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National Alpine Committee

Mission
To support Alpine and Ski Cross athletes and develop champions

Vision
We are one sport, Alpine and Ski Cross, developing a sustainable pipeline of world class athletes who are highly skilled skiers capable of achieving success at World Cup, World Championships and Olympic Winter Games

Priorities
- Establish a winning culture
- Increase ability to affect the pathway
- Increase levels of human/financial resources
- Achieve consensus on a clear vision for alpine and ski cross

National Skills Assessment

Introduction
The National Skills Assessment is a Ski and Snowboard Australia initiative to help promote the importance of skill development and to allow athletes, coaches and parents the ability to track development over time. The National Skills Assessment is based on the USSA Skills Quest. For more detail please go to USSA.org

Two things the world’s best alpine and ski cross competitors have in common is that they are incredible free skiers, and simply love to ski. In order to achieve long term success and enjoyment in competition, athletes first and foremost need to be technically great skiers. The National Skills Assessment will help identify athlete’s strengths and opportunities for improvement by challenging them to complete a series of tasks. By working hard and focusing on skill acquisition, athletes will be rewarded by seeing their Skills Assessment scores improve in the short term and their opportunities for athletic success increase in the long run.

Athletes will complete a series of tasks addressing four primary skill areas: pressure, edging, rotation and balance. By looking at these important skill areas, a complete picture of the athlete’s current technical abilities will be painted. The aim is to create a national database where athletes can compare their scores with the scores of their peers. This database will also help SSA identify talented athletes and ensure they are engaged in the Alpine Pathway.

Equipment
All participants must use GS for the duration of the assessment.

Skills Assessment Table

<table>
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<th>Phase 2</th>
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<td>Pole jumpers</td>
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<td>Linked turns in wave track</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* The National Skills Assessment will focus on phases 3-5. Additional phases may be introduced over time as the program develops and includes a broader spectrum of athletes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Perfect</td>
<td>Flawless execution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>Smallest of change needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Couple of small changes needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Skills are refined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Skill level is above average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Skill level is average for this level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Adequate skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mediocre</td>
<td>Substandard skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Vague demonstration of skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Very Poor</td>
<td>Grossly deficient skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Inability</td>
<td>Nothing resembling the skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Phase 3
Under 12

National Skills Assessment
Pole jumpers in tuck

Goal: Jump over a set of poles placed across the hill while holding a high tuck position

Fundamental Skill: Pressure

Reasoning: Jumping over an obstacle involves three phases, take off, flight and landing. Successful execution of all three phases requires good pressure control involving the full length of the ski. Being able to complete the exercise in a tuck position shows separation from the upper and lower body which is important to maintain aerodynamics and speed.

Terrain: Beginner groomed terrain without side hill or fall-away

KID-FRIENDLY START INSTRUCTIONS:
• Ski straight down the hill in a tuck
• Jump over the poles without your skis touching the poles
• Keep your skis and knees the same distance apart
• Jump and land with both feet at the same time
• Jump from your legs, keeping the rest of your body quiet
• Stay between a high and low tuck
• Your elbows should not be wider apart than your knees

Set-up: Eight poles are laid perpendicular to the fall-line at 8 metre spacing. The poles can be secured or unsecured to the snow surface. The start is 12 metres above the first pole and the finish is 12 metres below the last pole.

Description:
• Ski directly down the fall-line in a tuck position
• Jump to clear each pole
• Tuck position is between a high and low tuck

Criteria for perfect execution:
Skier maintains:
• a straight path down the fall-line
• a tuck position such that if the skier were to pull their elbows back without moving their shoulders or hips, their elbows would touch some part of their thighs, with elbows no wider than the knees
• Equal distance between both skis and knees
• Simultaneous take off and landing on both feet
• No contact with the poles by the skis
• Economy of movement

Scoring:
Based on the description and criteria for perfect execution above, the skier will be judged on a scale from 0 to 10 where 10 is perfect demonstration of the skill and task and 0 is the inability to demonstrate the skill and task.

One ski skiing

Goal: To ski completely on one ski linking medium radius turns (15-18m apex to apex).

Fundamental Skill: Edging

Reasoning: Being able to increase and decrease edge angle is critical to ski racing. By skiing on one ski the athlete loses the ability to move weight from one ski to other forcing them to be deliberate in their weight transfer. Being able to adjust fore and aft pressure throughout the turn and during the transition is essential

Terrain: Intermediate groomed terrain.

KID-FRIENDLY START INSTRUCTIONS:
• Ski on one ski for eight medium size turns, with the other ski off the snow
• Do not touch your free boot on the snow or swing your foot
• Turns are round, and the same size
• Keep your speed up through all the turns
• You may plant your pole to turn, but do not drag your poles or use them for balance
• Switch legs and repeat

Description:
• Skier wears one ski
• Make eight linked medium (15-18m) turns
• Foot without ski is held completely off the snow and maintains a non-swinging position
• Skier will demonstrate right and left leg

Criteria for perfect execution:
• Free ski boot never touches the snow
• Free ski boot is not used for balance adjustment
• Speed is consistent throughout entire maneuver
• Turns are relatively round, and of consistent radius
• Ski poles are not used inappropriately for balance

Scoring:
Based on the description and criteria for perfect execution above, the skier will be judged on a scale from 0 to 10 where 10 is perfect demonstration of the skill and task and 0 is the inability to demonstrate the skill and task.
Pivot Slips

Goal: To ski straight down the fall-line and rotate both skis; in each direction, until they are facing across the hill while maintaining speed and direction of travel.

Fundamental Skill: Rotary

Reasoning: Athletes must be able to move their upper and lower body independent of one another. The ability to rotate skis while maintaining a quiet upper body is critical for efficient ski racing

Terrain: Intermediate groomed terrain with a consistent fall-line.

KID-FRIENDLY START INSTRUCTIONS:
• Ski straight down the hill up to GS speed
• Quickly pivot your skis across the hill, turning both feet sideways at the same time
• Slip sideways straight down the hill, trying not to lose much speed
• Quickly pivot your skis to turn them across the hill in the other direction followed by another sideslip
• You’ll do four sideslips total, two to each side
• Try not to lose much speed and stay in a straight line down the hill the whole time
• After the fourth sideslip, stop by setting your edges and planting your downhill pole
• Hold still for 3 seconds

Description:
• Skier starts in a straight run down the fall-line
• Skis are maintained at hip width throughout the drill
• Skier travels 15 metres then pivots both skis across the fall-line
• Skier sideslips for six metres in a corridor down the fall-line, then pivots both skis in the opposite direction into a sideslip down the fall-line for another six metres
• Drill is concluded after the fourth sideslip, with an edge set that is timed with a pole plant and holds a stopped position for 3 seconds

Criteria for perfect execution:
• Skier stays within a ski-width corridor without deviation from the fall-line through the entirety of the drill
• Skis are pivoted simultaneously
• Hip width stance in all phases of the drill
• Skier loses a minimal amount of speed during the sideslips
• Pole plant coincides with edge set at conclusion of drill

Scoring:
Based on the description and criteria for perfect execution above, the skier will be judged on a scale from 0 to 10 where 10 is perfect demonstration of the skill and task and 0 is the inability to demonstrate the skill and task.

Freeski – lane changes

Goal: To establish a rhythmical short radius turn shape, then change that rhythm and recreate it in a new fall-line

Fundamental Skill: Balance

Reasoning: Good balance is required in order to make adjustments in rhythm and turn shape. This task combines pressure, edging and rotary skills

Terrain: Intermediate groomed terrain.

Description:
• Skier skis three short radius turns in the fall-line of even size, rhythm and speed in a 5 metre wide corridor, then traverses across another 5 metre corridor to a new fall-line corridor and repeats for three turns
• The drill consists of six short turns sequences linked by five traverses

Criteria for perfect execution:
• Balance is maintained in all three planes
• Turns are relatively round, and of consistent radius
• Changing lanes is accomplished by a drastic rhythm change where the skis continue across the fall-line without changing the radius of the exiting turn or the first turn in the new corridor
• Consistent speed is maintained throughout
• A pole swing coincides with edge set and center-of-mass movement into the new turn

KID-FRIENDLY START INSTRUCTIONS:
• Ski three short radius turns in the corridor
• After the third turn, continue across the hill past the next corridor and start another three short turns section
• Ski six short turn sections connected by traverses
• Stay in balance
• The turns are linked together
• All turns are of the same shape, but the third turn is taken across the hill to a new corridor
• Speed is the same for all of the turns
• Use a pole swing or plant for each turn

Scoring:
Based on the description and criteria for perfect execution above, the skier will be judged on a scale from 0 to 10 where 10 is perfect demonstration of the skill and task and 0 is the inability to demonstrate the skill and task.
Straight run in wave track

Goal: In an aerodynamic position, maintain constant snow pressure while managing rolling terrain using flexion and extension.

Fundamental Skill: Pressure

Reasoning: In order to create or maintain speed athletes need to be able to manage the pressure applied to the snow by the ski. Being able to affectively handle terrain variations is extremely important.

Terrain: Beginner Terrain

Set-up: Six waves are constructed that are one metre high when measured from the bottom of the trough to the apex of the roll. Waves are perpendicular to the fallline and spaced 12 metres apart from crest to crest.

Description:
- The skier enters the wave track at GS speed
- The skier skis in a straight run maintaining a consistent high tuck position such that they can absorb the “waves” through flexion and extension of the lower body

Criteria for perfect execution:
- The skier’s upper body remains at the same relative elevation above the horizon that is consistent with the pitch of the hill
- Lower body absorbs the rolls and maintains or increases pressure on the downside of the rolls
- Skis remain flat against the snow and run straight in the fall-line
- Skier maintains equal distance between both skis
- Skis have even pressure between left and right
- Skier adjusts fore/aft pressure to increase speed

Scoring:
Based on the description and criteria for perfect execution above, the skier will be judged on a scale from 0 to 10 where 10 is perfect demonstration of the skill and task and 0 is the inability to demonstrate the skill and task.
One ski skiing with lane changes

Goal: To establish a rhythmical short radius turn shape, then break that rhythm and recreate it in a new fall-line

Fundamental Skill: Edging

Reasoning: Being able to increase and decrease edge angle is critical to ski racing, being able to adjust rhythm reflects the demands of race courses. By skiing on one ski the athlete loses the ability to move weight from one ski to other forcing them to be deliberate in their weight transfer. Being able to adjust fore and aft pressure throughout the turn and during the transition is essential

Terrain: Intermediate groomed terrain.

Description:
• Skier wears one ski
• Skier skis three short radius turns in the fall-line of even rhythm and speed in a 5 metre wide corridor, then traverses across another 5 metre corridor to a new fall-line corridor and repeats for three turns
• The drill consists of six short turn sequences linked by five traverses
• Free ski boot is held completely off the snow and maintains a non-swinging position
• Complete the drill with left and right leg separately

Criteria for perfect execution:
• Free ski boot never touches the snow
• Free ski boot is not used for balance adjustment
• Speed is consistent throughout entire maneuver
• Turns are relatively round and of consistent radius
• Ski poles are not used inappropriately for balance

Scoring:
Based on the description and criteria for perfect execution above, the skier will be judged on a scale from 0 to 10 where 10 is perfect demonstration of the skill and task and 0 is the inability to demonstrate the skill and task.

Lane Change Drill

Sideslip to straight run to sideslip

Goal: To ski straight down the fall-line and rotate both skis until they are facing across the hill followed by a sideslip, then rotating them back into the fall-line while maintaining speed and direction of travel.

Fundamental Skill: Rotary

Reasoning: Athletes must be able to move their upper and lower body independent of one another. The ability to rotate skis while maintaining a quiet upper body is critical for efficient ski racing

Terrain: Intermediate groomed terrain with a consistent fall-line.

Description:
• Skier starts in a straight run down the fall-line
• Skis are maintained at hip width throughout the drill
• After about 10 metres skier pivots both skis across the fall-line in one continuous motion
• Skier sideslips for 6 metres in a corridor down the fall-line
• The skis are then rotated back so they point down the fall-line for 6 metres followed by another 6 metre sideslip in the opposite direction
• Drill is concluded after the fourth sideslip, with an edge set that is timed with a pole plant and holds a stopped position for 3 seconds

Criteria for perfect execution:
• Skier stays within a ski width corridor without deviation from the fall-line through entire drill
• Skis are pivoted simultaneously
• Hip width stance in all phases of the drill
• Skier loses a minimal amount of speed during the sideslips
• Distinct straight run between sideslips
• Pole plant coincides with edge set at conclusion of drill

Scoring:
Based on the description and criteria for perfect execution above, the skier will be judged on a scale from 0 to 10 where 10 is perfect demonstration of the skill and task and 0 is the inability to demonstrate the skill and task.
Freeski – hourglass

Goal: To progressively shorten the radius of linked turns to a point, then progressively lengthen the radius back to the original

Fundamental Skill: Balance

Reasoning: A proficient skier is able to control the radius of their turn and make gradual changes as needed. Understanding and executing when and where to place a turn in relation to previous or coming turns and terrain shows fine motor control and anticipation.

Terrain: Intermediate groomed terrain.

Set-up: Define the start and finish. Place two brushes half way down 5 metres apart across the hill.

Description:
• The drill is 10 turns in duration.
• Starting with GS-sized turns, gradually decrease the turn radius until a slalom size turn is achieved at the half-way point while skiing between the two brushes.
• After the brushes, the turns will become gradually larger until the GS-sized turn is reached at drill conclusion.

Criteria for perfect execution:
• Balance is maintained in all three planes.
• Round turns are linked without traverse.
• Turns gradually become smaller then larger without abrupt changes in turn size or shape.
• Relatively consistent speed is maintained throughout.
• Hourglass is symmetric from left to right.
• Hourglass is symmetric from top to bottom.

Scoring: Based on the description and criteria for perfect execution above, the skier will be judged on a scale from 0 to 10 where 10 is perfect demonstration of the skill and task and 0 is the inability to demonstrate the skill and task.
Linked turns in wave track

Goal: While making linked turns, maintain constant snow pressure and manage rolling terrain using flexion and extension

Fundamental Skill: Pressure

Reasoning: In order to create or maintain speed athletes need to be able to manage the pressure applied to the snow by the ski. Being able to affectively handle terrain variations while turning, and understanding where to apply pressure in relation to terrain is extremely important.

Terrain: Beginner Terrain.

Set-up: Six waves are constructed that are one metre high when measured from the bottom of the trough to the apex of the roll. Waves are perpendicular to the fall-line and spaced 12 metres apart from crest to crest. Width is two snow cat grooming widths or about 10 metres.

Description:
- The skier enters the wave track at GS speed, then makes carved, round linked turns
- The skier skis such that they can absorb the waves and extend into the troughs with their lower body while turning
- Turn apex is randomly placed on each wave by the athlete with no consecutive turn being placed in the same place (the turn apex could be on the backside, top, or trough)

Criteria for perfect execution:
- The skier's upper body remains at same relative elevation above horizon that is consistent with the pitch of the hill
- Lower body absorbs the rolls and maintains or increases pressure on the downside of the rolls
- Skis maintain snow contact at all times
- Skier demonstrates round turns while varying turn apex placement relative to the rolls
- Skier adjusts fore/aft pressure to increase speed

Scoring:
Based on the description and criteria for perfect execution above, the skier will be judged on a scale from 0 to 10 where 10 is perfect demonstration of the skill and task and 0 is the inability to demonstrate the skill and task.

One ski skiing without poles

Goal: To ski completely on one ski linking medium radius turns (15-18m apex to apex) without poles

Fundamental Skill: Edging

Reasoning: Being able to increase and decrease edge angle is critical to ski racing. By skiing on one ski the athlete loses the ability to move weight from one ski to other forcing them to be deliberate in their weight transfer. Removing the ski poles further unbalances the athlete and edging and weight transfer must be performed from the ankle.

Terrain: Intermediate groomed terrain.

Description:
- Skier wears one ski and performs without poles
- Skier will demonstrate right and left leg in eight linked medium radius (15-18m) turns
- Foot without ski is held completely off the snow and maintains a non-swinging position

Criteria for perfect execution:
- Free ski boot never touches the snow
- Free ski boot is not used for balance adjustment
- Speed is consistent throughout entire task
- Turns are relatively round, carved, and of consistent radius

Scoring:
Based on the description and criteria for perfect execution above, the skier will be judged on a scale from 0 to 10 where 10 is perfect demonstration of the skill and task and 0 is the inability to demonstrate the skill and task.
Hop turns

Goal: To rotate the skis with precision using just the lower body, while the upper body remains still.

Fundamental Skill: Rotary

Reasoning: Rotary skills must be executed by the upper and lower body working independently and travelling in different directions.

Terrain: Intermediate groomed terrain.

Description:
- Skier starts from a traverse stance
- Skier jumps with both skis pivoting them in alternating directions for 15 jumps
- Skis are pivoted around the middle of the ski with simultaneous leg rotation
- Skier jumps in the opposite direction immediately upon landing
- Track left in snow resembles a series of “Z”s, with the tip of the previous track almost coinciding with the tail of the next track
- Exercise concludes with an edge set of both skis across the fall-line and hold stopped position for 3 seconds

Criteria for perfect execution:
- Skis are always parallel to snow surface in the air (no tips or tail up)
- Equal distance is maintained between skis
- Skis land on edge and take off immediately from same position
- Consistent rhythm and speed with no pausing or stopping during hops
- Last hop concludes with an edge set that coincides with a pole plant and skier holds for 3 seconds

Scoring:
Based on the description and criteria for perfect execution above, the skier will be judged on a scale from 0 to 10 where 10 is perfect demonstration of the skill and task and 0 is the inability to demonstrate the skill and task.

Freeski – varied terrain and snow conditions

Goal: To show efficient ski control in challenging terrain and snow conditions

Fundamental Skill: Balance

Reasoning: To efficiently handle varying snow conditions the skier must constantly make adjustments, varied terrain challenges balance in all directions.

Terrain: Expert terrain that has variable Terrain angle and side hills on non-groomed snow.

Description:
- Skier skis 10 turns while maintaining a consistent 20 to 22 metre turn size and shape regardless of the terrain and conditions
- Link turns with minimal traversing, maintaining speed with turn shape
- Any air time is controlled with skis paralleling the angle of the Terrain

Criteria for perfect execution:
- Turns are round with consistent turn size
- Minimal traversing
- Skis are parallel with consistent width
- Any air time is controlled and landed with the skis paralleling the angle of the landing Terrain
- Skier skis with a high rate of speed

Scoring:
Based on the description and criteria for perfect execution above, the skier will be judged on a scale from 0 to 10 where 10 is perfect demonstration of the skill and task and 0 is the inability to demonstrate the skill and task.
Directory

Bradley Wall
Alpine Program Director
Ski & Snowboard Australia
m: +61 424 777 046
e: bwall@skiandsnowboard.org.au

Ski & Snowboard Australia
Level 2, 105 Pearl River Rd, Docklands Melbourne Victoria 3008 Australia
p: +61 3 9696 2344
f: +61 3 9696 2399
www.skiandsnowboard.org.au

teamHotham
Great Alpine Rd, Hotham Heights Victoria 3741 Australia
PO Box 435, Prahran Victoria 3181 Australia
p: +61 3 5759 3538 (ski season only)
www.mhrs.org.au

Mount Buller Race Club
208 Summit Road, Mt Buller Victoria 3723 Australia
PO Box 34, Mt Buller Victoria 3723 Australia
p: +61 3 5777 6221 or +61 3 5777 6715
f: +61 3 5777 6433
e: info@mtbullerraceclub.com.au
www.mtbullerraceclub.com.au

Falls Creek Race Club
fallscreekraceclub@yahoo.com.au
m: +61 409 248 765
www.raceclubfalls creek.com.au

Thredbo Ski Race Club (winter only)
p: +61 2 6457 6101
f: +61 2 8212 8141
e: info@thredboskiracing.com
www.thredboskiracing.com

Perisher Winter Sports Club
p: +61 2 6459 4609 or +61 2 6459 4608
e: wsc@perisher.com.au