



## BALANCE and PRESSURE



VARA Youth Coaches!

As you all should know VARA has a Youth Committee which is comprised of two representatives from each of the three councils, the VARA Executive Director and the VARA Youth Coordinator. Council representatives are all volunteers and give quite a bit of their time especially in the busy winter to help our young athletes.

As we start thinking about ski racing again I went to this group of youth coaches and asked them for their opinions on what their favorite drills are and why and which of the SkillsQuest skills they find help their athletes in the different areas of balance, edging, pressure and rotary. The fundamentals of skiing have been around since the beginning of time, some have changed as the sport has evolved but some have the same goals in mind. No need to reinvent the wheel and USSA has a great SkillsQuest program so many of the drills are from their program with a few different ones that the committee members find useful. The coach education is out there so let's use it!

Although skills can be organized to address the four main areas of focus, balance, edging, pressure and rotary, many of them fall in to more than one category with BALANCE being the cornerstone of all drills.

This will be the first of three emails sent to VARA youth coaches with skills I am sure you are already doing, but mostly a reminder that the season is coming, let's start thinking ski racing and perhaps some ideas for those going skiing this fall. Each of the three emails will include the U10, U12 and U14 age groups. Each of the skills is linked to SkillsQuest and describes set up, ideal terrain and video.

*.....keeping ski racers 1<sup>st</sup> in Vermont .....and Vermont ski racer 1<sup>st</sup> in the world.....*

## SkillsQuest

**Phase 2-U10 (6-10 years old)** Phase 2 skiers should spend time working on:

- Skiing with balance and control in a variety of terrain and snow conditions
- Learning how to move their lower body independently of their upper body
- Learning edging and carving skills
- Pressuring the skis independently
- Learning pole plant mechanics and using pole plants consistently
- Making a variety of turn shapes in free skiing and drill courses

[Pole Jumpers](#)-Balance and Pressure

[Free Ski Pole Usage](#)-Balance, Pressure, Rotary and Edging

**Phase 3-U12 (Girls age 10-13, Boys age 11-14)** Phase 3 skiers should spend time working on:

- Linking carved turns in a variety of terrain and snow conditions
- Using proper gate clearing skills for slalom without disrupting carving or turn shape
- Refining edging and carving skills
- Pressuring the skis independently
- Using both single and double pole plants consistently
- Making a variety of turn shapes in freeskiing and drill courses

[Pole Jumpers in a High Tuck](#)- Balance and Pressure

Falling Leaf- Balance: Steer the tips of skis to slight uphill turn then release the turn and steer tips back down the hill. It should look like a "Falling leaf". It forces athletes to be very subtle with fore-aft movement to release edges.

[Free Skiing Lane Change](#)- Balance, Pressure, Edging, Rotary and Speed Control

[Shuffle Drill](#)-Balance: Make slight shuffling movements throughout the entire arc of the turn. Oftentimes, athletes will stall at one point during the turn which indicates a point where the Center of Mass (COM) is not moving over the feet.

**Phase 4-U14 (Girls age 11-14, Boys age 12-15)** Phase 4 skiers should spend time working on:

- Refining previously learned skills in a variety of terrain and snow conditions
- Tactics exercises in gates to learn the fastest line
- Speed and terrain elements
- Regularly working on skiing skills outside of gates and then bringing those skills into gates

[Straight Run in a Wave Track](#)- Balance and Pressure

[Free Ski Hourglass](#)- Balance, Pressure, Edging, Speed Control

[Carving Leapers](#)- Balance and Pressure

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