



**Suggestions for a Junior Coach:** The suggestion for the junior coach is to build a yearly plan based on the concepts introduced above. The first step is to focus on the technical and tactical development, then the race preparation. The equipment piece is typically focused more on fitting and less on evaluation due to a lack of material to test. The assumption made for the junior level yearly plan is that these athletes require more training volume during the season, due to a lack of on snow time in the summer. Therefore the junior coach should try to build a plan with less racing per se, and more training than would be recommended for a National Team athlete. This would help to promote development in all of the areas mentioned.

**Technical Skill Development:-** This includes ski skill introduction, acquisition and refinement. The development of a great racer starts with the fundamentals. In the yearly plan, most USST athletes focus on basic skill acquisition and refinement at the early camps. It is based around a lot of free skiing and directed free ski drills to achieve this goal. The free skiing provokes the balance of the athlete and forces adaptability in the skiing. Although generally not a focus, technical work continues throughout the year according to athlete needs.

**Tactical Skill Development:-** Tactical skill development for the USST is defined as those specific skills and methods that an athlete requires to ski the slope, or course as fast as possible. The tactics a skier employs will determine their individual skier's line that in turn should compliment and optimize their technical ability for speed. Correspondingly, tactical skill development is ultimately dependant upon the athletes' technical skill development. In the yearly plan most USST athletes refrain from tactical development until such time that they have the consistent balance and fundamental skills necessary to complete the courses with consistent timing feedback.

**Equipment Testing:-** The USST philosophy on equipment testing is to pursue an objective comparison. Accurate testing requires first and foremost reliability and repeatability. If the skier is not balanced, makes frequent errors, tests in summer conditions, etc. then the accuracy of the tests is compromised. Most USST athletes typically test at the end of the competition phase when the athletes are skiing well, or once they are on winter snow in the southern hemisphere and have completed their basic skill acquisition. The testing courses are generally shorter and preferably during winter conditions to allow for greater reliability and repeatability.

**Race Skill Preparation:-** The USST philosophy on race preparation is to simulate a race situation with regard to course length, conditions and competition stress. The goal for these sessions is to focus on the course inspection, race-specific conditioning, and competition stress while still providing a learning environment. As a general rule from a physiological perspective, intensity is inversely proportional to volume and therefore number of runs is kept very low.

**Race Season on-snow training:-** The USST philosophy on race season on-snow maintenance incorporates race, on-snow training, rest, travel, and conditioning plans for the race season. The general goal for the race season plan is to peak the racer for the important race or races based on the athlete's goals. The on-snow training during this period is usually a combination of the categories outlined above (technical, tactical, equipment, race prep.) with the focus on short to medium courses, equipment testing, and free skiing to compliment the race schedule.