



VARA YOUTH ON SNOW IDEAS JANUARY 5 (U10-U12 GROUP)

As we head in to January inevitably all councils will start their council racing. Have you prepared your group of athletes for competition? Statistics show the main reason young athletes play sports is because it's fun. Whether that's because they get to be with friends, they like making progress and improvement or they enjoy the competition, remember FUN is why they do this. Competition can be difficult and stressful for many athletes so let's go over some activities/drills to help get them ready and confident for race day.

- **Race Day Routine:** Do athletes know what time and where to meet at the race? Have athletes pick up their own bib, not their parents. Do they know what time and where to meet to head up the lift? Who they will inspect with? How do they get their jackets after their run? Should they head in and have lunch after the first run? The more information they have pre-race day the less confusion and fewer questions coaches will need to answer.
- **Inspection:** Take your time. Let other groups go ahead so that your athletes have a clear view of the course, inspection is not a race. On terrain or blind rolls, show the athletes where the direction is and then have them hike back up the hill so they have a better idea of where to go. Inspect right through the finish. Athletes are going to race through the finish so inspect through the finish. Unless you have been told specifically not to go through the finish due to snow conditions etc. you should always inspect the finish area. Have athletes look at the line from the last gate to the finish area. Is it a straight line? If it is, then go straight, no need to put in an extra turn. [Inspection tips from Shiffrin.](#)
- **Practice Starts:** Set up your start with the first two gates (SL or GS). You can use your start house, build a small platform of snow or have a flat start. Athletes will see all kinds of different start situations so have them prepared for all of them. If possible, set up wireless timing or use stop watches. Have athletes start and skate to the first gate and get in to their groove. They may not realize it but a lot of time can be made or lost from the start to the first gate. The same is true from the last gate to the finish. [Youth Start1](#) and [Youth Start2](#) (video courtesy of Ashley Sargent BMA)
- **Practice Tucks:** Read [Tucking fundamentals](#) page 26-28 of the Level 100 Ski Fundamentals PDF Manual

KEY POINTS FOR A GOOD TUCK:

- Skis parallel
- Vision forward
- Ankles, knees, and hips flexed
- Flat or slightly rounded back
- Hands and elbow in front of chest piercing the air
- Movement from low tuck to high tuck is in hips, not shoulders
- View the tuck as a dynamic, not a static position

Find a flat area where your group can spread out and practice getting in and out of their tucks. Go around and inspect each tuck and make corrections. [Video of a young athlete tucking.](#) What can you see from his video that you would change? Explain the speed difference between a skidded tuck turn and a clean non-tuck turn. Surely you all have heard "Don't sacrifice a turn for a tuck"! [Youth Tuck1](#) and [Youth Tuck2](#) (video courtesy of Ashley Sargent BMA)

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- **Short Sections:** Set short sections with different turn shapes. The shorter sections will allow athletes to focus better from start to finish, less time for mistakes therefore more confidence. The different turn shapes will give them a taste of what they may see in a race course that won't be set by their home coach.
- **Let off Some Steam:** Get out of the gates and go free skiing. Find some bumps and jumps. Let loose and have fun!

Let's work towards: [U10 GS Training](#) and [U10 GS Training2](#) Notice the athlete is not "hunting" panels. The focus rather is on good fundamental skiing. Good skiers first, then fast ski racers. Also notice the pole hoppers set after the course. If you have more "real estate" to use, USE IT! Be creative!

Looking for a specific drill? Don't forget about the [SkillsQuest](#) videos and the [Center of Excellence TV](#)

Next: Weight Transfer

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