SNOWBOARDING

Special Olympics Coaching Quick Start Guide

Special Olympics

March 2008

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

Special Olympics wishes to thank the professionals, volunteers, coaches and athletes who helped in the production of the *Snowboarding Coaching Guide*. They have helped fulfill the mission of Special Olympics: to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for people 8 years of age and older with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

Special Olympics welcomes your ideas and comments for future revisions of this guide. We apologize if, for any reason, an acknowledgement has been inadvertently omitted.

Contributing Authors

Sven Knupp, Special Olympics, Inc. – Snowboarding Technical Delegate

Ryan Murphy, Special Olympics, Inc.

Brett Nemke, Snowboarding Sport Resource Team Member

Bob Whitehead, Special Olympics Wisconsin and Special Olympics, Inc. – Snowboarding Technical Delegate

Special Thanks To the Following for All of Your Help and Support

Floyd Croxton, Special Olympics, Inc., Athlete

Jarvis Jones

Dave Lenox, Special Olympics, Inc.

Paul Whichard, Special Olympics, Inc.

Special Olympics Idaho

Special Olympics North America

Special Olympics Wisconsin

Video Clips Starring Athletes from Special Olympics Maryland

- Troy George
- Josh Ortega
- Stephanie Rodriguez.

Video Shoot Support from Special Olympics Idaho Staff and Volunteers

- Terry Kinkead – Coach
- Corby Goade, Special Olympics Idaho

2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games – Games Organizing Committee

Tamarack Resort – Tamarack, Idaho USA – Location of Video Shoot and 2009 Special Olympics World Winter Games – Snowboarding

Essential Components of Planning a Snowboarding Training Session

Each training session needs to contain the same essential elements. The amount of time spent on each element will depend on the goal of the training session, the time of season the session is in, and the amount of time available for a particular session. The following elements need to be included in an athlete's daily training program. Please refer to the noted sections in each area for more in-depth information and guidance on these topics.

- ❑ Warm-ups
- ❑ Previously taught skills
- ❑ New skills
- ❑ Competition experience
- ❑ Feedback on performance

The final step in planning a training session is designing what the athlete is actually going to do. Remember – when creating a training session using the key components, the progression through the session allows for a gradual buildup of physical activity.

1. Easy to difficult
2. Slow to fast
3. Known to unknown
4. General to specific
5. Start to finish

Principles of Effective Training Sessions

Keep all athletes active	Athlete needs to be an active listener
Create clear, concise goals	Learning improves when athletes know what is expected of them
Give clear, concise instructions	Demonstrate – increase accuracy of instruction
Record progress	You and your athletes chart progress together
Give positive feedback	Emphasize and reward things the athlete is doing well
Provide variety	Vary exercises – prevent boredom
Encourage enjoyment	Training and competition is fun – help keep it this way for you and your athletes
Create progressions	Learning in increased when information progresses from: • Known to unknown – discovering new things successfully • Simple to complex – seeing that "I" can do it • General to specific – this is why I am working so hard
Plan maximum use of resources	Use what you have and improvise for equipment that you do not have – think creatively
Allow for individual differences	Different athletes, different learning rates, different capacities

Tips for Conducting Safe Training Sessions

Though the risks can be few, coaches have a responsibility to ensure that athletes know, understand and appreciate the risks of snowboarding. The safety and well-being of athletes are the coaches' primary concerns. Snowboarding is not a dangerous sport, but accidents do occur when coaches forget to take safety precautions. It is the head coach's responsibility to minimize the occurrence of injuries by providing safe conditions.

- ❑ Establish clear rules for behavior at the first practice, and enforce them.

  Keep your hands to yourself.

  Listen to the coach.

  When you hear the whistle, Stop, Look and Listen

  Ask the coach before you leave the group, enter the course or ride off on your own.
- ❑ When the weather is poor, have a plan to immediately remove athletes from inclement weather.
- ❑ Make sure athletes bring water to every practice.
- ❑ Check your first aid kit; restock supplies as necessary.
- ❑ Have a screwdriver or multi-tool available for on-hill adjustments.
- ❑ Train all athletes and coaches on emergency procedures.
- ❑ Choose a safe area. Do not practice in areas with rocks or holes that could cause injury. Simply telling athletes to avoid obstacles is not enough.
- ❑ Practice on slopes that are appropriate to the skill level of your athletes and out of the way of other snowboarders and/or skiers.
- ❑ Walk/ ski/ snowboard the slope and remove unsafe objects. Remove anything that an athlete may run into.
- ❑ Review your first aid and emergency procedures. Have someone who is trained in first aid and CPR on or very near the slope during practice and competitions.
- ❑ Warm up and stretch properly at the beginning of each practice to prevent muscle injuries.
- ❑ Train to improve the general fitness level of your riders. Physically fit riders are less likely to get injured. Make your practices active.

Snowboarding Attire

Appropriate snowboarding attire is required for all competitors. As a coach, you should discuss the types of sport clothes that are acceptable and not acceptable for training and competition. Discuss the importance of wearing properly fitted clothing, along with the advantages and disadvantages of certain types of clothing worn during training and competitions. For example, blue jeans are not proper snowboarding attire for any event. Explain that the athletes cannot perform their best while wearing jeans that restrict their movement. Take athletes to high school or collegiate snowboarding training or competitions, and point out the attire being worn. You should set the example, by wearing appropriate attire to training and competitions and not rewarding athletes who do not come properly dressed to train and/or compete.

Clothing must be appropriate to the weather conditions. Incorporate the "25° F rule" when training and competing. This means that if the temperature outside is 40° F (4.4° C), dress as if it is 65° F (18.3° C). This is how warm you will feel from the heat generated by your workout. It is best to dress in layers so you can add or subtract clothes as needed. Always bring too many clothes instead of too few.

Socks

Socks are a personal preference, but it is suggested that a wool or blended-material ski or hiking sock be used for snowboarding. Definitely avoid cotton socks, because they absorb moisture, are poor insulators and will result in blisters. It is recommended that liner socks made of synthetic or natural fibers be worn underneath insulated socks. The liners will help wick away perspiration and moisture from the foot and add more insulation layers of air. The liners will also absorb the friction between the feet and outer socks to prevent blisters.

Boots

Proper snowboard boots are perhaps the most important piece of equipment a snowboarder will own. Years ago, simple Sorel or pack-type boots were used. Today, sport specific snowboard boots are both available and recommended. Snowboard boots are made specifically to fit into today's snowboard bindings, and to give more support as well as better alignment than pack-type boots. The extra expense of purchasing these boots is well worth it.

Certain types of step-in bindings require the use of a compatible step-in boots, as discussed in the Binding Systems section below. Make sure all of your pieces fit together properly before going to the hill.

- **Snowboard Boot**

- **Alpine Snowboard Boot**

- **Alpine Boot Pro**

Choosing Proper Boot Fit

Boot fitting is best done by a reputable shop technician. If you will be fitting boots for your athlete, try to keep the following suggestions in mind. Boots should fit snugly, but should not pinch at any one point. When the athlete is laced in and standing erect, the toes should touch inside of the front of the boot. Have the athlete then stand with feet approximately shoulder width apart, and bend at the knees. When the athlete is lowered into this position, the toes should not touch in the front of the boot. Try NOT to purchase boots with extra room, as they will tend to pack out and become roomier with use.

Snowboarding Attire

Incorporate the three-layer system. It's simple and it works well.

Inside Layer

The inside (or inner or base) layer is the wicking layer. Long underwear made of synthetic materials, natural silk or treated materials will remove perspiration from the body. Both the upper and lower body should be covered by a wicking layer. A shirt that covers the neck and fits snugly at the wrists is an effective way to conserve body heat.

Middle Layer

The middle layer should be an insulating layer and consist of wool (sweater or pants), fleece (top or bottom) or treated material. Synthetic insulations or phase-change treatments have also proven to be lightweight yet very effective. This layer provides warmth by trapping a layer of air around the body. Note: Except in extremely cold conditions, the legs do not need and would be constricted by this layer.

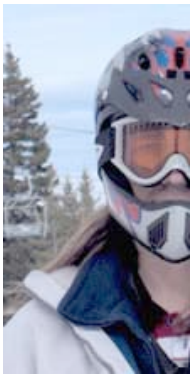
Outer Layer

Wind and snow are blocked by the weatherproof outer layer. For the legs, snowboard pants are appropriate. If snowboard pants are not available, choose looser-fitting synthetic sweatpants. A snowboarding or ski jacket works well on top. Clothing made with laminates that are waterproof, windproof and breathable (allowing perspiration to leave the body) can be useful. Be aware that absorbent clothing such as cotton sweatpants will provide little protection from the wind and cold. Snowboard specific pants and jackets have many useful features that make snowboarding more comfortable.

Consider the ability of your athlete and the weather when deciding upon clothing for competition. For optimal competition, strive to dress your athlete in clothing that is lightweight, breathable, layered and slick on the outer surface, and that allows unrestricted movement. Do not neglect an extra set of warm, dry clothes to change into for athletes whose competition clothes will get wet with perspiration and/or snow after competition.

Accessories

Gloves or mittens with the same three layers—synthetic base, thermal insulation layer and wind/waterproof outer layer—are especially appropriate for snowboarding due to the amount of direct contact with the snow. Snowboard specific gloves or mittens are best. Snowboard or ski goggles are recommended to protect the eyes from damaging ultraviolet rays, glare, wind and falling snow. Polarized lenses will cut glare, and high-quality goggles will be less likely to fog. Remember that if the goggles fog up, a goggle-friendly soft handkerchief should be used.



Helmets

A helmet approved for alpine ski racing by Federation International du Ski (FIS) is required on all people in official training and competition, for all ability levels in all events.

Snowboarding Equipment

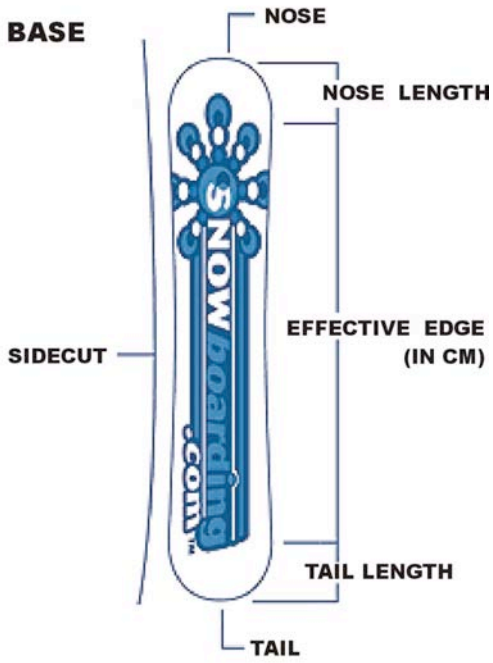
Special care should be taken when choosing equipment for your athlete. There are many inferior types of boots and snowboards available on the market today. This guide will help you to choose equipment that will not only enhance the learning and performance of your athlete, but will help to ensure safety as well.

Time should be taken with your athlete to help him or her try on all equipment in a dry indoor environment prior to on-snow training. Spend some time showing your athlete the various parts of the snowboard, bindings and boots as well as any winter clothing that is to be worn. Prior to on-snow training, your athlete should be comfortable with wearing and adjusting clothing, and should be familiar with the process of putting on boots and getting into bindings.

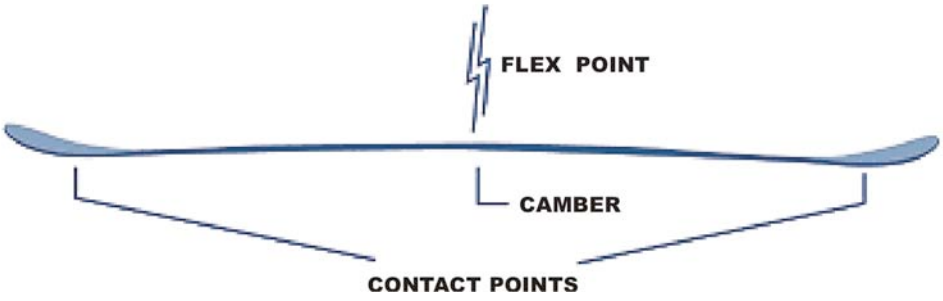
Snowboards

There are three types of snowboards available today: freestyle, freeride and race boards. All use similar types of construction. It is suggested that a reputable board shop be consulted when purchasing a new snowboard. There are many snowboards on the market made of plastic that are not allowed at ski areas. A good quality snowboard will be constructed like a ski. It will have metal edges and a P-tex base. Consult a reputable shop in your area if you aren't sure. If your athlete will be using a snowboard that has been handed down or given to him or her, it is suggested that it be taken to a certified technician to be tuned and checked for proper fit and safety.

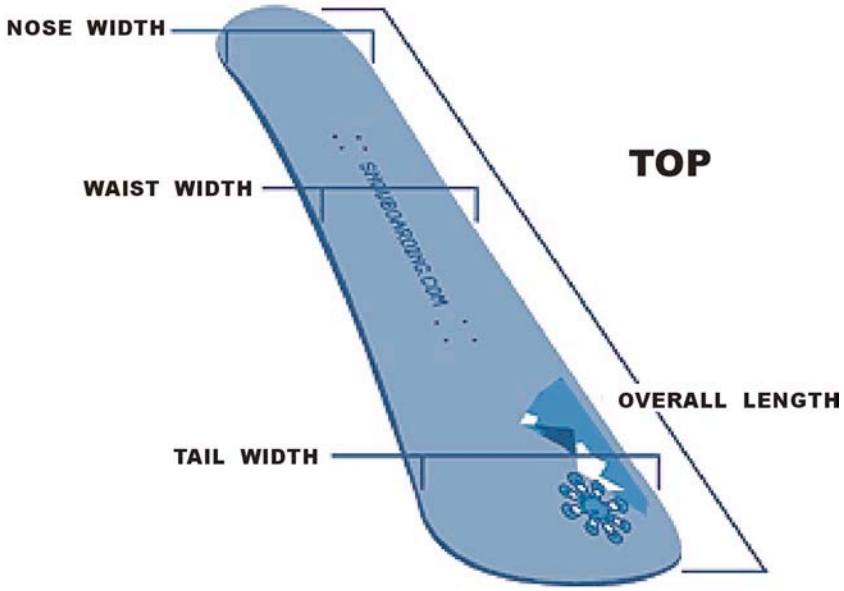
Parts of a Snowboard



Side View



Top View



(Pictures are provided courtesy of www.snowboarding.com)

Freestyle Snowboard

Freestyle boards are the most popular and most widely used. While there are many types of freestyle boards, they tend to have similar characteristics. They are wider, more stable and more forgiving to ride. Freestyle boards are usually symmetrical in shape both from tip to tail and from side to side. They have a softer flex, which makes them easier to turn. Both ends have a shovel, and these boards are constructed to be ridden both forward and backward (fakie). This type of board is suggested for the beginning rider.

Freeride Snowboard

Freeride boards look similar to freestyle boards, but usually are not symmetrical from tip to tail, and they place the rider slightly behind the center of the board when riding. Sometimes referred to as "directional," these boards tend to have a stiffer, less forgiving flex and are meant to be ridden primarily in one direction (although they can be ridden fakie).

Race Snowboard

Race boards tend to be narrower in shape and are usually slightly longer. They generally have a stiffer flex, and while these boards offer a higher level of performance, they are more difficult for the beginning rider to use, and are reserved for more advanced riders. These boards are made in both symmetrical and asymmetrical styles. They tend to have a shovel only on the nose and are made to ride only in one direction.

Binding Systems

There are three types of binding systems on the market today. They are the ratchet-strap binding system (the most popular in use today and the most readily available), the step-in binding system and the hard plate system.

Ratchet-strap Binding System

The most widely used binding on the market today, this system incorporates the use of snowboard boots that are fastened into the bindings by using two or three ratchet straps. This system was one of the first used, and continues to be the most popular. The advantages are availability and cost. These bindings will most likely be the easiest to find at a reasonable cost. The major disadvantage is that they are the most difficult to get into and out of.

Care should be taken when purchasing this type of system, in that many cheap plastic imitations are available. Care should also be taken to ensure that the boots purchased are compatible and fit securely into the binding. Once tightened, the boot should fit snugly, and it should not move around in the binding when fastened in.

Step-In Binding System

This is a relatively new system. It offers a significant advantage in terms of getting in and out quickly. The major disadvantages are availability and cost. Each step-in system requires a specific boot and the accompanying hardware. Step-in systems are made so that the boot can be secured without having to bend over. Some types of step-in systems tend to accumulate snow, which makes them difficult to use. Ask your shop if you're unsure.

Hard Plate Binding System

While easy to get into, this system is the least common among snowboards, and the most difficult to find. It also tends to be more difficult to use and more expensive. A plate system utilizes a hard, ski-type boot that locks into a plate binding. While these bindings are more performance related, they tend to be more difficult for the novice to use. Hard plate bindings are often the system of choice for serious snowboard racers.

Each of the snowboard binding systems available has its own advantages and disadvantages. The primary consideration should be purchasing quality equipment that will be the safest, most durable and most convenient to use for your athlete.

Choosing Proper Snowboard Fit

Each board has characteristics that determine how it will perform for different people. Longer boards are more stable, while shorter boards will be easier to turn. Wider boards are more stable but aren't as performance oriented. Softer flexing boards are more forgiving and better suited for smaller riders. A stiffer board is more difficult to flex and will be better for heavier and stronger boarders. In general, a board when set on end should reach a point somewhere between the rider's chin and nose. Again this is a generalization, and care should be taken to match the board to the size, strength and type of rider.

Protective Equipment

The sport of snowboarding often involves falling down. Some basic protective equipment can make falling safer and less painful for the athlete. A good helmet is very important to protect the head during all kinds of falls and is required for training and competition. The helmet should be tight enough that it doesn't move if the athlete shakes his or her head, yet not so tight as to be uncomfortable. Looking for helmets in a reputable ski shop is recommended. A set of knee pads and/or wrist guards will also help the athlete avoid injury. Some ski shops will sell wrist guards that fit under gloves, but any skateboarding or rollerblading wrist guards will work. Optional equipment to consider: thigh and tailbone pads (such as a hockey girdle) and goggles.

NOTE: If renting equipment or attire from a mountain or ski rental facility, make sure you are fitted by a trained professional as they will get you outfitted with the most appropriate equipment for yourself or your rider.

Teaching Snowboarding Rules

The best time to teach the rules of snowboarding is during practice, for example, teaching the athletes to understand the rules of the start command, going around gates and completing the course. The Official Special Olympics Snowboarding Rules can be found at www.specialolympics.org.

Protest Procedures

Protest procedures are governed by the rules of competition and may change from competition to competition. Only rules violations can be protested. Judgment calls made by officials or divisioning decisions cannot be protested. The protest must site specific violations from the rulebook and a clear definition of why the coach feels the rule was not followed.

The role of the competition management team is to enforce the rules. As a coach, your duty to your athletes and team is to protest any action or events while your athletes are competing that you think violated the official snowboarding rules. It is extremely important that you do not make protests because you and your athlete did not get your desired outcome of an event. Filing a protest is a serious matter that can impact a competition's schedule. Check with the competition team prior to a competition to learn the protest procedures for that competition.

Snowboarding Protocol & Etiquette

The following are rules that are to be applied to all people on the slopes:

- Always stay in control and be able to stop or avoid other people or objects.
- People ahead of you have the right of way. It is your responsibility to avoid them.
- You must not stop where you obstruct a trail or are not visible from above.
- Whenever starting downhill or merging into a trail, look uphill and yield to others uphill from you.
- Always use devices to help prevent runaway equipment.
- Observe all posted signs and warnings. Keep off closed trails and out of closed areas.
- Prior to using any lift, you must have the knowledge and ability to load, ride and unload safety.

During Training

For Coaches

- Arrive at training facility 15 minutes before the scheduled start time.
- Come prepared to coach: Know and understand the rules.
- Ensure that athletes are wearing proper equipment before training begins.
- Ensure that athletes participate in warm-ups, stretching and drills.
- Have a copy of an up-to-date medical for every athlete.
- Treat all athletes in the same manner.
- Speak calmly when giving instructions or corrections.
- Call snowboarders by their first names.
- Maintain a calm and pleasant demeanor.
- Answer the athletes' questions in a respectful and reassuring tone.
- Treat others as you would wish to be treated: Please be considerate of other snowboarders and/or skiers on the hill.
- Set rules and expectations for all athletes and coaches.
- Respect nature: Don't throw trash on slopes; don't ride in closed areas such as nature reserves.

For Athletes

- Come prepared and on time to training.
- Notify coach if not able to attended training.
- Wear proper clothing for training.
- Give your best effort during training.
- Treat others as you would wish to be treated: Please be considerate of other snowboarders and/or skiers on the hill.
- Notify coach of illness or injury.
- Be supportive of your fellow athletes.
- Respect nature: Don't throw trash on slopes; don't ride in closed areas such as nature reserves.

During Competition

For Coaches

- Ensure that you bring enough equipment.
- Know where athletes are during the competition.
- Get score sheets and other paperwork done on time or early.
- Review all competition rules and procedures.
- Attend all coaches' meetings.
- Encourage your athletes to participate to the best of their ability at all times.
- Practice the Honest Effort Rule.
- Ensure that athletes are wearing proper equipment and attire before competition begins.
- Have a copy of an up-to-date medical for every athlete.
- Treat all competition staff with respect: Remember, they are also volunteers.
- Maintain a calm demeanor throughout the competition.
- Never use foul language or raise your voice in an angry tone.
- Thank the competition staff and officials.
- Set rules and expectations for all athletes and coaches.

For Athletes

- Come prepared and on time to competition.
- Notify coach if not able to attend competition.
- Wear proper clothing/ uniform to compete in.
- Give your best effort during the competition.

Snowboarding Glossary

Term	Definition
Backside	Refers to the side of the board where the riders' heels are, also known as the Heel Side.
Base	The bottom of a snowboard.
Boot out	A skid or fall as a result of a boot or binding dragging in the snow when the snowboard is tilted on edge.
Camber	The arch in a snowboard that causes the middle of the board to be higher than the tip and the tail when it is placed on a flat surface.
Carve	A turn made with a minimum of skidding, in which the entire length of the snowboard's edge passes through the same point in the snow.
Chatter	The vibration caused by the rapid, repeated bite and release of a snowboard edge on the snow.
Countdown	Also known as the start command: 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, GO.
Counter Rotation	The movement of twisting the torso and legs in opposite directions concurrently.
DNF	Did Not Finish
DNS	Did Not Start
DSQ or DQ	Disqualified
Edge	The metal strip that runs down the side of the snowboard along the base. The edge can be sharpened, allowing the rider to slice through hard snow and ice.
Fakie	Riding backward while in the rider's original stance.
Fall Line	The imaginary line down a slope, where gravity and terrain would allow a ball to roll down the hill. Snowboarders achieve their greatest speed when in the fall line.
Falling Leaf	An exercise in which the rider skids back and forth on the same edge in an imaginary corridor, mimicking the shape a leaf makes as it falls from a tree.
Finish line	The line at the end of the race where the time for each rider is stopped and recorded.
FIS	The abbreviation for Federation International de Ski, the organization that regulates all international amateur snowboarding competition.
Flex	A description of the stiffness or softness of a piece of equipment.
Forerunner	A snowboarder who ridess a race course before the competitors do, in order to determine if the course is ready for competition.
Frontside	Refers to the side of the board where the rider's toes are.
Garland	A series of linked partial turns across the slope of the hill on the same edge, mimicking the shape that a garland draped on a tree makes.
Gate	A marker on the course, in the shape of a triangle, that the rider must pass at the smaller side; exists as both blue and red.
Giant Slalom	A type of race course with gates that a rider must pass through. This type of course requires medium-radius linked turns.

Term	Definition
Goofy-foot Stance	A directional stance in which the rider's right foot is the front foot.
Grab	To touch and/or hold part of the snowboard while airborne.
Grind	To slide or ride across an object such as a rail.
Groomed	Snow that has been mechanically prepared.
Halfpipe	A terrain park feature that resembles a large pipe with the top half removed.
Heelside	The edge of a snowboard nearest the rider's heels.
Inclination	Deviation from a vertical body position. This term is usually used to describe the overall appearance of the body in relationship to a vertical reference.
Leash	A required device used to keep the snowboard attached to the rider to prevent a runaway snowboard.
Line	The path taken through the gates.
Magic Stick	A short length of tubing or pole that can be used as a training aid.
Nose	The front end, or tip, of the snowboard.
Powder	A type of snow that is dry and fluffy.
P.S.I.A.	Professional Ski Instructors of America. The certifying body of ski instructors in America.
P-tex	A type of plastic material used for the bases of snowboards.
Regular-foot Stance	A directional stance in which the rider's left foot is the front foot.
Rotation	Turning the body in order to turn the snowboard in the same direction.
Shovel	The widest part of the snowboard, usually at the tip.
Side-cut	The hourglass shape of the snowboard in which the middle is narrower than the tip and tail.
Skidded Turn	A turn in which the snowboard slips across the slope throughout the turn.
Slalom	A type of race course with gates that the rider must pass through. This type of course requires short-radius linked turns.
Stomp Pad	A pad located between the bindings to provide traction to the foot that is not clipped in.
Super Giant Slalom	A type of race course with gates that the rider must pass through. The vertical distance between gates is 14 to 16 percent of the total vertical drop, requiring large-radius linked turns.
Tail	The back end of a snowboard.
Tip	The front end, or nose, of a snowboard.
Toeside	The edge of the snowboard nearest the rider's toes.
Traverse	Snowboarding across the hill from one side to the other.
Waist	The narrowest part of a snowboard, near the center of the board.

Appendix: Skill Development Tips

Snowboarding Basic Skills

Balance

Balance movements are used to help maintain a body's state of equilibrium. When internal (body movements) or external (gravity, changing snow conditions) forces act on the body, balancing movements are relied upon to keep the body from falling out of equilibrium. These may be large motor movements such as an arm swing, or small motor movements such as a slight shift in weight.

Rotation

Rotary movements involve some sort of rotation, either by the entire body or one of its parts. Rotary movements may be large and very noticeable or fine and virtually unseen.

Edge Control

This affects the way the edge of the board makes contact with the riding surface. It is the relationship between the edges of the board and the riding surface that causes a board to turn.

Pressure

Pressure movements determine how strongly a board will press down on the riding surface.

Dry Land Training

Stance

The stance used in board sports such as snowboarding is slightly different than that used in sports such as skiing, because it is a countered position. This means that the athlete's feet will point off to the side, while the body is countered so that the torso is pointing downhill.

The athlete should start in a relaxed athletic stance, with the knees slightly bent and the feet approximately shoulder width apart. With the feet stationary, the athlete will then turn his or her shoulders slightly toward the front of the board (and toward the front foot).

Your athlete can practice this position first on a flat surface, and then on the snowboard with no bindings. Finally, have your athlete put on his or her snowboard and assume the correct stance. It is important to remind athletes that statues are too rigid to snowboard properly, and that they will constantly be moving while in their stance.

Dry Land Skills

While on a flat surface, and practicing stance, your athletes can begin to become familiar with the skills required to snowboard, and with their equipment. This is a good time to quiz athletes on terms like nose, tail, heel-edge, toe-edge, etc. The more familiar your athletes are with equipment, the less confusion will arise as you try to explain movements while on-hill.

Balance

To work on balance, a few simple drills can be used. For example, have your athletes stand on a flat surface (without a board), and practice jumping up and landing in their stance. While in their stance (both with and without the snowboard), have your athletes feel what happens when they lean forward, and to the sides. Have them practice leaning and then returning to a centered stance position. Remember to ask a lot of questions about how they are feeling. As a coach, you may need to be close to prevent falls, especially when practicing balance while strapped into a snowboard. Much of successful snowboard riding depends on how well an athlete can maintain balance, or recover balance when it has been lost.

Rotation

An athlete can feel rotation by standing in a snowboard stance, and tuning the upper body to the left and right. The athlete should try to maintain a good athletic snowboarding position. Have your athletes experiment with rotation of the upper body first on a flat surface, followed by standing on the snowboard without bindings, and finally while clipped into the snowboard.

Edging Movements

Start by showing your athlete the way a board moves when it is on edge. Start with a board lying on a flat surface. This is the position of the board when it is running straight. Tip the board toward the toeside and then the heelside to demonstrate how a board moves when turns are made. Show how a board starts by running flat, then edges on one side, goes back to flat, and then edges to the other side. Next, have your athlete stand on a flat surface in a snowboard stance. Explain that this is the correct stance for running straight ahead. Have the athlete concentrate his or her weight on the toes, while maintaining balance (like pressing on a gas pedal). Follow by having the athlete concentrate his or her weight on the heels (like lifting off of the gas pedal or like digging in with the heels). It should be stressed that an upright position and balance are to be maintained at all times, even when weight is shifted. If the athlete is falling forward or back, he or she is applying too much weight, or leaning. The athlete should follow each of these movements by returning to a centered stance with weight evenly distributed. Finally, have the athlete clip in with one foot while standing on the board. Have the athlete place the free foot in front of the board on the toeside. Have the athlete tip the board onto its toe edge by standing on the ground and lifting and tilting the board with the clipped foot. Reverse this process for the heelside. Have the athlete place the free foot on the floor on the heelside of the board, followed by tipping the board with the clipped foot.

Pressure Movements

The idea of pressure can best be demonstrated rather than explained. Have your athlete sit in a chair. Place one or both of the athlete's feet in your hands with the knees bent. To show downward pressure, have the athlete push his or her feet toward you. To demonstrate the effect that reducing pressure may have, ask the athlete pull his or her feet away. Next have the athlete stand on a flat surface in a snowboard stance. Have the athlete practice lowering (increasing pressure) by bending the knees while in an upright position – not by bending over. Next have the athlete practice rising (reducing pressure) by rising up – without standing up straight). Have the athlete practice these movements on a flat surface, then on a board with no bindings, and finally while clipped into the board.

Putting on Boots

Most snowboard boots will have use a lace system and/or buckles that should be figured out and mastered in a warm, dry, indoor place before putting them on in the cold. Athletes should practice ensuring that they get a secure fit and that the pants and/or socks are not bunched up inside of the boot.

Putting Boots in Binding (Clipping in)

Most snowboard bindings use a ratchet strap system to hold the boots firmly in place. All ratchets and/or buckles should be figured out and mastered in a warm, dry, indoor place before putting them on in the cold. Athletes should practice bucking and unbuckling their binding before they go out on the snow. For athletes with step-in bindings, there are several types available; each one is unique and should be practiced according to the instructions that come with the bindings.

Removing Boots from Binding (Clipping out)

For athletes with step-in bindings, there are several types available; each one is unique and should be practiced according to the instructions that come with the bindings.

Falling (To be done on a flat surface with soft snow)

Before you begin the on-snow portion, it is important to teach your athletes the proper way to fall. Falls are a natural part of snowboarding, and falling in the correct way can prevent injury. Take some time to talk to your athletes, letting them know that it is OK for a fall to occur. By practicing falling, an athlete will become less apprehensive if a fall does occur. Be sure that the athlete also has all of the proper protective equipment prior to practicing falls.

Forward Fall

Ninety percent of the injuries in snowboarding are to the wrist and shoulder. Most of these injuries happen when a snowboarder falls forward in the incorrect way. Practice these movements side by side with your athlete. Start on your knees and let yourself fall forward onto your forearms. Catch your weight with the forearms slightly away from the body, with the elbows bent. Allow your forearms to touch the ground first. Try to resist reaching out toward the ground or placing the hands out in front. As contact is made, absorb the fall with your arms. You may want to practice this movement with your athlete until he or she is completely comfortable with it.

Rear Fall

The rear fall is generally the most painful because athletes tend to tense up, causing them to land flat. Most injuries during rear falls occur to the head. Start in a crouched position with your athlete. Gently rock backward until your balance is lost. As you fall, curl your body into a ball, making sure to keep the head tucked forward. A good visualization is to have the athlete pretend that he or she is a turtle going into its shell. As you fall, remember to bend the knees and bring the board up off the ground. This will prevent the board from catching while sliding downhill and causing a potential flip.

It is important to have the athlete work without a board until falling is comfortable. Once comfortable, have the athlete practice falling while clipped into the board. When this practice is approached the right way, the athlete will become less fearful of falling (and may even find it fun). Reducing fear will help the athlete perform better. Everyone learning a skill will be much more tentative if they are afraid of being hurt.

Teaching Points – Falling

1. Emphasize that falling can be safe.
2. Emphasize keeping elbows bent and close to body when falling.
3. Teach athlete how to tuck and roll (roll on shoulder).
4. Make sure the athlete is not physically injured.

NOTE: For Drills refer to the Full Snowboarding Coaching Guide at www.specialolympics.org

Getting Up (To be done on a flat surface with soft snow)

Because falling is common, it is important to teach the athlete how to get up from the snow. Many times this can be more frustrating than the fall itself, especially on an incline. The easiest way for a snowboarder to get up is to rise from a kneeling position. The kneeling athlete can dig the toe-edge of the board into the snow, support his or her weight on the hands, and rock the board back until the base is flat on the snow. The athlete can then slowly rise to a standing position.

If the fall has been to the back, the athlete will need to do a turtle roll in order to get to the kneeling position. A turtle roll begins with the athlete sitting on the snow, then rocking backward while lifting the board off the snow. Once the board is off the ground, the athlete can roll to one side, bringing the board around and under the legs. From this position, the athlete can stand from the kneeling position as described above.

Even an athlete in good condition may have problems getting up from a fall. It is important to work until the athlete is comfortable before going uphill. During lessons, it is a good idea to have the athlete practice getting up without assistance if he or she falls. It is also important to make sure that the athlete isn't becoming overtired from having to get up too often. In this case you may want to offer more assistance.

Teaching Points – Getting Up

1. If athlete falls completely to ground, roll onto side.
2. Position snowboard so that it is across the fall line (not facing downhill).
3. Get up to the hands and knees.
4. Dig toe edge into the snow close to hand placement.
5. Slowly rise to a standing position while maintaining pressure on toe edge.
6. Make sure the athlete is not physically injured.

NOTE: For Drills refer to the Full Snowboarding Coaching Guide at www.specialolympics.org

Skating (To be done on a flat surface)

Skating is a skill that will be used to maneuver around at the bottom of the hill, in the lift lines and in other situations when the snowboarders' momentum has stopped in a flat area. At this point, the skill of skating will be used to introduce the athlete to gliding on the snow surface. Begin by having the athlete stand in a snowboard stance on the board on flat ground, with the front foot clipped in. The athlete will then push forward with the free foot. Following the push, the free foot should be placed on the stomp pad between the bindings. The athlete will then ride the board as it glides to a stop. The coach should remain close to the athlete in case of loss of balance or a fall.

In the case of an apprehensive athlete, or an athlete with balance problems, the coach can assist by holding both of the athlete's hands during the glide. It is important to remember that this assistance is only to prevent falling and to provide security. The athlete should be supporting his or her own weight as much as possible.

Skating is an important concept for the athlete to master, as it is used to get around during the frequent instances when the athlete's board has lost momentum. It will be necessary for the athlete to skate in order to use the lift and to maneuver around prior to going downhill.

Continue to work on skating until the athlete is able to glide with good balance. Stay on a relatively flat surface to begin. As the athlete becomes more comfortable, the terrain can be varied by introducing a SLIGHT grade, allowing the athlete to experience the sensation of skating uphill. Also, the athlete can begin gliding for longer distances.

NOTE: Be very conservative when choosing terrain, especially during the beginning phases of learning. Many athletes experience unnecessary injury by trying to negotiate terrain that is too steep too early. Stay on flatter terrain until you are sure that the athlete has become comfortable with the skills you have been teaching. Overall, the athlete will learn proper snowboarding technique more quickly if the difficulty of the terrain is increased slowly.

Teaching Points – Skating

1. Begin with free foot next to the board on the toeside.
2. Only take small steps, to avoid slipping.
3. Keep head up with eyes facing forward.
4. Maintain most of the weight on the strapped -n foot.
5. Practice pushing with free foot on the heelside.
6. Practice alternating between toeside and heelside.

NOTE: For Drills refer to the Full Snowboarding Coaching Guide at www.specialolympics.org

Skate to Glide (To be done on a flat surface)

As the athletes demonstrate better balance and become less fearful, have them experiment with movement during the glide portion. Begin by having the athletes rise and lower slightly while the board is gliding. This can be followed by shifting weight forward and back, and then finding a centered balance. These experiments will help the athlete to realize the correct position for boarding, and will show how constant movement is required in order to maintain balance.

Teaching Points – Skate to Glide

1. Begin with free foot next to the board on the toeside.
2. Only take small steps, to avoid slipping.
3. Keep head up with eyes facing forward.
4. Maintain most of the weight on the strapped-in foot.
5. Practice placing the free foot on the board, between the bindings.
6. Maintain proper stance.
7. Have the athlete start with short glides, then progress to slightly longer glides.

NOTE: For Drills refer to the Full Snowboarding Coaching Guide at www.specialolympics.org

Climbing (To be done on a gentle slope)

During the course of snowboarding, it may become necessary for the athlete to skate uphill, or even to climb. Begin by having the athlete skate uphill on a slight grade. On steeper terrain, it may become necessary for the athlete to use the step and drag method. To prevent the board from sliding downhill, the athlete should place the free foot on the toeside of the board while facing uphill.

The board is then turned, placed across the hill and rested on the toe-edge. The athlete begins by putting weight on the board foot, stepping out with the free foot and then dragging the board forward. The process is then repeated in order to climb.

Teaching Points – Climbing

1. Practice stepping over the board toward the toeside.
2. Tip the board onto the toe edge, across the fall line.
3. Practice pushing against the toe edge without the board slipping.
4. Begin taking small steps.

NOTE: For Drills refer to the Full Snowboarding Coaching Guide at www.specialolympics.org

One Foot Straight Glide (To be done on a gentle slope)

Once the athlete has become comfortable with the previous skills, it is time to move uphill. Have the athlete skate or climb up a slight incline. Resist the temptation to go too high too fast. The incline should be low enough that the athlete will be able to glide to a stop (remember that he or she does not yet know how to turn or stop). Be sure that the finish area is clear of obstacles or other people. It may be a good idea to have an assistant stand at the bottom to act as an emergency "catcher" should the athlete get out of control.

Once the athlete has reached the start position, have him or her clip into the front binding while facing uphill. The coach should offer assistance by standing below athlete and taking the athlete's hands. As the coach, you will need to make sure that the athlete does not start before he or she is ready. Once the athlete is standing, have him or her place the free foot on the stomp pad between the bindings, and allow the board to glide downhill.

Before beginning the glide, review with the athlete the proper stance (eyes facing downhill, knees and hips bent slightly, athlete in a relaxed position). Remind the athlete to stay relaxed until the end of the glide.

Teaching Points – One Foot Straight Glide

1. Start by securing the board so that it does not move before the athlete is ready.
2. Have the athlete begin in the correct snowboard stance.
3. Keep knees flexed and stay in a relaxed position.
4. Keep feet flat and weight centered (over both feet, front to back and side to side).
5. Keep eyes forward, looking ahead.

NOTE: For Drills refer to the Full Snowboarding Coaching Guide at www.specialolympics.org

Direction Changes

Turning is actually accomplished using rotation, edging and pressure (with balance maintained throughout) at the same time. A proper stance should be maintained with the hands up in front.

Introducing Direction Changes (To be done on a flat surface)

At this point, it is a good idea to return to the flat surface to work on the movements that will be used when making a turn. Have the athlete assume a snowboard stance, and practice going from the neutral, centered position into the position for a toeside turn and then back. Follow this by going from a neutral stance into the position for a heelside turn, and then back. Once the athlete has mastered the movements, introduce the idea of turning rhythm. The athlete will start in a neutral stance, go to a toeside position (count to 2), then back to center (count to 2), to a heelside position (count to 2) and back to center (count to 2, then repeat cycle).

NOTE: Extra time should be spent at this level to be sure that the athlete is comfortable before progressing.

Teaching Points – Direction Changes

1. Start the athlete in a centered neutral stance.
2. Flex the knees and put pressure on the toes.
3. Return to the centered neutral stance.
4. Flex the knees and put pressure on the heels.
5. Return to the centered neutral stance.

Toeside Turn

A toeside turn will be in a different direction depending on the athlete's front foot preference. Those who are regular-footed (left foot forward) will be making a turn to the right, while the goofy-footed (right foot forward) will make a toeside turn to the left.

The athlete begins in a centered balance stance. To initiate a toeside turn, the athlete will begin to apply pressure to the balls of the feet, and will begin to lower his or her body as the hips are turned slightly in the direction of the turn.

NOTE: Turning rotation happens at the hips, NOT the shoulders. The shoulders should remain relatively still when a turn is initiated. Rotation is provided by equal movement of the ankles, knees and hips.

Heelside Turn

A heelside turn will be to the left for regular-footed riders, while the goofy-footed rider will turn to the right. A heelside turn can be slightly more difficult because movement is hampered by the feet being locked into the bindings (there is less range of movement), and because an athlete will have more of a tendency to lose balance to the rear.

The heelside turn begins in a balanced, centered position. The turn occurs as pressure is placed on the heels, the body is lowered, and the hips turn slightly in the direction of the turn.

NOTE: For Drills refer to the Full Snowboarding Coaching Guide at www.specialolympics.org

Side Slip

Up until this time, the athlete has been working with only the front foot clipped into the binding. The free foot has allowed the athlete to learn with a measure of safety. Before attempting turns and direction changes with both feet clipped in, the athlete must be introduced to the side slip. There is no gliding wedge position, as in alpine skiing, to slow the athlete down. Speed adjustments and stopping are accomplished with either a turn or a side slip. It is important to introduce the side slip before going any further in the learning sequence.

The side slip position may seem to be the opposite of what you have been teaching so far; however, it will become a useful tool for reducing speed and even stopping. The side slip position is similar to the neutral riding position except that the body is not countered. The feet, hips and shoulders all face in the same forward direction, with the board perpendicular to the direction moved. This position can be introduced and reviewed on a flat area, and then moved uphill.

The side slip, garlands and the J Turn are decisive parts in learning more advanced snowboarding techniques. They also are an important part of snowboarding safely. These techniques allow the athletes to slow their speed and even stop, making it possible to safely handle nearly every slope. The more secure the athletes are in these techniques (especially braking and feeling comfortable with sliding on one edge), the faster they will learn further techniques such as linking or carving turns. More time spent with these basic exercises and drills can save much time later due to falls (catching the wrong edge, for example).

NOTE: For Drills refer to the Full Snowboarding Coaching Guide at www.specialolympics.org

Heelside Side Slip (To be done on a gentle slope)

Begin by having the athlete return to the glide starting point on the hill. Learning to side slip on the heelside is easiest for most people. Have the athlete sit on the snow facing downhill and clip into both bindings. Place yourself on the downhill side facing the athlete. When ready, take both hands and help the athlete into a standing position. Remind the athlete of the proper stance (knees bent, relaxed position, etc). When the athlete is stable, begin to move backward down the hill, bringing the athlete with you. Tell the athlete to lift his or her toes off of the snow. The athlete's snowboard should be riding on the heel-edge as the athlete moves forward.

It is important to stress that the toeside edge should be kept up to avoid having it catch on the snow causing a forward fall. The movement of the side slip should be a smooth, flowing motion. The athlete may require some practice until jerky movements can be eliminated. A good visualization is to have the athlete pretend that the board is spreading butter in a smooth motion. Repeat this exercise several times until the athlete can move forward (with minor assistance) smoothly without falling.

Once the athlete can side slip smoothly with assistance, it is time to try without. The first few times the athlete attempts to side slip unassisted, the coach should stand downhill facing the athlete, moving backward as the athlete moves forward. This will place the coach in the best place to offer assistance should the athlete need it. This also will offer the athlete a measure of comfort seeing the coach nearby. Monitor the athlete's progress until he or she can side slip without assistance and without falling.

Teaching Points – Heelside Side Slip

1. Keep the knees flexed, eyes up.
2. Keep pressure on the heelside edge, equally with both feet.
3. Release heel pressure SLOWLY; snowboard will begin to move downhill.
4. The movement of the side slip should be a smooth, flowing motion.

NOTE: For Drills refer to the Full Snowboarding Coaching Guide at www.specialolympics.org

Toeside Side Slip (To be done on a gentle slope)

The toeside side slip is more difficult than the heelside for two reasons: The toeside side slip is done in reverse with the athlete's back facing downhill, and typically balance is easier to maintain when standing on the heels. Begin at the same starting point used previously. Have the athlete clip into the board, then turtle roll into a kneeling position facing uphill. Stand above the athlete and take both hands. Assist the athlete into a standing position. Take a moment to remind the athlete of the correct body position. Tell the athlete to raise his or her heels off of the snow. When ready, assist the athlete downhill, with athlete moving backward as you move forward. The snowboard should be riding on the toeside edge while the heelside edge is up off the snow. Repeat this exercise until the athlete can perform the side slip smoothly and with good balance.

Once the athlete has shown good balance, it is time to try the side slip unassisted. As the athlete performs the toeside side slip, walk behind (uphill) to offer assistance if necessary.

Note: Both side slips should be practiced until the athlete can perform them smoothly and without assistance.

Teaching Points – Toeside Side Slip

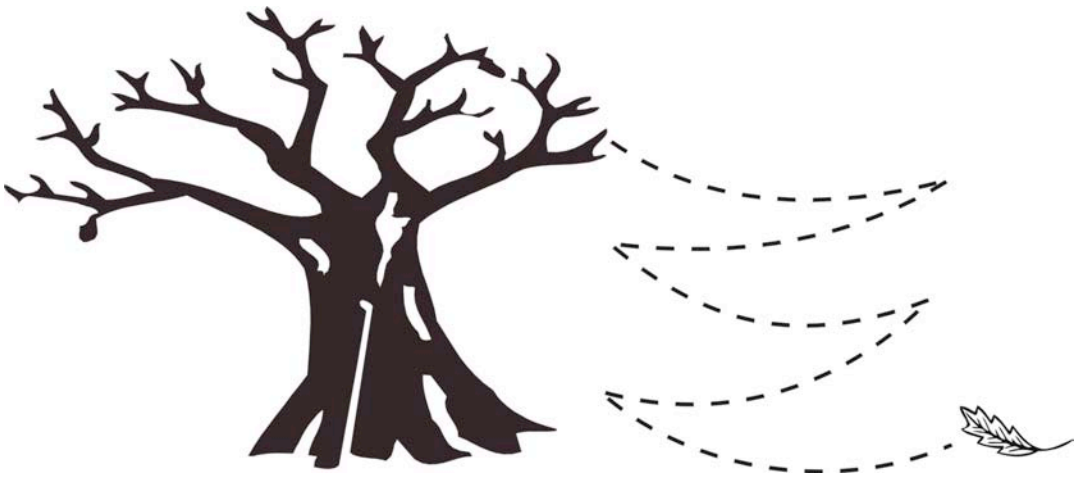
1. Keep the knees flexed, eyes up.
2. Keep pressure on the toeside edge, equally with both feet.
3. Release toe pressure SLOWLY; snowboard will begin to move downhill.
4. The movement of the side slip should be a smooth, flowing motion.

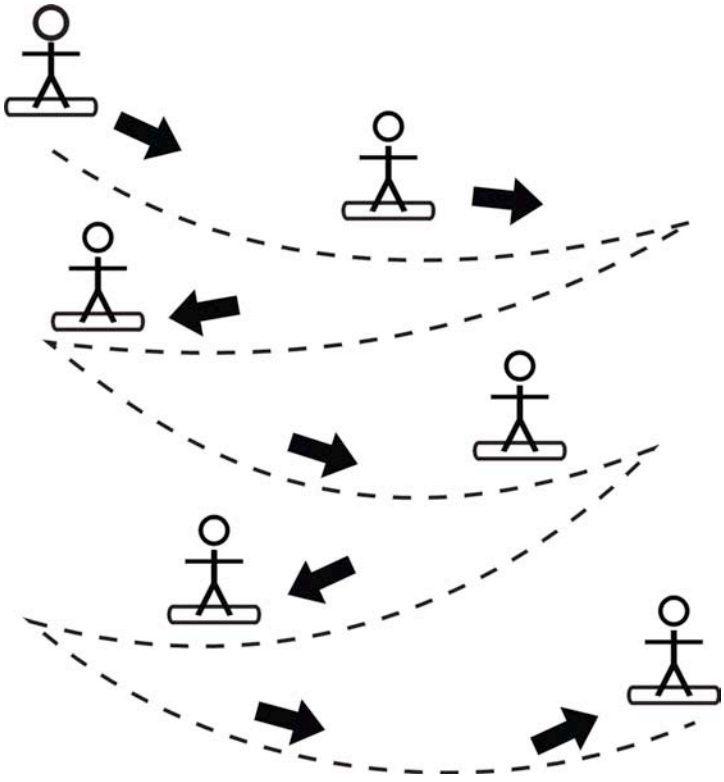
NOTE: For Drills refer to the Full Snowboarding Coaching Guide at www.specialolympics.org

Falling Leaf (To be done on a gentle slope)

The Falling Leaf is named because the movement of the boarder will resemble the movement of a leaf as it falls from a tree. The objective of this drill is to introduce movements that will allow the athlete to begin changing direction while controlling his or her speed.

SAFETY NOTE: This skill involves movement across the hill. Be sure to check for other snowboarders and/or skiers that may be on the slope.





Heelside Falling Leaf

Do not introduce this skill until the athlete has developed the ability to perform both the heelside and toeside side slips with good balance. Before initiating the drill, review a properly balanced and centered stance as well as how speed can be controlled by utilizing the edge of the board. Begin by hand-assisting the athlete as he or she performs a heelside side slip. As the athlete moves forward, begin to have him or her apply more pressure to one foot. Remind the athlete to use the edge of the board to keep from picking up too much speed. Ask him or her to notice what happens. As more pressure is applied, the board will begin to move in that direction. When the athlete's stance is returned to the center with weight equally distributed, the board will begin to travel in a straighter line forward down the hill.

While hand-assisting the athlete performing a side slip, have him or her apply slight pressure to one foot. As the board begins to change direction (the board will begin to move across the hill rather than down), ask the athlete to return to a centered stance with balance equally distributed on both feet. Once the board is centered and moving straight downhill, have the athlete apply pressure to the opposite foot, followed by returning to center. By alternating pressure to each side and back to center, the athlete's board will begin to follow the "falling leaf" pattern down the hill. As the athlete becomes comfortable with the movement, ask him or her to begin experimenting with the amount of pressure used, each time returning to center. Offer progressively less hand assistance as the athlete becomes more proficient with the movement, but walk in front of the athlete so that assistance can be offered if necessary and to help slow the athlete if he or she begins to lose control. Be sure to practice pressuring in both directions across the hill.

Teaching Points – Heelside Falling Leaf

1. Start with knees flexed, eyes up.
2. Begin with pressure on the heelside edge, equally with both feet.
3. Have the athlete slowly shift the weight toward the nose or the tail of the snowboard, looking in the direction of travel.
4. Release heel pressure SLOWLY; snowboard will begin to move downhill in a diagonal direction.
5. The movement of the snowboard should be a smooth, flowing motion.
6. Once the athlete is comfortable moving in one direction, have him or her move in the opposite direction.
7. Continue alternating directions down the hill.

NOTE: For Drills refer to the Full Snowboarding Coaching Guide at www.specialolympics.org

Toeside Falling Leaf

Once the athlete has become familiar with the falling leaf movement utilizing the heelside edge, begin to practice the movement utilizing the toeside edge.

Important! Please remember to take extra care when teaching the toeside falling leaf. While performing the toeside falling leaf, the athlete will be traveling with his or her back facing downhill, increasing the risk of potential injury. Achieving success with the heelside falling leaf may make the athlete anxious to rush into trying the same movement on the toeside. Be careful to start slowly and progress as the athlete becomes more comfortable with the movement.

Begin with a review of the balance progression, and practice with a straight toeside side slip. When the athlete has re-familiarized himself or herself with the side slip motion, begin to have him or her experiment with applying pressure in the same manner that was used while performing the falling leaf on the heelside.

Teaching Points – Toeside Falling Leaf

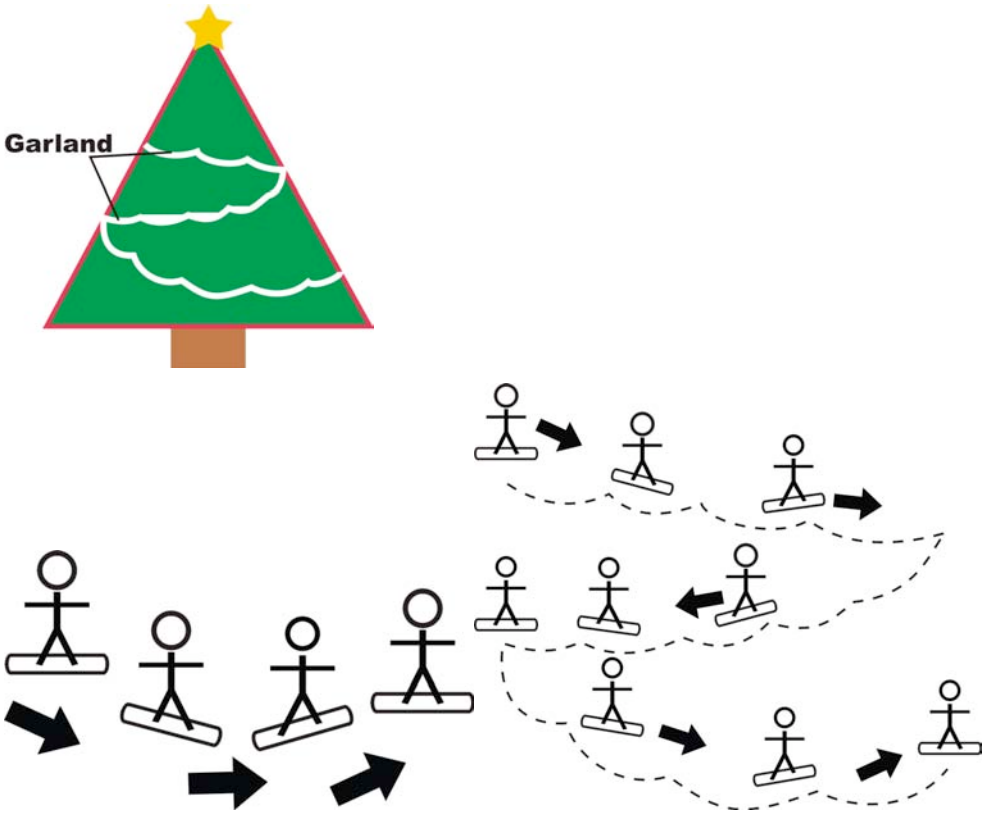
1. Start with knees flexed, eyes up.
2. Begin with pressure on the toeside edge, equally with both feet.
3. Have the athlete slowly shift the weight toward the nose or the tail of the snowboard, looking in the direction of travel.
4. Release heel pressure SLOWLY; snowboard will begin to move downhill in a diagonal direction.
5. The movement of the snowboard should be a smooth, flowing motion.
6. Once the athlete is comfortable, have them move in the opposite direction.
7. Continue alternating directions down the hill.

NOTE: For Drills refer to the Full Snowboarding Coaching Guide at www.specialolympics.org

Garlands (To be done on a gentle slope)

Garlands are named after the pattern that they make in the snow resembling a garland on a Christmas tree. The purpose of the garland is to teach the athlete board control: edge control, balance, speed control by releasing and engaging the edge while traveling across the hill in the same direction.

SAFETY NOTE: This skill involves movement across the hill. Be sure to check for other snowboarders and/or skiers who may be on the slope.



Assisted Garlands

Important! The garland should first be taught with some assistance from the instructor. This can be done similar to the falling leaf, with the instructor standing slightly in front of and down the hill from the athlete, with hands outstretched toward the athlete for the heelside turn and slightly in front of and uphill from the athlete for the toeside turn. The athlete should have the hands outstretched in front, reaching for and/or touching your hands.

Heelside Garlands

Explain to the athlete that a garland is started with the same shifting of weight to the front foot as in the falling leaf. Remind the athlete how speed can be controlled by using different amounts of edge pressure. As the board begins to slide to the side and down the hill, have the athlete move the weight back to the center of the board and look up the hill to a spot. This will cause the athlete to rotate slightly, and the board will turn up the hill and slow to a stop. When the momentum of the snowboard has stopped, the athlete should move the weight over the front foot and let the nose of the board slide back down the hill, starting the process over again. This cycle should be repeated until the athlete is all the way across the hill. At this point the same skill should be practiced moving across the hill in the opposite direction. As the athlete becomes more familiar with the skill, provide less support until the athlete can complete the skill with no assistance.

Teaching Points – Heelside Garlands

1. Start with knees flexed, eyes up.
2. Begin with pressure on the heelside edge, equally with both feet.
3. Have the athlete slowly shift the weight toward the nose of the snowboard, looking in the direction of travel.
4. Release heel pressure SLOWLY; snowboard will begin to move downhill in a diagonal direction.
5. The movement of the snowboard should be a smooth, flowing motion.
6. Repeat the garland process across the fall line, until you run out of room.
7. Repeat the garland process in the opposite direction using the same edge.
8. Continue alternating directions down the hill.

NOTE: For Drills refer to the Full Snowboarding Coaching Guide at www.specialolympics.org

Toeside Garlands

This drill is done in the same way as the heelside garland but on the toeside of the board.

Important! Please remember to take extra care when teaching the toeside garland. While performing the toeside garland, the athlete will be traveling with his or her back facing downhill, increasing the risk of potential injury. Achieving success with the heelside garland may make the athlete anxious to rush into trying the same movement on the toeside. Be careful to start slowly and progress as the athlete becomes more comfortable with the movement.

Begin with a review of the balance progression, and practice with a straight toeside side slip. When the athlete has re-familiarized himself or herself with the side slip motion, begin to have him or her experiment with applying pressure in the same manner that was used while performing the garland on the heelside. As the athlete becomes more familiar with the skill, provide less support until the athlete can complete the skill with no assistance.

Teaching Points – Toeside Garlands

1. Start with knees flexed, eyes up.
2. Begin with pressure on the toeside edge, equally with both feet.
3. Have the athlete slowly shift the weight toward the tail of the snowboard, looking in the direction of travel.
4. Release heel pressure SLOWLY; snowboard will begin to move downhill in a diagonal direction.
5. The movement of the snowboard should be a smooth, flowing motion.
6. Repeat the garland process across the fall line, until you run out of room.
7. Repeat the garland process in the opposite direction using the same edge.
8. Continue alternating directions down the hill.

NOTE: For Drills refer to the Full Snowboarding Coaching Guide at www.specialolympics.org

Straight Glide Review, with Both Feet Clipped In (To be done on a gentle slope)

Up to this point the athlete has been learning to control the speed and move across the hill. He or she will now have to get comfortable once again with moving straight down the hill with both feet buckled. The following drills should be performed at the bottom of a hill where there is a large flat area that the athlete can use to coast to a stop before picking up too much speed. Have the athlete buckle in both of the feet, and assist with pointing the board straight down the fall line. Use your foot as a stop in front of the nose to keep the athlete from sliding down the hill. Once he or she is in the proper stance you can move your foot and allow the athlete to coast down the hill to a stop while maintaining balance and athletic position. Once the athlete is comfortable going straight, the coach can start the drill with the athlete standing across the fall line instead of pointing down the fall line. Have the athlete start the downhill straight glide by moving the weight over the front foot and letting the nose of the board slide down the hill until moving in a straight line down the hill. Have the athlete do this numerous times until comfortable going from a standing position on the hill to a gliding run down the hill on their own.

Straight Glide to Turn, or J-Turn (To be done on a gentle slope)

Once the athlete is comfortable with the straight glide with both feet attached to the board, turns can be introduced again. The following skills should be performed on the lower slope of a hill where there is a large flat area that the athlete can use to coast to a stop before picking up too much speed. Use your foot as a stop in front of the nose to keep the athlete from sliding down the hill. Once he or she is in the proper stance, you can move your foot and allow the athlete to coast down the hill while maintaining balance and athletic position. Once the board is going straight down the fall line, the athlete should press gently on the toes and look up the hill in the direction he or she wants to go. This will cause the board to edge and turn slightly. As the board begins to turn, the athlete should sink down by flexing the knees while progressing through the turn. The athlete should hold this position until he or she has turned back up the hill and come to a complete stop. During this skill the coach should stay in front of the athlete and to the side toward which the athlete is expected to turn. This allows the coach to continue talking to the athlete and helps to have the athlete focus on the direction that he or she is trying to turn. Once the athlete has come to a complete stop, the process can be repeated with a turn in the opposite direction (heelside) to go back across the hill to the other side. As the athlete gets more comfortable and proficient at controlling speed and stopping, the skill can be started higher up the hill on a steeper slope. It is also a good idea to do several J-turns in a row without stopping between each one, allowing the snowboard to point straighter down the fall line each time (which will result in faster speeds). When the athlete has become comfortable making a J-turn from a straight slide, have the athlete do a J-turn following a slow traverse across the hill.

Teaching Points – Straight Glide to Turn (J-Turn)

1. Start by securing the board so that it does not move before the athlete is ready.
2. Have the athlete begin in the correct snowboard stance.
3. Keep knees flexed and stay in a relaxed position.
4. Keep feet flat and weight centered (over both feet, front to back and side to side).
5. Keep eyes forward, while looking ahead.
6. While the snowboard is traveling down the hill, pressure the toeside (or heelside) edge, equally with both feet, while flexing the knees.
7. The athlete should continue the turn until the board stops.

NOTE: For Drills refer to the Full Snowboarding Coaching Guide at www.specialolympics.org

Linking Turns (To be done on a gentle to moderate slope)

Once the athlete is comfortable and proficient making J-turns on toesides and heelsides, he or she is ready to learn how to link these turns together. The athlete has already learned all of the skills needed to make turns. In this process, the athlete is learning to combine the skills he or she already has in order to make continuous toeside and heelside turns down the hill. The athlete should begin by making a J-turn from a traverse. As the athlete finishes the turn and begins to slow to a stop, he or she should rise by straightening the legs and shift some weight to the front foot while reducing the pressure on the edge. At this point the snowboard will point down the fall line and increase speed. The coach should be aware that as the board picks up speed, the athlete may have a tendency to lean back or to get frightened, so be sure to do this in an area where the athlete will not pick up excessive speed. The coach should be downhill and close enough to the athlete during this skill to provide support as necessary. When the snowboard is traveling down the fall line, the athlete should then gently pressure the edge on the opposite side of the board from the turn just completed, i.e., if the first turn was toeside, the athlete should gently pressure the heelside edge for the second turn. It is best to link one set of turns (one in each direction) together and then come to a stop. This will allow the athlete to practice the skill without building up excessive speed. As the athlete becomes more proficient, he or she can be allowed to link several sets of turns together. To practice speed control, have the athlete make large turns that cross the entire run, placing the snowboard across the fall line for a long period of time. Making larger turns will help the athlete to slow down and be more able to control the speed.

Teaching Points – Linking Turns

1. Have the athlete begin in the correct snowboard stance.
2. Keep knees flexed into a turn and stay in a relaxed position.
3. Keep your eyes forward, while looking in the direction that you want to travel.
4. Rise, extend the knees and reduce edge pressure at the completion of the turn to begin the initiation of a new turn.
5. While the snowboard is traveling down the hill, pressure the toeside (or heelside) edge, equally with both feet, while flexing the knees.
6. The athlete should continue down the hill, linking turns together.

Turning on Purpose (To be done on a gentle to moderate slope)

As the athlete develops the skills that allow him or her to be able to link turns together, the coach should begin to think about introducing racing skills. Turning on purpose is the first step in this sequence. On the race course, an athlete will need to change direction based on the shape of the course and the terrain. Turning on Purpose is just one of the skills that racing skills involves; these can be found in the Racing Skills Section of this guide.

NOTE: For Drills refer to the Full Snowboarding Coaching Guide at www.specialolympics.org

Snowboarding Skills Progression

Your Athlete Can	Never	Sometimes	Often
Perform a correct Skating Technique	☐	☐	☐
Perform a correct Skate to Glide	☐	☐	☐
Perform a correct Climbing Technique	☐	☐	☐
Perform a correct One Foot Straight Glide	☐	☐	☐
Perform a correct Direction Change	☐	☐	☐
Perform a correct Toeside Turn	☐	☐	☐
Perform a correct Heelside Turn	☐	☐	☐
Perform a correct One Foot In Direction Change	☐	☐	☐
Perform a correct Heelside Side Slip	☐	☐	☐
Perform a correct Toeside Side Slip	☐	☐	☐
Perform a correct Falling Leaf	☐	☐	☐
Perform a correct Heelside Falling Leaf	☐	☐	☐
Perform a correct Toeside Falling Leaf	☐	☐	☐
Perform a correct Assisted Garland	☐	☐	☐
Perform a correct Heelside Garland	☐	☐	☐
Perform a correct Toeside Garland	☐	☐	☐
Perform a correct Straight Glide (Both Feet Clipped In)	☐	☐	☐
Perform a correct Straight Glide to Turn (J-Turn)	☐	☐	☐
Perform correct Linking Turns	☐	☐	☐
Perform a correct Turn on Purpose	☐	☐	☐
Totals			

Racing Skills

Course Definitions

Slalom

A slalom course will be set up such that the athlete needs to make a series of quick, short- to medium-radius turns while avoiding side slipping. The gates will be fairly close to each other, making edge control very important. Due to the technical difficulty of slalom, it will often take longer to complete than the other races, even when it is a shorter course.

Giant Slalom (GS)

A giant slalom course will be set up such that the athlete needs to make a series of flowing, medium- to long-radius turns. The gates will be spaced farther apart than the slalom course with slower, more fluid edge changes required.

Super Giant Slalom

A super giant slalom course will be set up such that the athlete will need to make a minimal number of turns, taking them slowly across the entire width of the course. The gates will be spaced very far apart with slow, smooth long-radius turns needed.

How to Read a Course

Dry Land

There are a few things that a rider needs to be aware of when looking at a course. They include slope of the hill, terrain features and placement of the gates. Before "slipping the course," detailed below, the coach should discuss with the athlete how these factors can affect the course.

On-Snow

Before the beginning of each event, the athletes and coaches are allowed to "slip" the course. This means that both athletes and coaches may travel the course but must remain in a sideslip throughout the entire course. Edge changes are permitted, but any race-style practicing will result in a disqualification. The purpose of slipping the course is to let the riders get a feel for the course and decide how they want to approach each turn. As the athlete and coach progress down the course, they should be looking for a couple of things. The first is the rhythm of the gates. This is the downhill distance between the gates and the horizontal offset between the gates. Some may be closer together in one or both of the above aspects, and the rider needs to be aware of these changes to plan turns. The second thing to be aware of is the terrain on the hill as the course progresses. For example, there may be a small roller or hump in the course. If this is present between the gates, it may not affect the shape or timing of the turn. However, if there is a gate on the top of it, the rider may pick up more speed on the down side of the gate and roller, making it harder to complete the turn and get to the next gate. Therefore, the rider may have to adjust the timing of the turn and start it earlier than when going around a gate with no roller. The athlete should become familiar with each part of the course and should have a strategy for finishing the course. This means that the athlete will need to control the speed while navigating the gates. It may even be necessary to use a falling leaf or garland type of turn to make it through an especially steep section of the course.

Race Tactics

The coach and athlete should discuss how the rider approaches running the course. The rider should be in a flexed athletic stance with the arms in front of and close to the body. This allows the rider the widest range of motion and makes it easier to keep in a balanced stance while negotiating the course. The eyes should always be up and focused on the course as opposed to looking down at the snowboard. This will help the rider anticipate and prepare for what is ahead as opposed to reacting to things as they happen. It is very important that the rider knows that the turn should be started before reaching the gate and that the turn should be ending while passing the gate. It is actually advantageous to be in control at all times; speed is not always beneficial if it makes it too hard for the athlete to finish the course. Due to this, there may be sections of the course where it is appropriate to use a falling leaf or a skidded turn.

One last thing to keep in mind as the coach and athlete slip the course is that a snowboarder will take a different route through a course than a skier will. As a snowboarder changes direction, he or she moves out and down the fall line, taking less time and a more curved path to the next gate than a skier.

- 
- 
- 

Racing Skills Drills

All drills in the "Turning on Purpose Drills" may also be used as basic drills for practicing race tactics.

Cone Shuffling Drill

This drill can be done on the snow or during the summer on a grassy hill. The coach should set up a series of four to ten cones on a hill, similar to a race course. The coach should then help the athlete read the course while looking at it from the top. Discuss where the turns should be made and what size and shape they should be. The coach can then shuffle sideways down the hill through the course using the line that was discussed with the athlete. The athlete should then do the same thing, and the coach and athlete can discuss what they felt and saw during the drill. This can then be repeated several times, and the course can be changed as needed. The coach should be reminding the athlete to have bent knees, hands up and eyes forward while shuffling through the course.

Practicing in a Race Course Drill

The best way to practice racing is to race. Practicing and refining general snowboard skills is important, but whenever possible it is important to practice those skills under the same conditions an athlete will face in competition. Allowing the athlete to practice making turns under race conditions is the best way to improve times. The best practice is to race in various courses using the same gates, timing system, etc., used in competition; however, access to such equipment is often limited. For those with limited access to equipment, there are some options to help offer a similar experience to athletes.

Practice Course Drill

If you do not have access to regular racing gates and other equipment, you can set up a practice course using orange cones, ski poles, etc. The advantage is that you can re-create an environment where the athlete can practice his or her turning skills in a race-type setting without spending a lot of money. Practice courses are also much more portable and do not take as much time and effort to set up. When setting up practice courses, it is important to try to re-create the type of course that the athlete will be facing in competition. Try to give the athlete experience practicing small (slalom) turns, medium (giant slalom) turns and large (downhill) turns. The best way to measure improvement is to time the athlete in each of a series of six to ten runs on the same course. When the athlete has completed the course, take a few minutes to share his or her time and talk about how it felt. You can also share helpful hints for improvement that the athlete can then practice on the next run. Comparison of times between runs can help an athlete see whether or not he or she is improving.

Public NASTAR Racing Drill

Many ski hills offer public NASTAR racing. NASTAR is a system where the general public can sign up and race timed runs in a giant slalom format. While NASTAR only offers giant slalom, it is a good way to give athletes an opportunity to race using the same racing gates, timing system, etc., used in regular competition.

Turning in the Poles on Command Drill

The coach may practice riding parallel to the course and giving the athlete advice on when to turn ("NOW!"). In this way the athlete can more easily determine the proper time to initiate his or her turns. Please note as mentioned above that this should be used only to introduce movement through gates, and the athletes should learn to navigate a course on their own as soon as possible.

NOTE: For Drills refer to the Full Snowboarding Coaching Guide at www.specialolympics.org

Carving

The turns that an athlete will have learned to this point will most likely be "skidded turns" where the snowboard slides perpendicular to the fall line as the turn progresses. This type of turn is good for controlling speed and is often very comfortable for the athlete to complete. However, a "carved turn" is the most efficient and fast way to come down the hill. In a carved turn, the snowboard remains on its edge throughout the whole turn, and the tail of the board follows the same path through the turn as the nose of the board – as opposed to sliding down the fall line on a lower path than the nose of the board. To make a carved turn, the athlete will need to put more pressure on the edge for a longer amount of time through the turn. A good drill is to have the athlete start on one side of a run and make a single turn to the opposite side of the run, while putting a lot of pressure on the edge and not letting it slip down the hill. To be able to do this, the athlete will have to be in an athletic stance with knees bent and lots of flexion in the ankles. A carved turn will be easy to recognize because the snowboard will leave one track in the snow that is a single thin line. Once the athlete is able to make a single turn like this in both directions, he or she can try to link several carved turns together. To do this, the athlete will have to switch from one edge to the other in a single faster movement. To practice, the athlete can do a small straight glide while quickly hopping from one edge to the other and back again.

Teaching Points – Carving

1. Have the athlete begin by assuming the correct snowboard stance with eyes looking straight forward.
2. Make sure the athlete remains loose, keeping the knees flexed.
3. Begin by moving down the hill and initiating a turn.
4. As the board begins to turn, have the athlete tilt the board on edge by applying pressure with both feet.
5. Have the athlete experiment with different amounts of pressure. Explain how different amounts of pressure add different amounts of emphasis to the turn.
6. Maintain constant pressure on the edge throughout the entire turn to completion.
7. While moving through the turn, concentrate on keeping the board on edge with no sliding.
8. Once this can be done consistently for a single turn on the toeside and the heelside, begin linking several turns together.

Additional Advice

Athletes who reach this level in snowboarding may require special advice. Here are some tips to emphasize when teaching carving:

- Bend your knees and ride in a compact body position.
- While doing a toeside turn, press your knees to the snow.
- While doing toeside turn, grasp or claw your toes in the snow.
- While doing a heelside turn, pull up your toes to the top of your boot.
- While doing a heelside turn, feel the pressure on the high back of the binding.
- While riding on the edge when making traverses, jump up and practice landing on the edge.
- Emphasize leaning and tipping the board onto the edge during the turn.

NOTE: For Drills refer to the Full Snowboarding Coaching Guide at www.specialolympics.org

Snowboarding Racing Skills Progression

Your Athlete Can	Never	Sometimes	Often
Negotiate a slalom course without falling	☐	☐	☐
Negotiate a giant slalom course without falling	☐	☐	☐
Negotiate a downhill course without falling	☐	☐	☐
Carve a portion of a turn	☐	☐	☐
Complete one carved turn	☐	☐	☐
Complete linked carved turns in succession	☐	☐	☐
Totals			

Special Olympics

www.specialolympics.org

e-mail: info@specialolympics.org

Created by the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation for the Benefit of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities.

QSG_SB_03/08