps up a moderate slope, alternating arms and legs</li><li>• Tips are kept quite wide apart (in a “V” shape)</li><li>• The inside edge of each ski is angled into the snow to eliminate slipping</li><li>• Arms swing comfortably</li><li>• The pole tips are planted behind and to the side of the feet, and the hands are just below shoulder height</li><li>• There is good weight transfer from ski to ski</li><li>• The skier completes five steps with each leg</li></ul>   |  A line drawing of a skier ascending a moderate uphill slope. The skier is in a herringbone stance, with their skis angled wide apart in a V-shape. Their weight is on their right leg, and their left leg is stepping up. Both hands are holding ski poles, which are planted on the slope behind and to the side of the feet. The background shows a few stylized evergreen trees. |

### Double Poling

This technique should be practised and assessed on a slight downhill slope with set tracks.

- The skier pushes down the track for five metres using only the upper body
- The skier reaches their hands forward to plant the poles
- The pole tips do not come ahead of the pole handles when they are being planted
- The upper body flexes at the waist just after the poles are planted to provide additional propulsion
- The upper-body movement is completed by extending the arms to the rear
- The legs remain fairly straight, but not rigid, through all phases of the movement



### Free Glide

This technique should be practised and assessed on a moderate downhill slope that is packed but not too hard or icy. Ideally, the bottom of the hill should be flat in case of emergency landings.

- The skier starts at the top of the hill in the Ready Position; the body is generally upright; knees and ankles are relaxed and slightly bent
- Hands are kept forward
- Skis are kept parallel
- Pole handles are down in front of the body and the tips are angled behind, so the pole shaft is generally angled down and backward without dragging on the snow
- The skier is able to glide five metres down the slope maintaining the Ready Position



### Kick Turn

This technique should be practised and assessed on flat terrain, in loose snow

- The skier stands in the Ready Position
- The skier then reaches back with the right arm outstretched and plants the right pole on the outside of the left ski, near the tail
- Both poles are now planted on the same side of the left ski
- The skier faces to the right
- The skier now lifts the right ski, bending at the knee and hip so the tail of the ski drags on the snow and the ski is perpendicular to the ground
- The skier now moves the right leg so the skis are parallel but the tip of the one ski is beside the tail of the other
- The left leg and pole are now brought around so the ski tips are together and the skier resumes the Ready Position, having completed a 180 degree turn
- The skier performs the technique in both directions
- At this level the skier may require some assistance.



### **Snowplow Stop**

This technique should be practised and assessed on a moderate downhill slope that is packed, but not too hard or icy.

- The skier begins by demonstrating Snowplow Braking
- The skier returns to the top of the slope
- The skier moves down the hill in the Ready Position showing a good wedge and keeping the ski tips together
- By applying equal pressure on the inside edges of the skis (rolling inward with the ankles) the skier is able to safely reduce speed to a full stop
- Half-Snowplow Braking
- The skier Free Glides down the track on an easy to moderate hill and in softer snow conditions
- Part way down the skier lifts the right ski out of the track and places it in a wedge position with the tip close to the tracks and the tails farther away
- Pressure is applied to the inside edge of the right ski by shifting much of the skier's weight to the ski and rolling inward on the ankle
- The pressure is applied until the skier is able to significantly reduce speed
- Both skis are then placed parallel in the tracks
- Repeat with the left ski





### **Snowplow Turn**

This technique should be practised and assessed on a moderate downhill slope that is packed, but not too hard or icy.

- The skier starts down the hill in a proper Snowplow position
- The skier applies his/her weight unequally to the skis, so most of the body weight is placed on the right ski and the ankle is rolled inwards. This will cause the right ski to start to move perpendicular to the fall-line
- The skier continues to face down the hill
- After the skier's skis turn to the left, he/she unweights the right ski and transfers his/her weight mainly to the left ski while rolling the left ankle inward
- The skier completes two successful turns



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### 4.3.5 Skill Criteria and Evaluation Benchmarks - Level 3

In general, poles should be used when learning/practising the following skills.

#### **Diagonal Stride**

In the progression of the diagonal stride, this is called the “long step”. This technique should be practised and assessed on flat terrain with set tracks.

- The skier shows a clear weight transfer from ski to ski resulting in a longer gliding action
- The ski lifts off the snow when the skier kicks
- The recovery foot usually lands beside or in front of (not behind) the gliding foot when viewed from the side
- The hands are close to shoulder height and elbows are slightly bent at pole plant
- The skier demonstrates some ankle and knee bend, and maintains a slightly forward body lean
- The poles are angled backwards and help provide propulsion; the skier is clearly pushing off of them
- Each pole is planted beside the opposite side ski boot



## Double Poling

This technique should be practised and assessed on flat terrain with set tracks.

- The skier reaches the hands forward to plant the poles
- When the poles are planted, the skier is leaning forward slightly, hands are forward at shoulder level, elbows are slightly bent
- Poles are held at a small angle to the snow, pointing backwards. Pole tips are behind the pole handles when they are planted
- The upper body flexes at the waist just after poles are planted to provide additional propulsion
- As the upper body bends to a horizontal position, the arms start to extend, and follow through with a strong extension to the back
- Immediately following the pole plant, the skier is obviously pushing on the poles with his/her upper body weight
- The upper body movement is completed by extending the arms to the rear. The progression is upper body, then shoulders, then elbows. The elbows should not collapse in the initial phase of the pole motion
- Legs remain relatively straight, but not rigid, through all phases of the movement
- After completing the push, the arms and upper body are recovered forward at the same time to initiate another poling action

The skier is able to execute fairly effective poling action and push down the track using the Double Poling technique.



### **One-step Double Poling**

This technique should be practised and assessed on a slight downhill with set tracks.

- The skier stands in the Ready Position with body weight on the left ski
- The skier pushes off the left ski, and transfers all of the weight to the right ski, while reaching forward with the arms to Double Pole
- The skier then initiates Double Poling action while recovering the push foot forward
- The skier glides on both skis, and then begins the cycle again, alternating the pushing leg (this time using the right ski)
- The skier is able to ski 50 metres using this technique

For evaluation purposes the skier needs to demonstrate some weight transfer between the pushing and gliding skis.



### Free Skate

This technique should be practised and assessed on a packed, gentle downhill slope.

- The skier is in the Ready Position demonstrating an obvious “V” shape with the skis
- The skier bends the left knee and ankle, pushing off with the left leg and transferring his/her weight onto the right ski
- The right hip and shoulder are aligned over the right ski. As the glide ski slows, the skier flexes the right knee and ankle and pushes off the right ski so his/her weight is transferred to the left ski
- The skier’s left shoulder and hip then align over the left ski. The glide on the left and right skis is consistent
- During each glide, the feet come close to each other
- The skier swings the arms in front of the body (rotation movement)
- Poles are held with the tips pointing backwards, not touching the snow



### Downhill Tuck

This technique should be first practised on flat terrain and then evaluated on a medium slope where the skier has a 10 metre run to demonstrate the technique.

- In a “low tuck” the upper body is bent to a horizontal position, and knees and ankles are bent so the thighs are parallel to the snow
- In a “high tuck” the knees and ankles are bent so the thighs are only slightly bent
- Poles are held under the arms and tightly against the body
- The skier can safely descend a medium hill in a low or high tuck



### **Diagonal Skate**

This technique should be practised on a moderate uphill slope.

- The action is similar to that used in Herringbone, but in this case the skier glides on each ski
- Alternating pushes with the arms and legs, the skier glides up the hill shifting the weight from ski to ski
- A pole and the opposite ski touch the snow at the same time.
- The gliding skis should be kept fairly flat on the snow, and not edged until the actual push off
- The arm action is similar to that used in the Diagonal Stride
- Arms are kept close to the body during the initial phase of the arm push



### Kick Turn

This technique should be practised and assessed on flat terrain, in loose snow.

- The skier stands in the Ready Position
- The skier then reaches back with the right arm outstretched and plants the right pole on the outside of the left ski near the tail
- Both poles are now planted on the same side of the left ski
- The skier faces to the right
- The skier now lifts the right ski, bending at the knee and hip so the tail of the ski drags on the snow and the ski is perpendicular to the ground
- The skier now moves the right leg so the skis are parallel, but the tip of the one ski is beside the tail of the other
- The left leg and pole are now brought around so the ski tips are together and the skier resumes the Ready Position, having completed a 180 degree turn
- The skier performs this technique in both directions
- At this level the skier should be able to do the exercise without assistance



### Skate Turn


This technique should be practised and assessed on a packed, gentle downhill slope.

- The skier performs Double Poling just in front of the place he/she wishes to turn
- As the skier recovers the arms and upper body forward, the inside ski (the ski that is on the side to which the skier is turning) is unweighted and pointed in the new direction
- The skier edges and pushes off the outside ski transferring the body weight to the inside ski
- The skier then glides with the skis parallel and equally weighted in the new direction

Another Double Poling action completes the turn.





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### 4.3.7 Skill Criteria and Evaluation Benchmarks - Level 4

#### **One-step Double Poling**

This technique should be practised and assessed on a slight downhill with set tracks.

- The skier stands in the Ready Position with body weight on the left ski
- The skier pushes off the left ski, and transfers all of the weight to the right ski, while reaching forward with the arms to Double Pole
- The skier then initiates a Double Poling action while recovering the push foot forward
- The skier glides on both skis, and then begins the cycle again, alternating the pushing leg (this time using the right ski)

For evaluation purposes the skier should be able to show a consistent fluid action with good balance at both the pole plant and the end of the pole push phase, and to continue with this technique for 50 metres.



### Free Skate

This technique should be practised and assessed on flat terrain or a packed, gentle downhill slope.

- The skier is in the Ready Position demonstrating an obvious “V” shape with the skis
- The skier bends the left knee and ankle, pushing off with the left leg and transferring the weight onto the right ski
- The right hip and shoulder are aligned over the right ski. As the glide ski slows, the skier flexes the right knee and ankle and pushes off the right ski so the weight is transferred to the left ski
- The skier’s left shoulder and hip then align over the left ski. The glide on the left and right skis is consistent
- During each glide, the feet come close to each other
- The skier swings the arms in front of the body (rotation movement)
- Poles are held with the tips pointing backwards, not touching the snow

For evaluation purposes, there should be an obvious and complete weight transfer from ski to ski (the skier glides on one ski and then the other).



### One Skate

The One Skate technique requires a poling action (arm push) with each leg push. This technique should be practised and assessed on a packed, gentle downhill slope.

- The skier begins as if Double Poling
- The skier's weight is placed on the right ski, while the left ski is lifted and angled a bit to the side
- Ski tips should be kept 50 cm apart
- The right hip and shoulder are over the gliding ski until the leg push is initiated
- The skier plants the poles with the tips slightly ahead of the binding and initiates a complete Double Poling action
- As the skier pushes down with the upper body and arms, the skier begins to transfer the weight onto the left ski
- Knees and ankles bend before pushing off
- The leg pushes to the side, not back, and as the ski is pushed off it remains parallel to the snow
- The weight transfer is accomplished by edging and pushing off the right ski, and pushing with the arms
- The completion of the poling extension is synchronized with completing the weight transfer to the left ski
- As the skier shifts onto the new ski, the arms are recovered along with the right ski and the sequence is repeated using the opposite arms and legs
- The glide on the left and right skis is consistent
- During each glide, the feet come close to each other



## Two Skate

The Two Skate technique is similar to the One Skate except the poling action only occurs with every second leg push. This technique should be practised and assessed on a moderate downhill slope.

- The skier begins as if Double Poling, gliding with the weight on the right ski and the right shoulder and hip aligned over it
- The left ski is lifted and angled a bit to the side.
- Ski tips should be approximately 50 cm apart
- The skier plants the poles with the tips slightly ahead of the binding, and completes a Double Poling push action
- As the skier pushes down with the upper body and arms, he/she begins to transfer weight onto the left ski by pushing off with the right leg
- The skier glides on the left ski, with left hip and shoulder aligned on the glide (left) ski as he/she starts to recover the arms forward
- The skier then skates off the new glide ski (left) using only a leg push
- The arms are recovered forward over the right ski in preparation for another double poling action after the skier has transferred the weight back to the right ski



### Step Turn

This technique should be practised and assessed on a packed, moderate, untracked slope.

- The skier starts in a “high” tuck position and glides down the hill
- The skier completes several Step Turns in one direction, using small, quick steps, and consistently maintaining the tuck position
- The skier keeps the weight on the heels
- During this exercise there is a complete weight transfer from one ski to the other
- Skis are edged when weight shifting

The skier can Step Turn both to the left and right.



### Parallel Side Slipping

This technique should be practised and assessed on a steep well-packed downhill slope.

- The skier maintains the Ready Position throughout
- By moving the knees and rolling the ankles in and out, the skier shifts the weight alternately on the uphill and downhill edges
- Skis remain parallel while slipping down the hill sideways
- The skier demonstrates control by stopping mid-slope
- The skier should be able to sideslip at least one metre down the hill

The skier is able to demonstrate this skill facing both directions.




## Offset

This technique requires a poling action after every second leg push, and should be practised and assessed on a gentle uphill slope.

- The skier begins as if initiating the Two Skate technique, but the ski tips are generally a bit wider apart
- The skier balances on the left ski and pushes with the left leg in order to step up the hill onto the right ski, planting both poles and the right ski at the same time (three point landing)
- The right shoulder and hip should be aligned over the right ski
- The poles are planted in an “offset” position. The right pole is planted with a slight slant to the rear, with the tip beside the right binding. The left pole is angled more sharply back and to the side, with the tip at the left binding
- The skier continues with an action similar to the Double Poling motion but with less bend at the waist
- During the Double Poling action, the skier steps up the hill with the left ski
- The skating (pushing and weighted) right ski is then edged and the skier pushes off with the right leg and arms to begin the weight transfer to the left ski.
- The skier balances briefly with the left hip and shoulder aligned over the left ski. The ski is then edged and the skier pushes off the left leg and steps and shifts the weight onto the right ski, to start the cycle again
- The skier’s weight shifts quickly and does not linger over the ski as it does with One Skate and Two Skate techniques

The skier must be able to offset on both sides – i.e. with right hand leading and with left hand leading.



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### 4.3.9 Games for Teaching Technique

Acquiring balance on skis takes time. Children pick it up more quickly than adults do, but they are usually less motivated for skiing itself and may lose interest quickly. Children simply are not small-scale adults.

Adult recreations, such as tours, are often tiring for children, whether or not they are on skis. Their attention spans are simply too short for them to enjoy doing the same thing for any length of time. So introducing children to skiing skills often requires a special approach keyed to their needs and capabilities through suitably arranged learning situations. One of the best ways to introduce children to skiing skills is through games. Almost any game that can be played on foot can be played on skis.

Teaching Children to Ski

- ❑ **Jaws.** Everyone lines up on one side of the field. Have one person stand in the middle of the field and yell “jaws”. When “jaws” is called, all the skiers attempt to reach the other side of the field without getting caught by Jaws. Skiers who are caught then help Jaws to catch other skiers.
- ❑ **Simon Says.** This is the old game where the one who gets caught becomes Simon and that individual continues by trying to trick someone else. If Simon says “Simon says” first, - e.g., “Simon says: touch your toes” or “Simon says: twist at the waist” - the group should follow the instructions. However, if Simon says simply “clap your hands” without saying “Simon says: clap your hands”, no one should clap their hands. Coaches may or may not allow the use of poles depending on the space available to play the game.
- ❑ **Orienteering For Treasure.** First select a suitable location, such as a city park or ski trails. Divide the children into teams of three or four, with one adult per team. Every team is provided with one map. On the map is a picture of where the next map is hidden (for example, a lamp post, if there are numerous lamp posts in the area). There can also be a drawing of a nearby pond, picnic table or similar landmark. The teams then search until they find the next map, which in turn indicates where another map is hidden. There should be one map per team at each checkpoint – ideally, numbered for each team. All teams have to find the same locations, but each trail is laid out in a different order so the teams are not following each other. Another alternative is to follow the same order but have a staggered start. If this is done at a ski area, the maps must include features that the children are familiar with and recognize. A beautiful viewpoint on the 15 km trail may be recognized by adults but not by the children if they haven’t been there before. Keep words and directions to a minimum. If a large school yard or city park is used, set up 15-20 checkpoints with approximately 150- 250 metres between each one. In a ski area with hilly terrain, keep the check points closer together. Have the “treasure” ready for each team when it arrives at the last checkpoint.
- ❑ **Ski Orienteering.** This game should be simplified for beginners. The level of difficulty can be increased as the participants gain more experience. Obtain maps of the ski area. These maps can be laminated at most schools or libraries. Use an erasable marker (grease pencil) to mark the location of the control points for each team. At each control point, put a letter. The skiers, in pairs, then ski to as many control points as they can and record or remember the letter at each station.

The pairs return when they have been to all of their control points and can make a word from their letters. Stations are chosen so that each group can spell a word. You could also put numbers at each station and each group gives you the total of their numbers. The team completing the course in the shortest amount of time wins. The level of difficulty can be increased by putting the letters near but not exactly at the control point. It can also be increased by using compass directions to lead the groups from control point to control point.

- **Wolf Ring:** A defined area with both perimeter and diameter lines is established for the game. Skiing is permitted around the perimeter and across each of the diameters, but in one direction only. A hunter, “the wolf”, chases the rabbits within the defined area. When the wolf tags a rabbit, that person becomes a wolf as well. The game continues until the last rabbit is tagged. The size of the area can vary according to the age of the participants. The coach may or may not choose to have skiers use poles depending on space available to play the game. See Figure 4.1.

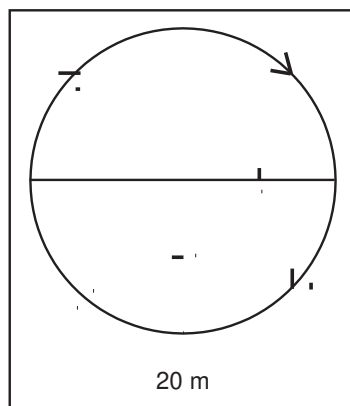


Figure 4.1

- **Follow the Leader.** This game should be adapted to the age of the group in order to provide a challenge that is suitable. Incorporate the movements that correspond with the skills being taught during that activity/practice session. Keep the group small so that even the last skier in line is doing the activity. A variation is to lead the group out, do an exercise, then have the first skier lead that movement while you go back down the line and encourage others to copy them. When the last skier has finished, reverse the line and lead on to begin the next exercise. For older groups, the exercises need to be progressively more difficult.
- **Jump the Clock.** The group spreads out (lots of space is required between each skier). All face a point designated as twelve o'clock. When the leader shouts “three”, everyone tries to jump and turn 90 degrees so that their skis face three o'clock. They jump back to twelve o'clock again and this continues. With some practice, some participants may make a jump turn as far as six o'clock. The coach may or may not choose to have skiers use poles depending on space available to play the game.
- **Schmerltz Rugger.** A Schmerltz is a tube sock with a tennis ball dropped in the toe and a knot tied in the sock. Two goal lines and a field goal ring (about two meters in diameter) are created. A touchdown (six points) is scored by carrying the ball across the opposition's goal line; a field goal (three points) is scored by throwing the Schmerltz into the circle. The idea is to pass the Schmerltz. If a skier is tagged while holding it, the tagging team gets a free throw. Each team should have a goalie to protect the circle. If the Schmerltz is being carried for too long by the skiers, use the three stride rule (three strides and pass). No poles. See Figure 4.2.

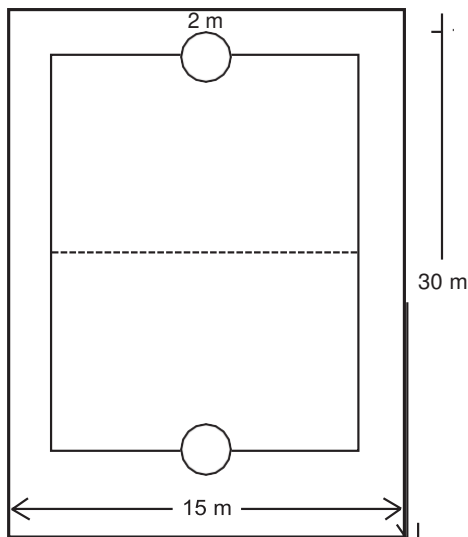


Figure 4.2

- ❑ **Human Slalom.** A long hill is required for this exercise. The first skier goes about ten metres down the hill and stops. The second skier then skis around the first and stops ten metres further down the hill and so on until the whole group reaches the bottom.
- ❑ **Get the Leaders.** Children ski down a gentle slope doing a slalom course. The coaches are watching along the side and each child attempts to grab a handful of snow to throw at each coach they pass, while retaining their balance. The coach may or may not choose to have the skiers use poles depending on space available to play the game.
- ❑ **Colours.** The skiers ski around within a circle six metres in diameter until the coach calls out a colour. They then stop and touch that colour on another skier's clothing. More than one skier can touch the same person. The most fun is selecting a colour that is found only on the socks or gloves of one or two skiers.
- ❑ **Name Tag.** This is a good game for the first session of the year, used by the groups once they have divided up. Start a game of Frozen Tag, but adapt it so the "tagger" has to say a skier's name when he/she tags or frees them. This works well with all age groups. No poles.
- ❑ **Frostbite Tag.** This game is played within a six metre ski pole circle. One person is "It" and another is "Hot Spot". When "It" tags skiers, they must remain frozen with their hand touching the tagged part of their body. They remain frozen until "Hot Spot" touches them on the frozen spot. Change "It" and "Hot Spot" frequently. Also, you can have more than one "It". This works well when the "girls" are on one side and the "boys" are on the other side. No poles.
- ❑ **Hounds and Hares.** Hares have a small flag (flagging tape) tied on their arms and are given two minutes to ski off anywhere within the game area. Vary the range according to the age level of the group. Hounds are then sent out to catch the hares' flags. Hares that lose their flag become hounds. After ten minutes, a whistle is blown and everyone returns. Flags cannot be captured after the whistle. Count the number of flags that the hounds captured and switch roles to see which team does better. Those who lose their flag continue to play by acting as decoys.

- ❑ **Dodge Ball.** For this game you require a soft, air-filled ball (i.e. volleyball). Divide the group into two teams, the “Ins” and the “Outs”. The “Outs” form a large circle within which the “Ins” can move freely. The size of the perimeter of the circle is determined by the throwing ability of the participants. The ball is handed to one of the “Outs” to begin the game. The object is for the “Outs” to knock the “Ins” out of the circle. No hits are allowed above the shoulder. If the ball does not make it back to the outside edge of the circle, an “Out” may enter the circle to retrieve it, but cannot throw until back in position. Each “In” that is hit by the ball has to leave the circle. Once the “Ins” have been removed from the circle, the “Ins” and “Outs” exchange roles. The coach may choose to time each group to see which one can eliminate the other the fastest. No poles.
- ❑ **Streets and Alleys.** This is a fun way to form a teaching grid. The skiers line up in pairs facing the same direction. The second skier in a pair stands about five meters behind the first skier. When the coach shouts “Streets”, the back skier has to try and catch the front skier. When the coach shouts “Alleys”, the skiers turn around. The chaser (the skier behind) becomes the pursued. Use poles if classic skiing.
- ❑ **Swedish Bulldog.** Skiers line up on one side of the field. At a signal from the coach they attempt to cross to the other side of the field without getting tagged by “It”. Anyone tagged also becomes “It”. The game continues until everyone is caught. No poles.
- ❑ **Tattle-Tale Pursuit.** For this game use a loop of the trail which will require 10-15 minutes for the group to ski around (increase the distance as appropriate for the age of the skiers). All skiers except one (the coach or the fastest skier in the group) ski around the loop as quickly as they can. The pursuer waits three or four minutes and then chases the others, tagging each skier they catch. If tagged a skier must turn around and return to the start line. The first skier to escape the pursuer, complete the course and make it back to the start line by skiing the full loop wins the game.
- ❑ **Fish Gobbler.** A square area is marked out as shown with one side designated as “ship” and the other as “shore”. All the fish swim around in the ocean and when “ship” is called, they have to get to the ship, and when “shore” is called they have to get to shore. When “Fish Gobbler” is called, they all link arms within a count of twenty or the “Fish Gobbler” (the coach) will nab them. When “sardines” is called, they all have to cram into a small square in one corner before the count of twenty. This is a good game for young skiers as there is no penalty for being gobbled other than you get caught. No poles. See Figure 4.3.

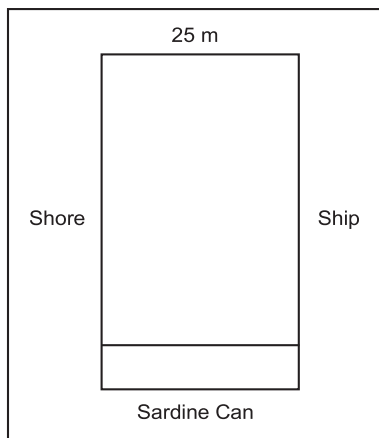


Figure 4.3

- **Mile Game.** For this game you require three or four bicycle tubes (14” to 16” across). Most bike shops will give these away. Tape back the stems on the tubes so they do not protrude outward and cause an injury. Tubes may be painted various colours. Three to four pylons are also required. Space the pylons and tubes on the hill as shown. Skiers Snowplow or Step Turn (depending on the technique the coach has selected) their way around the first pylon and then Snowplow around a turn to pick up a tube, and so on down the hill. This game can be adapted by having only the pylons, changing the grade of the hill, increasing or decreasing the number of pylons and tubes, increasing or decreasing the distance between the pylons/tubes. No poles. See Figure 4.4.

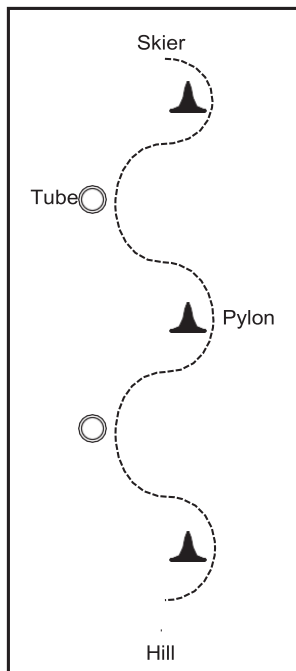


Figure 4.4

- **Team Station Game.** Teams are formed (size is not important). On a two km trail, set up four or five stations (a bean bag toss, a wheelbarrow run, a three legged run, a slalom course, a hat and glove exchange, etc.). Teams can be sent both ways along the trail as long as it is reasonably

flat. The rules are: (1) no team can start an activity until all of the team has arrived at the station; (2) teams cannot start for the next station until all of the team has finished the activity. The winning team is the first team back to the start with all of its members.

- ❑ **Fox and Rabbit Chase.** This game is played within a square. The square should be as big as the skills of the skiers allow. Markers are required to establish the boundaries. One skier is a fox, and one is the “chase” rabbit. The other skiers are also rabbits, but they are hidden in the forest (the forest is made of ski poles set up in an area within the square). If the chase rabbit becomes tired, he/she may at any time tag one of the other rabbits hiding in the trees, and that rabbit will become the chase rabbit. If the fox catches the chase rabbit, the two exchange roles so that the rabbit becomes the fox. If you have enough skiers, you can have two foxes and two chase rabbits. The coach may or may not choose to have the skiers use poles depending on space available to play the game.
- ❑ **Pablo Rabbit.** Working in pairs, the skiers each draw a giant rabbit in the snow using their skis. Then the entire group skis from rabbit to rabbit to decide which pair of skiers will be the Picasso of the future.
- ❑ **Dwarf-Giant Game.** In this game, the skiers switch back and forth between strides, changing from a “dwarf” to a “dragon” by going from a deep crouch to where their body and arms are stretched upward. Once skiers have mastered this imitation, this game can be adapted to a relay.
- ❑ **Double Pole Race.** The group is divided up into two or more teams. The front skier for each team stands behind the “start line”. The skiers on a team stand one behind the other holding the waist of the skier in front. The lead skier double poles, pulling the other skier/skiers to a line that has been determined as the finish line. Variations are: the lead skier pulls one or more depending on terrain; this game is adapted to a relay format, with other skiers waiting at the finish line to do the next leg of the race; or the skiers behind the lead skier snowplow when they are being pulled forward.
- ❑ **Laugh Line.** The skiers form two lines approximately 1.5 metres apart, and turn to face each other. One skier skis between the two lines, from one end to the other. The others try to make the skier laugh as he/she skis down the line. The group can do whatever it wants to make the skier laugh, except touch him/her. If the skier laughs, he/she is out of the game. If the skier manages to complete the trip without laughing, he/she returns to his/her original position. This game can be adapted according to the number of skiers in the group.
- ❑ **Three-Legged Race.** This can be a single start race with all skiers paired, or the pairs can form teams and it can be done as a relay. Each pair of skiers has adjacent legs tied together with a strip of cloth. No poles are used. The skiers ski out to a pylon and back. If it is a relay, they help the next pair get their legs tied. Coordination of strides is the skiers’ goal. The better skier of the pair will often encourage the other to take bigger strides, glide or even use a marathon skate.
- ❑ **Monster Skis Relay.** For this game you need several pairs of monster skis. These consist of six foot long pieces of 1” x 6” board. Pairs of holes are drilled every 16” (four pairs), through which loops of rope are tied for bindings. With four people on each pair, it is a race to the end! This is a very popular game.
- ❑ **Beat the Field.** Two teams are formed, “hitters” and “fielders”. The hitting team lines up in a row facing the fielders. The fielder’s team is scattered. The first skier on the hitting team hits the tennis ball, volleyball, etc., with his/her hand and then proceeds to ski around his/her team. As soon as

one person on the fielder's team has fielded the ball, the rest of the team lines up behind him/her and the ball is passed, from hand to hand, between the legs until it gets to the last person who yells "Stop!" One point is scored for each complete circuit. The hitter goes to the end of the line and the second person hits. When one side is done, "hitters" and "fielders" switch sides. Keep the teams fairly small (six or less). The coach may or may not choose to use poles. See Figure 4.5

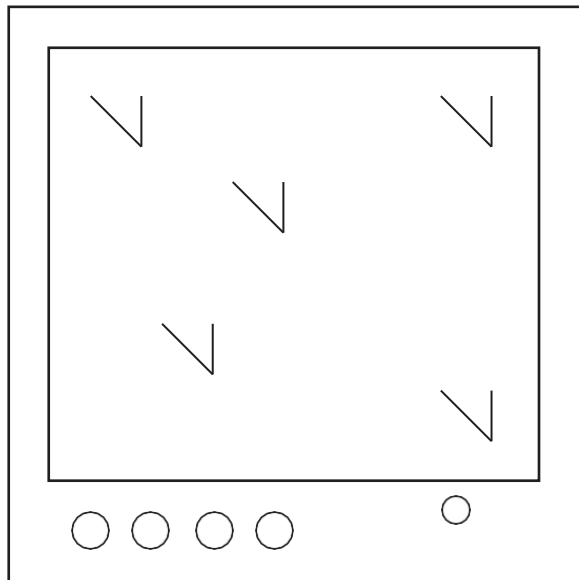


Figure 4.5

- ❑ **Hokey Pokey.** The group stands in a circle and sings “You put your right ski in, you take your right ski out, and shake it all about, you do the Hokey Pokey and you turn yourself around...” to the tune of the Hokey Pokey. Repeat using different parts of the body. Finish the game with all the skiers sliding towards the centre of the circle for one last, rousing round.
- ❑ **Superheroes.** Have the skiers lean forward as if they are going to fly, like Superman or Superwoman. Test how far they are willing to lean from the ankles before they move their feet.
- ❑ **Moving Bridges.** The group is divided up into pairs. One pair of skiers creates a bridge with their arms, which all the other pairs have to duck under. When the second pair of skiers ducks under the bridge, they turn to face each other and create a second bridge. Each pair of skiers builds a bridge at the end of the tunnel when they finish going through it. The group can travel around trees or other areas with their moving bridges. If the skiers are advanced enough to manage it, progress to a gentle slope. No poles.
- ❑ **Musical Poles.** This game is a version of Musical Chairs. The skiers stand about two metres apart in a single line. Some poles are stuck in the snow in a row opposite, about 20-30 metres away. The number of poles should be one less than the number of skiers. At a signal from the coach (the music stops!), all the skiers race to get a pole. The skier who ends up empty handed has the task of setting up the poles for the next round. Remove one additional pole each time.

There are many games that can be used to develop balance, coordination and ski technique skills. Often these games allow the skiers to learn a skill naturally by diverting their attention away from the mechanics of completing the action.

- **Chain Tag.** The skiers play this game within a marked circle. One skier is “It”. When “It” tags another skier they hold hands, and try to tag other skiers. Each skier that is tagged joins the chain by holding hands with the skier at the end of the chain. The game continues until every skier is part of the chain. A variation is to have two “Its” forming chains, and the chain with the most skiers at the end is the winner. No poles.
- **Relays.** A relay can be as simple as lining up in teams and using the technique of the day to ski around a pole and back. The following are examples of more complex relays. These relays can be run with one group just for fun, or with several groups in competition. Unless otherwise indicated, you can use them to practice any ski technique that you wish, although with the “rougher” relays, it is strongly suggested that poles should not be used. The distance that skiers ski for their leg of the relay should be kept relatively short. It is better to do several short relays than one long one.
  - ✓ **Long Eared Memory Relay.** The teams line up one behind the other. The first person skis ahead about ten metres. He/she is given a card with a saying on it to memorize (this can vary in difficulty according to the age group), e.g. “The rain in Spain falls mostly on the plain”. At the signal, the skier skis his/her leg of the relay then returns to the transfer point to which the second skier has moved up and passes the saying on verbally. This continues through the line to the final skier. The winning team is the one which comes closest to repeating the original saying to the coach.
  - ✓ **Snowball Relay.** Skiers ski to the end point, as shown, where they make a snowball and throw it at a target, trying to score as many points as possible. The team with the most points wins.
  - ✓ **Scooter Relay.** This is a good game for emphasizing glide. Skiers simply remove one ski and scoot their lap of the relay. Have the skiers do this with both legs, as balance is often much worse on one leg than the other.
  - ✓ **Number Relay.** Teams of four are formed and each team member is numbered from one to four. For this relay you can have a turn-around pole for each team (or have only one turn around pole for all the teams to use). The coach then calls out a number (or numbers) and the skiers with that number race around their pole and return to their team. The first skiers back earn a point for their team. Keep the distance to the pole short so that the skiers stay active.
  - ✓ **Bell Relay.** Form two teams. Blindfold the first person in each line. The coach stands some distance away and rings a bell. The skiers try to ski around the bell and back to their line blindfolded. A paper bag makes a very effective blindfold for older skiers; younger ones can use a scarf which allows them to “cheat” a little. The rest of the team should shout directions and encouragement to the blind skier on their team.



- ✓ **Soccer Relay.** Each team has a balloon and a turn-around pole. The skier must kick his/ her balloon to the pole, around it and back. The first team finished is the winner. Keep the distance short. Make sure you have many extra balloons.
- ✓ **Newspaper Relay.** Pile an equal number of sheets of newspaper (for each team) at the turn-around point. Skiers in turn ski to their pile, take one sheet of paper and return to the start of the line where they crumple it up and put it in their garbage bag. First team to fill their bag wins.
- ✓ **Hula Hoop Relay.** In turn, skiers ski to a turn-around point where their team has a hula hoop. They must drop it over their heads so it sits on their skis, remove it, and return to their team.
- ✓ **Ball Relay.** Skiers hold a ball in front of them and ski to a turn-around point. They return holding the ball behind their backs and tag the next team member. Keep the distances short and the teams small so that skiers are not inactive for very long periods of time.
- ✓ **Obstacle Course Relay.** For each team, create an identical course. Slalom around poles, ski under a rope, over a rope, and whatever your imagination and the terrain allow.
- ✓ **Who Can?** Each of the following questions can be used for a relay theme:
  - ✓ \_\_\_\_\_ Who can glide the farthest on their skis?
  - ✓ \_\_\_\_\_ Who can take the fewest strides between two points?



## PROGRESS REPORT FORM

### Podunk Jackrabbits - Progress Report

**Name:** I.M. Realfast

**Date:** March 10th, 20xx

**Skill Level Completed:** Level 3

**Skill Level Working On:** Level 4

**Coach:** Tom Green

| <i><b>Skill</b></i>    | <i><b>Comments</b></i>   |
|------------------------|--|
| Diagonal Stride        | <b>Good.</b> Good glide, weight shift and forward upper body lean. Needs more work on landing recovery foot beside or ahead of glide foot.   |
| Double Poling          | <b>Good.</b> Good upper body flex, arm follow through and straight legs. Work on the pole plant to make sure tips are not too far ahead (not ahead of the handles)                                     |
| Free Skate             | <b>Good.</b> Good glide on each foot. You need to work on "lining up" your toes, knees, hips, body and same side shoulder in the direction of your glide ski.  |
| One-step Double Poling | <b>Good.</b> Passed this skill previous season.  |
| One Skate              | <b>Needs more work.</b> You need to work on "lining up" (see Free Skate) and on using a "Double Pole" to start both left and right glides.   |
| Step Turn              | <b>Needs more work.</b> You are good on the Ready Position, but you need to work on small, quick steps and shifting your weight from ski to ski.   |
| Diagonal Skate         | <b>Good.</b> Remember to keep your gliding skis flat on the snow.  |
| Kick Turn              | <b>Excellent.</b> Good Kick Turns, even on steeper slopes and in deep snow. Don't forget to work on this important skill for back country skiing!  |
| Downhill Tuck          | <b>Good.</b> Good bending of upper body to horizontal. Good arms and hands position (well forward of body). You need to work on a deep bend for the low tuck, so your thighs are parallel to the snow. |
| Classic Skiing         | <b>Excellent.</b> Good Diagonal Stride for 10 minutes.   |
| Skating                | <b>Needs more work.</b> More practice needed for One Skate technique.  |

**Summary:** I.M. has been a very enthusiastic skier in all of our classes. His skills and interest in skiing have developed a lot this year. He should have no problem getting his Level 4 Award next year, if he keeps up the good work! I have really enjoyed having him in my group.

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