



*VARA U14 Fundamentals Project
Sunday, December 9th, 2018
Stratton Mountain, Vermont
Project Report*

Project Purpose: Provide a SL progression through constraint environments for 45 VARA U14 athletes. Bring together VARA athletes and coaches from the state for athlete and coach education. Introduce athletes to the 2019 U14 State Championship venue.

Thank you: On behalf of VARA I would like to thank Stratton Mountain Resort, Stratton Winter Sports Club, David Edry, Dylan Snell, Robin Gibson and the SWSC race crew. I would also like to thank the coaching staff: Christine Booker (BMA), Crosby Coughlin (BMA), Justin Lillie (S6), Jet Robbins (OMS), Ryan Sheredy (SNSC), Bryan Pell (Pico), Garrett Quimby (BMA), Ben Blakely (MMSC), Neiko Razingar (BOC), Pete Davis (COCH) and all of the program directors for supporting the project. The success of these events is dependent on the help and experience of the VARA coaches. The coaches all pitched in and worked well together with each other and their groups of athletes.

Project Recap: 11 environments total (video courtesy of Christine Booker, BMA)

A.M. Session:

1. Straight corridor set at 11 meters. Athletes did different drills in the corridor.
2. Hour Glass Corridor [drill](#)
3. Picket fence set at 2 meters.
4. Stubby SL with combinations [drill](#)
5. Stubby SL with brush for pole touch (Fred's Drill) [drill](#)
6. Snake Drill [example](#) (some athletes chased each other through the drill)

P.M. Session:

1. Rhythmical stubby section set at 8 meters
2. Tall pole SL with combinations [drill](#)
3. Paneled SL hour glass
4. Tall pole and stubby section [drill](#)
5. Varied distance SL [drill](#)

Observations: Due to early snow this season all athletes had a minimum of 5 days on snow prior to the project. The corridor drills are very productive and allow the coaches to be creative with the drills they choose for the athletes and tailor the drills to the specific needs of the athletes. The constraint environments worked really well for self-discovery and immediate feedback. Athletes quickly realized they needed to recenter and pole plant in order to be successful in many of the drills. Recentering for that athletes is most difficult when they don't have a strong core. Athletes struggled with short distances and offset. Suggestion: incorporate short distances and offset in to training courses. Overall body positions were much better in the stubbie courses. Stubbies are a great teaching tool that should

really be used more. Unfortunately, stubbies are seen to some as a tool only for the younger kids, NOT true! World cup athletes ski their fair share of stubbies too! [World Cup athlete stubbie SL training](#)

Coaches commented that the pole touch is from the binding back with many of the athletes and completely lacking with some athletes. Also, boots should be checked as there were several athletes that seem to have very stiff boots. This makes it very challenging for both the athlete and coach to make progress.

Mixing genders with the 2nd year athletes proved to be a benefit for both the boys and the girls. For the boys it seemed to keep some of the “silliness” at bay that 13-year-old boys like to exhibit and for the girls it made them step up their game.

The constraint environments were difficult. Athletes were told in the morning that they would need 100% focus and effort and that they weren’t going to feel good but that they would come away from the day having learned a lot. Even in the most difficult situations the athletes stayed positive and worked really hard. The day ended at 2:45 with a group of very tired U14 athletes.

Thank you again to the coaches for all of their hard work with the athletes and making the day a positive experience for everyone.

Respectfully submitted,
Alex Krebs

