



Introduction

On behalf of Special Olympics International, THANK YOU for contributing your time and expertise. The knowledge you share with the course participants will make a significant impact on the lives of athletes with intellectual disabilities.

The Volunteer Coach Course offers a basic introduction to coaching Special Olympics alpine skiing. The course should be relevant to coaches involved with Special Olympics athletes of low to average ability. Higher-level skills and tactics are introduced in the Advanced Coach Course and in NGB and other coaching accreditation programs.

Coaches should leave the training school with a clear understanding of the following:

- Official Special Olympics alpine skiing events and rules
- How to use the Special Olympics Alpine Skiing Coaching Guide
- How to properly assess Special Olympics alpine skiers
- How to organize a training session
- Techniques for warm-up and stretching
- How to teach the fundamental of introductory alpine skiing skills
- Ideas for appropriate drills and activities to teach skills

Review the Quick Quiz at the end of this guide to identify major points and ensure that they are covered within the course.

Suggestions for Instructors

- **Review the Special Olympics Alpine Skiing Coaching Guide.** It provides the necessary background to our coaching program.
- **Stay on schedule.** There is a lot of material to be covered, and it is easy to fall behind. Remember, this course is an overview. Encourage coaches to take additional coaching courses.
- **Use team teaching.** Two instructors can bring different expertise to the course and also make this course more enjoyable for the participants. It is suggested that one instructor be a specialist in alpine skiing and the other in Special Olympics.

Your ideas on the course are welcomed. Please send any ideas for future improvement to the SOI Alpine Skiing Director, Special Olympics International, 1133 19th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.





Alpine Skiing Volunteer Coach Training School Agenda

PART 1 Classroom Session (90 minutes)

- 1.0 Introduction and Using the Special Olympics Coaching Guide
- 1.1 Special Olympics Coaching Philosophy
- 1.2 Coaching Resources
- 1.3 Athlete Assessment/Assessment Skills
- 1.4 Special Olympics Alpine Skiing
- 1.5 Preparing for Your Alpine Skiing Program
- 1.6 Training and Competition Plan
- 1.7 Organizing a Training Session
- 1.8 Prevention of Injuries
- 1.9 Coaching Athletes with Intellectual Disabilities

PART 2 Activity Session (120 minutes)

- 2.1 Skiing Evaluation of Coaches
- 2.2 Special Olympics Skills Assessment
- 2.3 Teaching the Coach to be a Better Skier

BREAK

- 2.4 Review of Teaching the Beginner
- 2.5 Equipment Preparation and Stretching
- 2.6 Basic Skiing Skills

PART 3 Special Olympics Athletes Training Session (90 minutes)

- 3.1 Model Training Session

PART 4 Classroom Wrap-Up (30 minutes)

- 4.1 Review (Questions)
- 4.2 Quick Quiz
- 4.3 Certification Process and Application
- 4.4 Training School Evaluation

Materials

- Course Agendas (one per participant)
- Special Olympics Alpine Skiing Coaching Guides
- Samples of recommended coaching books/videos for display

Equipment

- Skis, boots, bindings, poles
- Appropriate alpine ski apparel
- Supplemental items (tape, old skis, markers, etc.)
- Wax table w/accessories (optional)
- First-aid kit
- Water





PART 1

Classroom Session

(90 minutes – Approximately 10 minutes per session)

1.0 Introduction and the Using the Special Olympics Alpine Skiing Coaching Guide

- Welcome the Participants
- Introduce yourself, including your coaching background.
- Ask participants to briefly introduce themselves.
- Review the course objectives and agenda.
- Discuss and review the Coaching Guide.
- Refer to this text throughout the course.

1.1 Special Olympics Coaching Philosophy

- The use of the word “**Olympics**” means a commitment to high standards of coaching.
- **Training and safety** are critical for athletes’ development.
- Coaches must continually **challenge** athletes to push on to new levels of achievement.
- In Special Olympics, athletes train to **compete**, not just recreate. Refer to oath: “Let Me Win, But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.”
- Life-long fitness and the ability to enjoy recreational activities is an important by-product of Special Olympics.

1.2 Coaching Resources

- Provide examples of coaching **books and videos**.
- Encourage coaches to affiliate with alpine skiing **associations/organizations**.
- Promote **NGB coaching courses**.
- Make use of **assistant coaches and Partners Clubs®** with High Schools and colleges. (Many Special Olympics athletes need individualized attention in order to progress.)
- Involve the **family members**.

1.3 Athlete Assessment

- All athletes must be medically certified to participate in Special Olympics (review the **Special Olympics medical form**).
- All athletes with **Down syndrome** must have an **Atlantoaxial** X-ray and test **negative** in order to train and compete in alpine skiing.
- Coaches will encounter athletes of all levels of abilities. Allow each athlete to **progress** as his/her ability permits.
- Work on **one skill/drill at a time**.
- Discuss and explain the **assessment process**.





PART 1 (Continued)

1.4 Special Olympics Alpine Skiing Events and Rules

- There are alpine skiing events appropriate for all ability levels.
 - **Glide, Super Glide, and 10-Meter Race** are appropriate for beginners and athletes with lower abilities.
 - **Downhill, Slalom, and Giant Slalom** events are appropriate for athletes with average to higher abilities.
- Special Olympics alpine skiing **rules** include some modifications to the FIS rules.
- **Divisioning** allows players to compete against those of comparable abilities and ages.
- The official **Skills Assessments** are used by competition Divisioning Committees to pre-classifying athletes before divisioning. These skills assessments are also used by coaches in early season and pre-event groupings of ability levels.

1.5 Preparing for Your Alpine Skiing Program

- List the minimum **equipment** needed for a training session.
- Emphasize the importance of **quality equipment** and **appropriate clothing** for athletes.
- Provide names of **dealers** who will supply quality equipment at a low cost.
- Discuss and demonstrate the importance of proper equipment **maintenance**.

1.6 Training and Competition Plan

Briefly discuss and emphasize the importance and effectiveness of the following:

- **Written training plan**
- Pre-season (dryland) program
- On-snow eight-week training program
- In-season (home maintenance) program
- Competition plan
- Post-season (cross training)





PART 1 (Continued)

1.7 Organizing a Training Session

• In-door Preparation

- How to fit equipment (shoes, ski boots and skis); tape exercises on the floor
- Show the Special Olympics Ski Coach Training Video #1 (ATM, PSIA)
- Preparation of the athlete for the particular mountain (building; ski patrol location; lift and training layout; walk through)
- Time management) clothing and equipment; rest-room stop; class logistics; ability levels; safety)

• On-Snow Training

- Utilize parents or non-skiing volunteers for support.
- Review the Skills Assessment – “Beginner.”
- Review the other ability levels for general knowledge.
- Review the assessment procedure.

1.8 Prevention of Injuries

- **Safety** is a coach’s number one priority.
- **Check the competition area** for safety hazards before each practice.
- Establish **training rules** to minimize accidents.
- Have an **emergency action plan** and practice it.

1.9 Coaching Athletes with Intellectual Disabilities

Note: When discussing common issues and problems associated with coaching Special Olympics athletes, it is helpful to include **specific examples**. Encourage participants to relate their own experiences. Below are several general guidelines.

- Establish clear **rules** to help athletes understand exactly what is expected of them and to reduce behavior problems.
- **Break down skills** and concepts into simple parts.
- Use **one-part instructions** and “**Key Words**” to explain and reinforce technical skill components.
- Instruct and demonstrate, but also coach through asking appropriate *questions*. **Challenge players to think for themselves.**
- Be aware of **physical impairments** that affect the way players hear, see, or pay attention.
- Establish a consistent **routine** at competitions.





PART 2

Activity Session I

(60 minutes)

Goals

The initial on-the-hill session should focus on each coach's individual skiing ability. Each participant should leave this session knowing:

- What his or her **assessed skiing ability** is, according to the Special Olympics Alpine Skiing Skills Assessment
- What skills make up the **beginner, novice, intermediate, and advanced** ability levels
- How the **assessment process works** (*A skier must be able to perform each component of an ability level before advancing to the next level.*)
- What skills he/she might practice in order to progress to a **higher skiing skills level**

2.1 Skiing Evaluation of Coaches [20 minutes]

- Select a lift with a short (5-10 minutes) turnaround next to a short assessment course.
- Briefly discuss a stretching/flexibility routine.
 - Hamstring stretch
 - Leg stretch
 - Torso stretch
 - Arm swing
- Give each coach two practice runs to warm up.
- Have half of the coaches individually ski the course.
 - Other coaches evaluate the skiers' abilities using the assessment cards provided.

2.2 Discussion of Assessment Process [20 minutes]

- The skills assessment program has been designed to record each athlete's sports skills performance throughout the alpine skiing program. Each ability level (beginner, novice, intermediate, and advanced) has defined skills in terms of ski-area awareness and technical/tactical development.
- Each standard reflects how well the athlete must execute the desired skills. It is the responsibility of the coach to determine his/her athlete's level of acceptable performance.
- The assessment should be filled out for each athlete at the beginning of each season and before the athlete's attendance at that year's highest level competition.

2.3 Teaching the Coach to be a Better Skier [20 minutes]

- Discuss technical drills that coaches can use to progress.
- Have each skier work on one or two drills that will help improve his/her own skiing ability.





PART 2

Activity Session II

(60 minutes)

Goals

The second on-the-hill session should focus on the basic skills of alpine skiing. Each coach should leave this session knowing:

- **Stretching and flexibility** routines that can be implemented into a training session
- Simple activities to teach athletes the basics of **equipment preparation**
- Basic **skiing skills** and way to teach those skills to the beginning skier. (*Activities and drills should be taken from the Coaching Guide.*)

Teaching Suggestions

- Make this an active session! Allow each coach to perform each stretch and skill.
- Encourage participants to offer their own suggestions for stretches or activities.

3.1 Review of Teaching the Beginner [15 minutes]

- Review Skills Assessment Tests 2-4 for the novice level.
- Briefly demonstrate each.

3.2 Equipment Preparation and Stretching [15 minutes]

- Boots
 - Boot games
- Boots to bindings on ski
 - One-ski games
- Flexibility routines (on or off skis)
 - Hamstring stretch
 - Leg stretch
 - Torso stretch
 - Arm swing

3.3 Basic Skiing Skills [30 minutes]

- Wedging
- Stance
- Wedge turns
- Introducing to ski poles





PART 3

Special Olympics Athletes Training Session

(90 minutes)

Guidelines

This part of the training school provides an opportunity for coaches to work directly with Special Olympics athletes and to participate in some of the ideas introduced earlier.

Coaches will benefit by taking part in the teaching of the introductory skills discussed earlier in the course. Small groups of athletes should be assigned to each coach. The size of each group may vary depending on the number of coaches and athletes involved.

A minimum of three Special Olympics alpine skiing athletes are needed for this part of the training school.

The instructors should oversee this session while assisting coaches and answering questions.

Model Training Session with Athletes

3.1 Equipment Preparation [10 minutes]

- Boots
- Boots to bindings on ski

3.2 Flexibility Routine [10 minutes]

- Stretches (on or off skis)

3.3 Basic Skiing Skills [45 minutes]

- One-ski games
- Two-ski games
- Early Wedges
- Stance
- Introduction to ski poles

***Note:** The time spent on each skill and the number of skills covered will vary depending on the ability levels of the skiers.*

3.4 Cool-Down and Discussion [10 minutes]





PART 4

Classroom Wrap-up Session

(30 minutes)

4.1 Review (Questions and Answers) [5 minutes]

- Review the points of emphasis.
- Network existing programs and ski-areas support.

4.2 Quick Quiz (see following page) [15 minutes]

- Ask coaches to complete the Quick Quiz.
- Provide the answers to each question.
- Coaches grade their own quiz.

4.3 Certification Process and Form [5 minutes]

- Ask coaches to fill out the first part of the certification form.
- In addition to taking this course on teaching and coaching a specific sport, a Special Olympics coach must do the following in order to achieve certification:
 - Attend a General Orientation as a basic introduction to Special Olympics
 - Complete a course on the basics of teaching and coaching Special Olympics athletes.
 - Complete 10 hours of working with Special Olympics athletes under an experienced coach
 - Complete the training programs for Protective Behaviors and Concussion Training and submit confirmation of completion to the Local Special Olympics Program (U.S. only).
 - Receive endorsement from his/her Program as having fulfilled the above criteria, as well as general screening approval as a suitable individual to work with Special Olympics athletes.

4.4 Training School Evaluation [5 minutes]

- Coaches complete the course evaluation and return it before leaving the training school.
(See attached form.)





Quick Quiz

1. The most important single piece of ski equipment is _____.
2. Yes ___ No ___ A good demonstration with little explanation will allow for a quality on-snow skill learning experience for your athletes.
3. There are _____ levels of ability for assessment, training, and competition.
4. As a coach, your first consideration in practice, training, and competition must be _____.
5. Name at least three outside organizations or groups that can provide additional alpine skiing materials or resources for your program.
_____.
6. A Special Olympics alpine skier should have _____ weeks of dryland training prior to going on snow.
7. The _____ rule allows ample time for the athletes either to regroup and continue in a race or to be removed from the race course.
8. _____ are developed by the International Ski Federation (FIS). They are the basis for Special Olympics alpine skiing rules; however, in some cases Special Olympics rules have been modified to suit the ability level of athletes.
9. A simple checklist of equipment for alpine skiing includes:

10. The five components of an alpine skiing training and competition plan are _____, _____, _____, _____, and _____.
11. We encourage athletes to participate in an indoor session prior to going on snow because _____.
12. The Special Olympics winter sports are _____
_____.



Quick Quiz Answers

1. The most important single piece of ski equipment is **the boot**.
2. Yes **X** No ____ A good demonstration with little explanation will allow for a quality on-snow skill learning experience for your athletes.
3. There are **four** levels of ability for assessment, training, and competition.
4. As a coach, your first consideration in practice, training, and competition must be **safety**.
5. Name at least three outside organizations or groups that can provide additional alpine skiing materials or resources for your program.
U.S. Ski Coaches Association, Professional Ski Instructors of America, National Handicapped Sports, local ski schools, and Ski Industries of America.
6. A Special Olympics alpine skier should have **six** weeks of dryland training prior to going on snow.
7. The **two-minute** rule allows ample time for the athletes either to regroup and continue in a race or to be removed from the race course.
8. **International Ski Competition Rules (ICR)** are developed by the International Ski Federation (FIS). They are the basis for Special Olympics alpine skiing rules; however, in some cases Special Olympics rules have been modified to suit the ability level of athletes.
9. A simple checklist of equipment for alpine skiing includes:
Skis
Boots
Poles
Hat
Gloves
goggles
10. The five components of an alpine skiing training and competition plan are **Pre-Season Dryland Training, On-Snow Eight-Week Training, In-Season Home Maintenance, Competition Plan, and Post-Season**.
11. We encourage athletes to participate in an indoor session prior to going on snow because **it allows athletes the opportunity to become comfortable with ski equipment**.
12. The Special Olympics winter sports are **Alpine Skiing, Figure Skating, Floor Hockey, Cross-Country Skiing, and Speed Skating**.





Skills Assessment

Level I - Beginner

<i>Test</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>#1 Ski-Area Awareness</i>
_____	_____	Knows "GREEN" or easiest trail sign
_____	_____	Knows "CLOSED TRAIL" sign
_____	_____	Understands the objectives of a ski lesson
_____	_____	Learns, demonstrates courtesy to other skiers
<i>Test</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>#2 Dryland or Inside Activity</i>
_____	_____	Buckles boots independently
_____	_____	Puts boots in bindings
_____	_____	Holds ski poles properly
_____	_____	Walks with skis in a straight line
_____	_____	Walks with skis in a circle
_____	_____	Side steps with skis
_____	_____	Places skis in a wedge position
_____	_____	Herringbones with skis
<i>Test</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>#3 Technical Development: Flat to gentle slope on-snow activity</i>
_____	_____	Buckles boots independently
_____	_____	Puts boots in bindings
_____	_____	Holds ski poles properly
_____	_____	Walks with skis in a straight line
_____	_____	Walks with skis in a circle
_____	_____	Side steps with skis
_____	_____	Places skis in a wedge position
_____	_____	Herringbones with skis
<i>Test</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>#4 Technical Development: Gentle to novice slope activity</i>
_____	_____	Stands up after falling
_____	_____	Can re-fasten skis on gentle terrain
_____	_____	Can re-fasten skis on novice terrain
_____	_____	Performs a straight run
_____	_____	Performs a gliding wedge
_____	_____	Performs a breaking wedge
<i>Test</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>#4 Technical Development: Gentle to novice slope activity</i>
_____	_____	Stands up after falling
_____	_____	Can re-fasten skis on gentle terrain
_____	_____	Performs a straight run
_____	_____	Performs a gliding wedge
_____	_____	Performs a breaking wedge
<i>Test</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>#5 Tactical Development: Gate Training and Competition</i>
_____	_____	Understands the start command
_____	_____	Understands the finish area
_____	_____	Can perform 10-meter walk independently
_____	_____	Can perform the glide event independently





Skills Assessment (continued)

Level II – Novice

Test	Sum	#1 Ski-Area Awareness
_____	_____	Can identify “BLUE” (more difficult) trail sign
_____	_____	Demonstrates safety while skiing
_____	_____	Can recognize a member of the ski patrol
_____	_____	Rides the following lift(s) with assistance: (please circle) Rope tow, t-bar, poma, surface and/or chair lifts
_____	_____	Rides the following lifts without assistance: (please circle) rope tow, t-bar, poma, surface and/or chair lifts
Test	Sum	#2 Technical Development: Wedge Turns
_____	_____	Performs wedge turn to a stop (left wedge turn)
_____	_____	Performs wedge turn to a stop (right wedge turn)
_____	_____	Performs two wedge turns simultaneously
_____	_____	Performs four or more wedge turns simultaneously
_____	_____	Performs wedge turns entire length of “GREEN” (easiest) trail
Test	Sum	#3 Tactical Development: Gate Training and Competition
_____	_____	Properly moves into race start position, unassisted
_____	_____	Properly follows start procedure <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Moves poles over starting wand• Moves through start procedure
_____	_____	Trains a five gate slalom course, unassisted
_____	_____	Races a five gate slalom course, unassisted
_____	_____	Trains a five gate giant slalom course, unassisted
_____	_____	Races a five gate giant slalom course, unassisted
_____	_____	Trains a four gate downhill course, unassisted
_____	_____	Races a four gate downhill course, unassisted
_____	_____	Can get up after falling and finish the training course
_____	_____	Can get up after falling and finish the race course





Skills Assessment (continued)

Level III– Intermediate

<i>Test</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>#1 Ski-Area Awareness</i>
_____	_____	Can identify a ski school instructor
_____	_____	Can locate the ski patrol building/headquarters
_____	_____	Can ski in group lessons (4-8 people)
_____	_____	Can ski independently/individually at ski areas
_____	_____	Can identify “BLACK” (most difficult) trail signs
<i>Test</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>#2 Technical Development: Christy Turns</i>
_____	_____	Skis move from wedge to watched (parallel) position at end of turn – wedge Christy
_____	_____	Performs two wedge Christy turns simultaneously
_____	_____	Performs four or more wedge Christy turns simultaneously
_____	_____	Matches skis at or before fall line (start of the turn)
_____	_____	Uses pole plant between turns
_____	_____	Performs four or more wedge Christy turns with pole plant
_____	_____	Performs wedge Christy turns entire length of “GREEN” (easiest)
_____	_____	Performs wedge Christy turns entire length of “BLUE” (more difficult)
<i>Test</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>#3 Tactical Development: Gate Training and Competition</i>
_____	_____	Inspects training course with coach
_____	_____	Inspects race course with coach
_____	_____	Trains fifteen gate slalom course, unassisted
_____	_____	Races fifteen gate slalom course, unassisted
_____	_____	Trains fifteen gate giant slalom course, unassisted
_____	_____	Races fifteen gate giant slalom course, unassisted
_____	_____	Trains ten gate downhill course, unassisted
_____	_____	Races ten gate downhill course, unassisted





Skills Assessment (continued)

Level IV– Advanced

<i>Test</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>#1 Ski-Area Awareness</i>
_____	_____	Can ski varied terrain in control
_____	_____	Can ski mogul runs in control
_____	_____	Can ski varied conditions in control: (please circle) ice, heavy snow, and/or powder
<i>Test</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>#2 Technical Development: Open Parallel</i>
_____	_____	Skis are matched throughout the turn
_____	_____	Performs four or more open parallel simultaneously
_____	_____	Performs short radius (slalom) turns consistently
_____	_____	Performs long radius (giant) turns consistently
_____	_____	Performs long-to-short or short-to-long turns following coaches example
<i>Test</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>#3 Technical Development: Parallel</i>
_____	_____	With skis closer than shoulder width apart, can make four or more “parallel turns”
_____	_____	Can ski length of “BLUE” (more difficult) trails with linked parallel turns
_____	_____	Can ski “BLACK” (most difficult) trails
<i>Test</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>#4 Advanced Exercise</i>
_____	_____	Balance drills: javelin turns, one ski, no poles
_____	_____	Edging drills: side slipping, hockey stop, traverse
_____	_____	Weight transfer drills: flexion/extension, wedge turns, various turn shapes, hop turns
_____	_____	Stepping drills: parallel step, 1000 steps, converging step, diverging step
<i>Test</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>#5 Tactical Development: Gate Training and Competition</i>
_____	_____	Inspects course without coach
_____	_____	Understands “racer’s line” (racer’s path through course)
_____	_____	Skis giant slalom “drill courses”
_____	_____	Skis slalom “drill courses”
_____	_____	Trains twenty gate giant slalom course
_____	_____	Races twenty gate giant slalom course
_____	_____	Trains twenty gate downhill course
_____	_____	Races twenty gate downhill course

