National Skills Assessment

What is it?
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.

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.

Why are we doing it?
The primary objective of the National Skills Assessment is to help create incredible skiers who are passionate about skiing and motivated to achieve their best. The Assessment will provide athletes, coaches and parents with valuable insights to help shape athletic programming and target opportunities for improvement.

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.

Who is it for?
The National Skills Assessment is for everyone aged 10 years up to senior FIS age. Whether you are competing at interschools or aspire to compete on the World Cup in Alpine or Ski Cross, the National Skills Assessment is for you. For everyone who wants to have a better understanding of their current skill level and feedback regarding what they should be working on in order to progress, the National Skills Assessment is the best tool.
How to be involved?
All SSA Alpine Members are encouraged to take part. The National Skills Assessment is a critically important initiative and as such has been included in the SSA Alpine Membership fee structure. The accessible Alpine Registration categories are:

- Alpine Club Racer
- Alpine Junior Racer
- Alpine Racer

See the membership section of the SSA website for more information.

When is it happening?
The National Skills Assessment will hit all 5 major resorts from the end of June and through the July school holidays. Keep an eye on the Ski and Snowboard Australia website or speak with your local club.

How is it being delivered?
The National Skills Assessment will be delivered at each of the 5 major Australian resorts minimising the cost for attending athletes. The assessment panel is made up of Ski & Snowboard Australia staff and Pathway Program staff.

- SSA Alpine Program Director
- Shawn Fleming: Olympic Winter Institute of Australia Head Ski Cross Coach
- Craig Branch: three time Olympian
- Club representatives

The Skills Assessment is scored on a 0-10-point scale. Each exercise has a specific task description and criteria for perfect skill execution. The assessors will focus on whether the athlete performs the skill and task to a high level relative to their developmental phase. The tests are designed such that the most skilled skiers in each phase should be capable of earning a perfect score of 10.