



## EASTERN REGION YOUTH SKILLS ASSESSMENT PROJECT

**Goal:** Reaffirm Eastern Children's Committee commitment to skill development.

**Strategy:** Introduce a skills assessment program which will guide appropriate skill development, provide metrics for assessing skill, and standardize the assessment of skills related to: balance, pole plant, carving, and turn shape. The tests are limited in number to provide for better utilization and standardization.

### **Skill Assessment Tests:**

#### **TEST #1**

##### **Pole Plant**

The pole plant is a requisite skiing skill best learned during the early ski acquisition phase. Mastery of pole plant execution will be based on poles planted angled forward, arms forward with economy of movement utilizing the hands and wrists, quiet upper body with minimal unnecessary movement, and proper timing.

The test will be through two trials of twelve to sixteen consecutive medium radius turns with the best score of the two utilized for the assessment. For mastery the first trial must be judged as proficiency with either single or double pole plant then the second trial would demonstrate the other.

Level One	Entry Level	Lack of pole plant fundamentals
Level Two	Acquisition	Inconsistent pole plants with improvement needed with the timing of the pole plant, economy of movement with upper body and arms forward, precision in planting the poles angled forward and/or consistency of pole plant.
Level Three	Adequate	Consistent pole plants with proper timing, quiet upper body with arms forward using the hands and wrists to execute the planting of the poles. Needs more consistent planting with the pole tips angled forward on both turns.
Level Four	Proficiency	Precision as summarized above with either a single or double pole plant.
Level Five	Mastery	Precision as summarized above with one run each of single and double pole plants.

## TEST #2

### One Ski

Mastery in skiing on one ski demonstrates both fore/aft and lateral balance. Elements of mastery using one ski include upper and lower body separation, pole planting, forward ankle/knee flexion, and carving the initiation through completion in both directions. Consistent turn shape/radius is also an important element, as well as speed control. Mastery would incorporate these technical elements skiing on one ski without poles.

A corridor of brushes may be set to define the radius of the turns which should be approximately 15-18 meter vertical distance with consistent turn shape an element of mastery. The test will be for twelve consecutive turns with two trials on each leg with assessment for each leg. The assessment will be the average between the top score for each leg, average rounded up if uneven. Proficiency using poles the first trial is required prior to electing to demonstrate mastery on the second.

Level One	Entry Level	Learning to ski on one ski
Level Two	Acquisition	Can ski on one ski with improvement needed in consistency of turn radius and maintaining balance for twelve consecutive turns.
Level Three	Adequate	Displays execution of skiing on one ski as outlined with the ability to carve the fallline through completion phases but needs to improve in carving the initiation of the turn in both directions and planting of the poles.
Level Four	Proficiency	Precision as outlined above with the ability to carve turns from the initiation through completion in both directions with good pole plants, whether using a single or double pole plant.
Level Five	Mastery	Mastery will include the technical elements described above without the use of poles.

## TEST#3

### Apex Drill

The Apex Drill is utilized as an exercise for developing proper turn shape and carving. Mastery executing the Apex Drill includes carving the initiation, apex, and completion of the turn as well as demonstrating the technical elements of athletic stance, parallel position, and lower body movements. Proper turn shape is a critical part of mastery and includes entering the top brush with the skis carving and pointed out close to the top brush so the greatest depth to the outside is between the two vertical brushes with the ski direction in the fallline this is the apex of the turn, the skis continue carving and pass the second brush close to the brush with good ski direction.

The Apex Drill will be set with brushes, 6 meters distance between the two vertical brushes, 9 meters distance between the bottom brush of one vertical to the top brush of the next vertical. There needs to be a good amount of offset in the turn shape to allow for proper execution of this drill. There will be two trials of twelve turns with the best score of the two utilized for the assessment. Straddling a brush will not cause any deduction as the execution is the emphasis.

Level One	Entry Level	Learning to complete the Apex Drill
Level Two	Acquisition	Completes the drill course but has difficulty both carving turns and with the proper turn shape in executing the drill.
Level Three	Adequate	Completes the Apex Drill either with good turn shape or carving the turns well from the falline through the completion..
Level Four	Proficiency	Displays proficiency in the execution of completing the Apex Drill with both proper turn shape and carving the falline through completion but can improve in areas of carving the initiation of the turn into the top brush with the skis pointed out, consistency on both turns, and movement from athletic stance to parallel.
Level Five	Mastery	As outlined above with the ability to carve from the initiation through completion in both directions with good turn shape, in the proper location, on both turns.

## **BASIS AND STATION SET UP**

- The terrain for the skills assessment should be an even, moderate pitch for slalom or giant slalom.
- For each assessment skill test there will be two evaluators to determine an assessment on a 1-5 scale with 1 being entry level and 5 showing mastery of the skill. Athletes will have two trials for each assessment skill test; two runs of pole plant emphasis, two runs each leg (four runs total) for one ski, and two runs of the Apex Drill.
- If there is a difference between the two scores of the evaluators the average will be rounded up. The top score of the two trials within each skill test will be utilized. The 3 skill test scores will be totaled and become the skier's overall skill assessment score.
- When utilized as part of an Eastern Region project the athletes will be assigned bibs to help identify the athletes and facilitate recording.
- Ideally the skills assessment will take place on a hill wide enough for the three skills to be performed adjacent to one another.
- For the two drills set within brush corridors there will be an 8-10 meter straight run into the middle of the corridor to allow the athlete to gather speed prior to the first turn. The test will begin after this first direction change.

The recommendation from the task group to the Children's Committee is to incorporate the skills assessment as part of camp curriculum for 2010-11 at the JIII and JIV Fundamentals Camps and as part of Future Stars. In 2011-12 the skills assessment would become part of the selection from Future Stars to the Can-Am series. This recommendation is to utilize results from the timed runs per present scoring for the first two thirds (40, if 60) of the quota with the skills assessment utilized for selecting the next twenty athletes.

Objective ski racing results continue to carry greater relative weight but this selection incentive will help underline the importance of skill acquisition and recognize athletes later in their physical maturation and development who have a strong level of skill development. See the USSA Alpine Training System or Canadian Long Term Athletic Development outlines for the underlying research and basis.

For more information contact:

Alexandra Krebs

Eastern Region Youth Development and Competition Manager

Akrebs@ussa.org