



## FREESTYLE CANADA FREESTYLERZ PROGRAM GUIDE

### Freestylerz Key Focus:

The Can Freestyle FREESTYLERZ Program aligns with the [Canadian Sport For Life Learn to Train stage of athlete development](#). The focus is on the growth of fundamental sport skills (including Freestyle skiing skills) through fun, year-round training.

Athletes will often want to focus on learning only a few exciting skills that they have seen in movies or that their friends can do, but it is really important that the program develops foundational athletic, skiing, and acrobatics skills for safety and long-term success. It will be up to the coach to motivate and explain the importance of being a well-rounded athlete.

Freestylerz will be introduced to athletic practices including warm up, stretching to develop flexibility and prevent injury, strength and endurance, agility, acrobatic literacy, cool down, hydration, nutrition, recovery, relaxation and focus. Coaches will integrate these into their programs.

While the focus in Freestylerz is on training, competition should be used to start teaching and assessing Learn to Train competitive skills in a fun and relaxed environment. Generally, Learn to Train athletes have a ratio of 90% training to 10% competition over the year.

FREESTYLE CANADA is adding more resources to the Can Freestyle LTAD programs. Also view more detailed program guidelines below.

### When setting goals, keep the following SMART criteria in mind:

- **Specific:** A specific goal addresses as many descriptor questions as possible (Who, What, When, Where, Why and How). It has a greater chance of being met if a specific plan is made for its completion.
- **Measurable:** This involves deciding what will measure when the goal is attained; a finish line has to be set before it can be crossed.
- **Attainable:** To properly set a goal, you must set the steps that are necessary to reach it. This scaffolding ensures that the goal actually is attainable, and therefore produces motivation as the goal's completion has become a reality.
- **Realistic:** A goal must be set in the spirit of desiring its completion. In setting a goal, one can determine if it's realistic by asking the following questions; am I capable of attaining



this goal? Am I willing to work for this goal? Setting an unrealistic goal will often result in a decrease in motivation over time.

- **Timely:** Setting the goal within a time frame helps to motivate; without an end goal, there is no set limit to help drive the goal's completion.

### **Freestylerz Administrative Planning Resource:**

Great sports programs are always the result of terrific planning, good technical leadership, and delivery by a caring group of staff and volunteers. In addition, clubs, and coaches have to plan well in advance and work together with resorts to make sure terrain is well built and safely maintained.

Below is a sample plan for administrators that contains the elements of a great

Freestylerz program. This plan is based on:

1. Pre Season Dryland Training, Coach Training, and Program Preparation
2. Early Season Christmas Camp gets everyone off on a good foot.
3. 10 weeks of training, including 3 fun competitions on weekends
4. Admin Prep for next season, Note: Some kids and clubs will opt to go to spring/summer camps as well!

A well planned and shared program schedule keeps coaches and athletes on track, and helps families keep plans straight!

Please Note: The sample plan below is for a fairly new club with athletes who have not started to flip yet. If athletes are preparing to flip on snow – they will need to have enough training volume with certified coaches on trampoline and water ramp or air bag to qualify to try inverted skills on snow.

For athletes doing inverts ideally plan for 20 days of water ramp and/or air bag training spread over 6 -10 sessions

### **Sample Program Plan – Freestylerz – Happy Valley Freestyle Club**

Happy Valley Freestyle Club is in its second season and has 23 Freestylerz athletes between 9 and 11 – most of whom are keen to try some freestyle competitions.

These athletes all graduated from Jumps and Bumps but none of them have qualified to do flips yet or trained over the summer – this is the plan the Head Coach, Ski School Director, and Freestyle Club Volunteer President have agreed on.

Happy Valley Freestylerz comprises:

- 10 X 3 hr fall tramp/dryland sessions



- 4 day on-snow Christmas Camp.
- 9 weekends X 2 full days each.

#### **April/May:**

The spring prior to season start, the Fz program leader downloads all of the Freestylerz materials from the FREESTYLE CANADA website and works co-operation with the FREESTYLE CANADA, PSO, club, ski school, and host resort to plan for a great Freestylerz Program.

The Head Coach and Club President check registration and consider returning athletes from prior year (using FREESTYLE CANADA membership list) to create an assessment plan to meet the program needs including:

- Coaches (number of coaches at 1:8 ratio and coach level of certifications) Facilities
- Camps/Special Events
- Competitions

With the President and Head Coach set up a template season schedule – using Freestylerz Seasonal Excel Planning download.

Program administrators can also:

- Assess the need for off-season water ramp, tramp, dryland training.
- Plan for Club Information Days/Social Events
- Contract a Head Coach if you have one
- Set up Coach Professional Development Plans with your Provincial Sport Organization
- Book/organize facilities
- Set a budget and program costs
- Arrange advertising with your club
- Set up early bird registration

#### **September:**

- Start an 8 -10 week tramp/gymnastics/Dryland training program with local gymnastics club
- Open Fall Registration
- Confirm coaches winter contracts (including expectations around professional Development/ showing up early to train and prep courses, staying after skiing to run dryland sessions etc.)
- Confirm special event/competition schedule and set up any committees/volunteers to manage – make sure needed officials are trained to run their events.
- Weeks Prior to Program Start:
- Meet with athletes and parents to establish expectations – review equipment needs and special event schedule, do an LTAD presentation, run a fun dryland activity and social – (this could tie into a fundraiser.)
- Clear off as many organizational details as possible – ensure FREESTYLE CANADA memberships are done, distribute any uniforms, inform coaches and parents of policies, get medical info forms and photo consent forms completed, etc.



- Coaches complete any pre-season courses 2 weeks prior to program start
- **Coaches indoor workshops – Staff Kick-off Day:**
  - 8 AM 10 AM– coffee and Freestylerz program review workshop
  - 10 AM –12:30 Technical Ski Warm Up
  - 2 PM – 5 PM finish/prep moguls course/intro air site

#### Dec 28- 31:

- 4-day Christmas Camp on early season terrain – focus on strong take-offs on jumps with softened landings, good all-terrain skiing, good turn timing in waves, a variety of exits/entrances on boxes – have a mini-comp last day with on-hill BBQ and coaches throw out small prizes (hats and t-shirts) to kids who show good control (everyone gets something)

#### Week 1 Jan 4:

- Program starts!
- Check all participants have FREESTYLE CANADA license (ask your PSO for list)
- Meet with parents and kids to show them goal book and share information and dates about club and regional competitions
- Make sure the entry- level terrain from Christmas camp is still in good shape.
- Handout guidebook, set up a schedule to work with athletes to set goals
- Make sure you can get kids moving right away – groups may not be set up so have a fun activity planned while any organization is done – there is nothing worse than starting the season with chaos and confusion. Assign one staff or volunteer just to answer parent questions.

#### Week 2:

- Meet with coaches to review skill testing and tracking. Confirm season schedule for coach training mentor sessions with each other and various experts.
- Start coach training sessions before or after athlete training once a week.
- Post an open invite for Try Freestyle/sapling sessions, interclub/club or regional series
- Work with coaches to determine which level of competition is best suited for each athlete

#### Week 3:

- Coaches have completed individual goals and should meet to review athlete goal book, track progression and create action plan for rest of the program that supports athletes to attaining their goals
- Host an all club mental skills workshop Sat evening
- Big H-air Day Sunday - big hair theme/lots of work on well prepared jump sites that are closed to public



#### **Week 4:**

- Mogul/Terrain clinic for officials/coaches.
- First 'competition' Moguls, Big Air and Slopestyle with skill assessments- Hand out report cards to parents at event wrap up. Results are posted but no medals.

#### **Week 5:**

- Meet with coaches to review skill testing and tracking.
- Have a Freestyle Social – with athletes, coaches, and families – by now everyone should be starting to feel like family.
- Advertise your March Break Camp if you plan to hold one.

#### **Week 6:**

- Meet with Coaches to review reports and plan Club Championships.
- Prepare for next week's Slopestyle event.

#### **Week 7:**

- Prepare Saturday and have a Big Air AM and Slopestyle PM event Sunday.
- Results are posted – no medals – recognize special efforts with cheers – throw out draw prizes at wrap up.

#### **Week 8:**

- Saturday or Sunday visit or host a neighboring club for a 1-day Halfpipe clinic/fun event (depending on distance – ideally not an overnight trip)

#### **Week 9:**

- Prepare for club champs and have athletes prep runs
- Coaches do final season goal review/set next year's goals

#### **Week 10:**

- Club Championships Big Air, Moguls, Slopestyle events – run in stations with 2-3 judges at each so kids don't have to stand around. Medals are awarded at season wrap party and coach, volunteer and athlete recognition celebration (May be in conjunction with Jumps and Bumps recognition/Wings ceremony)

### **Freestylerz Seasonal and Technical Planning Resource:**

The Freestylerz program introduces athletes to the structured and goal oriented training of competitive sport. Although competition is introduced at this stage; priority must be given to the improvement and development of basic movement skills through progressive seasonal planning.

The seasonal planning of training is broken into phases throughout the year, which progressively prepares the skier for the competitive season (OR just the skill development on-snow season).



As skiers move to year-round training the phases will shift and it is the coaches job to identify what the needs of their athletes and plan an appropriate program.

Below you will see what each phase is named, a recommended duration of each phase and the relative skill objectives. There are 4 phases of the year – these are described below for a Freestyle athlete who is training in the summer, and likely training inverts at a water ramp or air bag. This would be a typical plan for a more advanced Freestylerz athlete who is competing at Club, regional or possibly Provincial level and is likely 11 years plus.

- **Preparation:** Generally, May through August, approximately 15 -18 weeks.
- **Specific Preparation:** Generally, September through December, approximately 15 - 18 weeks.
- **Competition:** Generally, January through March for 4 - 8 weeks depends on number and schedule of competitions
- **Transition:** Generally, April for 4 weeks

Notes on Training that is supplementary to on-snow at the Learn-To-Train stage.

### Spring/Summer (Apr-Aug)

Note: April can be an optimal time if snow is available to have athletes accelerate skills in short camp sessions in soft snow conditions and sunny skies, if athletes do not have other sport commitments.

- Trampoline Sessions\* (recommended 20 hrs coached w. certified coach/ 200 hours practice per year- should prepare for on ski skills)
- Water Ramp/Air Bag Camps (volume based on skills goals plan for 200 jumps on water and/or airbag to master an invert skill)
- Dryland Training\*\* (2-4 per week) - Capabilities to develop and monitor include:
  - Flexibility – L2T is critical phase for development
  - Stamina developed through games like soccer, rock climbing,
  - Strength through own body exercises e.g. squats with good form, o Speed/Agility through ladder training etc,
- Includes other Sports balance and edging sports like ice and in-line skating, and other acrobatics sports are effective cross training)
- Summer Glacier Camps

### Fall (Sep-Nov)

- Trampoline sessions\*
- Dryland Training
- Other Sports and Acrobatic Programs:



- FREESTYLE CANADA air 1-4 and Gymnastics Canada Trampoline place a high value on quality basic skills and acrobatic literacy in traditional and off-axis skills. Most clubs will need to set up gymnastics /freestyle cross coaching to access coach expertise to teach all Air 1 and 2 skills.

It is always great to access an expert in fitness for athletes who are approaching and in puberty to help your club set up a fitness program with your athletes. As well the NCCP courses Developing Athletic Abilities (DAA), and Fundamental Movement Skills will help your coaches create a basic training program that is fun and helps build physical literacy in your young skiers.

### **Freestylarz Competitions and Events:**

During the Winter Season the Freestylarz program will align with a number of Freestyle clinics, competitions and workshops. Generally these will range from club – interclub- provincial level events. Across Canada these may include:

- Try Freestyle - Special Camps - Sapling Sessions - Christmas Camps - Santa's
- Workshop
- Inter/IntraClub Competitions/Superyouth Events/Regional Series
- Timber Tour/Provincials\*
- Junior Nationals\*

\*Where the athletes are prepared for the level of competition/courses.

### **FREESTYLE CANADA Guiding Principles for Freestylarz/Learn-to-Train Competitions:**

When planning and preparing for competitions for Freestylarz think about the following recommended guidelines:

- Include Big Air /Acrobatics events with appropriate sites and focus on acrobatics quality of air including:
  - balanced take-off with lift (extension on take-off rather than collapse) control of rotations and spins and ability to make adjustments in the air, spins in both directions
  - creating appropriate 'form' e.g. hold grabs, tuck position, performance with style.
- Wherever possible, focus on rewarding skill quality and progression rather than just the highest overall scores.
- Using results for ranking (RPA) and competitive Team selections are not appropriate for this stage

FREESTYLE CANADA is working with its members to develop better competition formats for Learn-to-Train Stage athletes. Here is a sample of an ideal competition season plan for a Freestylarz athlete.

Limit competitions to 3 snow starts – 1 per month with event formats tailored to support skill development seasonal plan for example:



- Jan – Skills tests run in combination with fun Slopestyle/Moguls – test includes criteria is:

## **Skiing**

Moguls turn timing in wave tank Box/Rails positioning

## **Air Take-off**

- Feb. Formats focus on testing air basic skills from Fz Goal Book (good take-off, with lift, spin both directions, front and back tuck + athlete fun skills)
- March – combined event Big Air, Slopestyle, Moguls – criteria stays consistent with skills tests
- Aug. Water ramp and/or tramp events – criteria on well-rounded Fz skills.

Use of technology/ equipment and resources to hold events should be lowered for ease of delivery by new officials

Consider running two tiers Fz1/Fz2 focusing on Entry level, and Exit skill benchmarks.

## **Freestylarz Coach Training Requirements**

The Supercoach program has been designed to prepare athletes for success at the Learn-to-Train Stage. FREESTYLE CANADA does not mandate that every Freestylarz coach is a certified Supercoach – but expects that clubs are working with their coaches towards that goal!

Coaches must be Club Coach trained to meet FREESTYLE CANADA insurance and sanction requirements, the club coach course covers the introduction to basic skills, risk management, and the introduction to teaching and leading children. The Club Coach skills are ideally taught to athletes in the Jumps and Bumps program, but often will continue to be taught and mastered through Freestylarz.

Here is a description of the Supercoach courses required to teach Freestylarz skills.

**Technical Ski Module (TSM) 1 Freeskiing** – every FREESTYLE CANADA Club Coach should take this action packed 2-day course on developing good stance and balance, and carving turns.

**TSM 2 Moguls** – National Team coaches developed this 2-day course to teach pressure control and turn timing in the wave tank and moguls that dramatically improve mogul skiing skills in young athletes and lead to long term success.

**Park and Halfpipe** – This 3-day module teaches quality mechanics for take-offs and landings, spinning, grabs, rails and riding halfpipe. This offers FREESTYLE CANADA skiers a serious advantage in safety and competition over skiers and coaches who are self-taught.



Certification in Air 1-4 Coach courses is mandatory to coach athletes doing inverts on trampolines, airbags, and snow.

**Air 1&2 Acrobatics on Trampoline** – high quality entry-level skills up to spinning inverts

**Air 3 A&B Water Ramp & Air Bag** – safely transferring spinning and single flip acrobatic skills onto skis.

**Air 4 A&B Acrobatics on Snow** – transferring skills into widely variable snow environments and ensuring athletes are confident and competent to succeed.