

SNOWSPORT ENGLAND CROSS COUNTRY COACHING AWARD SCHEME: LEVEL 3 CROSS-COUNTRY COACH

AWARD SUMMARY

The Level 3 Coach Award is gained on successful completion of an approved Level 3 training and assessment course, led by an appointed Level 4 Coach who has qualified as a Senior Tutor. This award qualifies instructors to work on snow and on roller skis with skiers at all levels to advanced, including those seeking further specialisation, such as aspirant Level 1 and 2 Instructors themselves.

A Level 3 Coach will demonstrate a high level of understanding of all aspects of the sport. He/she is also expected to be able to fulfil a responsible and positive role within his or her club or organisation. Level 3 Coaches will have an in-depth knowledge of both skiing and coaching skills, and significant coaching experience on both snow and roller skis. They will have the ability to play a role in the long-term development of their skiers and to undertake, if desired, the necessary training to become a Tutor with responsibility for instructing and assessing other Instructors.

A Level 3 Coach is able to synthesise knowledge from a variety of sources and apply it to their coaching, enabling them to make adjustments to their session plans and modify them to respond to any challenge.

The Level 3 Coach will be a strong, versatile and adaptable skier and will demonstrate high levels of competence in the performance of the exercises required for assessment.

Level 3 Training and Assessment Course

The Level 3 Award is gained on successful completion of an SSE approved on-snow programme of 6 days (or 42 hours) training and assessment on a continuous or modular basis. It is a prerequisite for participating aspirants for this Award that they hold a Level 2 Instructor Award, or they are deemed to be of an equivalent standard. They must have logged 40 hours of cross-country instructional experience, including a minimum of 10 hours each for on snow and roller skis. Holders of equivalent awards may apply to the awarding body for accreditation of a qualification.

The training course covers the fundamentals and more detailed aspects of coaching and further learning, working with advanced skiers including those seeking to work towards a role in coaching.

The course will cover:

- The candidate's own skiing performance
- Details of working with novice to advanced skiers, including planning and delivering safe and enjoyable sessions which provide the basis for further progress,
- planning sessions taking into account short, medium and long-term goals
- planning and delivery of weekend and week-long courses.



Prerequisites for accreditation

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In order to qualify for the award and, apart from the assessment stage, candidates must:

- be at least 18 years old,
- be a qualified On-snow Level 2 Cross-country Instructor, be registered with Snowsport England
- have had a minimum of 40 hours' cross-country skiing instructional experience recorded in their log book, at least 10 hours each on snow and on roller skis
- complete a coaching portfolio which shows the candidate's work with skiers over a period of several months,
- attainment of an appropriate level on both snow and roller skis in a relevant Proficiency Award Scheme, e.g. 5 star in the SE Scheme.

Assessment for Level 3 accreditation

The assessment part of the coaching takes place after the training phase of the 10-day programme.

- The process will include the following:
- coaching assignment: the candidate will be asked to coach his/her peers at their own level of skiing,
- communication assessment (presentation)
- personal skiing assessment,
- a completed logbook, showing Level 2 Instructor, the required hours of skiing instruction,
- a current First Aid certificate and current DBS cover,
- completion of a coaching portfolio.

Skiing Level 3: Advanced Skiing Techniques

Level 3 Coaches must be able to ski tracks and medium to steep slopes to demonstrate appropriate posture, consistent balance, effective movement, control of speed and of direction of travel.

Demonstrations must display an understandable, reproducible and technically accurate picture of the technical aspects of cross-country skiing suitable for all recreational skiers from novice to advanced.

The candidate will illustrate excellence in all techniques:

- Good posture
- Dynamic and, where appropriate,
- Static balance
- Good weight transfer (where relevant)
- Smooth rhythm good coordination
- Good ski/pole control and placement varied tempo according to terrain
- Bilateral skills (i.e. Be equally strong on both sides)

Skiing tasks – Level 3 Coach

Excellent performance of classic techniques, skating techniques and downhill skills appropriate to cross-country skiing, and ability to make transitions between techniques within each style is required. Awareness of recent development in both classic and skating techniques is expected. Candidates must demonstrate the following, displaying the features of skilful technique specified above:

CLASSIC	5★ Proficiency Award standard
Overall level of skiing	Makes skiing look easy with a high level of balance, agility, and relaxation on skis. Maintains technique on steep and variable terrain, at race pace and when fatigued. Able to switch lead/drive legs and techniques with seamless one phase transitions; to remain in tracks on fast downhills and corners. Can demonstrate ski techniques by skiing slowly with well defined movements and angles and minimal tension through the body. Able to break techniques down into phases and to stop the action at any stage.
Diagonal Stride	Fluent and dynamic two phase action with accurate controlled and smooth placement of arms poles and recovery leg.
Double Pole	Dynamic commitment of body weight to poles to generate power plus effective adaptation of technique on variable terrain, and execution of perfect one phase transitions in and out of DP technique. Able to double pole uphill by altering tempo and range of movement. Able to demonstrate both new and old school techniques.
Double Pole Kick	Double pole action as above with well timed compression and drive off kick ski and a well balanced glide phase a definite pre-loading of the kick ski and long drive from it. Able to execute on alternate kick leg and to execute one phase transitions in and out of technique from both double pole and diagonal stride. Able to alter technique according to terrain.
Exit track and change track	Fluent track change in 3 stages with correct timing of pole action and clean and committed exit from tracks, to both sides. Able to respond to sudden need to change track and to adapt to snow conditions.
Herringbone and half herringbone	Herringbone: Able to ascend steep hill steadily using inner edge of ski, with skis angled to suit gradient and ankles and knees flexed. Co-ordinated use of poles with opposite skis. Body weight over centre of skis on steep hill, also able to place each ski flat then roll onto inside edge. Half herringbone: clean step with inside ski onto central area of track, maintain effective progress in half herringbone then smoothly replace ski in loipe; avoiding herringboning on loipe; plus smooth transition to full herringbone outside loipe, then committed step back into loipe. Able to perform seamless transitions with no loss of forward momentum.
SKATE	
Overall	Makes skating look easy with a high level of balance, agility, and relaxation on skis. Maintains technique on steep and variable terrain, at race pace and when fatigued. Able to switch lead/drive legs and techniques with seamless one phase transitions. Can demonstrate ski techniques by skiing at very slow pace with well defined movements and angles and minimal tension through the body. Able to break techniques down into phases and to stop the action at any stage.
Herringbone skate	Accurate placement of skis and poles with high degree of flexion in knees and ankles and clear steps up hill. Able to change tempo and cope with varied terrain with smooth transition in and out of technique; plus ability to maintain fluency on very steep hill, and in varied snow conditions.
Skate 1	Able to step leading ski forward with smooth accurate placement to obtain instant balance on new glide ski. Able to lead with both legs; and to adapt technique and tempo according to terrain; Able to climb steep hills maintaining technique.

Skate 2	Correct timing of arms and legs: one drive of poles on each gliding leg. Symmetrical pole plants and glide phases, with body facing direction of travel. Compression and extension of body on each glide. Power clearly generated through legs by range of movement of ankles and knees while maintaining tall posture in each extension phase. Skis placed flat then edged to effect drive at conclusion of glide. Able to adapt glide phase, tempo and ski angle according to terrain plus dynamic generation of power. Able to climb medium gradients, changing tempo according to terrain
Skate 3	One symmetrical arm action for each full leg cycle. Full effective arm swing with extended glide on lead side and an active arm recovery in time with recovery leg. Body compresses on lead side with pole plant, and extends upwards on recovery side so only one extension phase per full leg cycle. High degree of ankle and knee flexion, and compression to begin drive, giving a definite drive off each leg with placement of flat glide ski plus dynamic recovery and extended glide on non-lead side. Able to lead on each side, and to adapt tempo and patterns of glide to suit the terrain and snow conditions; and to maintain skate 3 up and down hill. Able to carry out with symmetrical and asymmetrical pole recovery before symmetrical plant.
Free Skate	Extended glide on both skis with varied body position. Able to use arms both in synch with leg action and held static and to ski effectively in both low and upright stance, and up and downhill..
Turns and braking	
Overall	Excellent posture maintained throughout, adapting seamlessly to changes of speed direction and power. Able to corner at speed without losing forward momentum. Able to use poles effectively in time with turns.
Skate turn	Both skis edged, with fast foot movements, and body in state of dynamic balance with centre of gravity falling inside the position of both feet. Effective use of poles to add power and to balance, plus ability to ski high-speed figure-of-eight turns and to skate-turn both up and down hill. Able to execute with and without the use of poles and to vary angle of ski placement.
Step turn	Able to maintain step turns at fast pace and downhill, with seamless transition into skate turn.
Side step on hill	On steep hill: Able to side step up and down, with slight lowering of body posture plus appropriate angulation of body relative to hill, with effective use of edges. Positive lift and placement of inside ski with effective weight transfer and smooth recovery of other ski and pole, maintaining smooth and effective movement. Place inside pole up slope for stability and be able to carry this out cleanly in various snow conditions (deep/icy/uneven).
Kick turn	Stable kick turns (facing downhill) on steep hill, to either side. Accurate placement of skis and effective use of poles and edges for support and in varied snow conditions (deep/icy/uneven); also able to execute on hill without poles.
Half snowplough	Able to use half snowplough to control speed and stop on steep hill. Controlled placement of plough ski out of track and replacement in track with appropriate flexion and effective pressuring. Poles held in safe position. Able to execute on both sides, to use in varied snow conditions and to execute hard stop on request.
Snowplough glide and brake	Good relaxed and effective position. Able to use snowplough to control speed on steep slope, to stop at predetermined place and to execute effectively in varied snow conditions (groomed, soft).
Snowplough turns	Fluent turns with extension of body before turn, outer foot rotated in direction of travel, compression of legs basic edge control; able to link smooth, rounded turns, all in varied snow conditions
Stem turns (4★ and 5★)	Clear stem turns with outer leg driving the turn and inner leg brought cleanly in to parallel position by end of turn, finishing in traverse position. Able to execute to either side and in varied snow conditions, and to carry out a flowing sequence of left and right turns.

Traverse with step up stop	Stable position with head and shoulders facing downhill, upper ski slightly forward; lower ski weighted. Traverse steep slope, with skis making clearly edged parallel tracks. Able to stop by stepping up hill to either side, holding line and posture on steep slopes. Step up stop controlled and smooth with balance held throughout. Able to execute in variable snow conditions.
Emergency stop	“Hockey stop” from parallel, with both skis cleanly brought round and edged. Able to execute to either side, with and without use of poles.
Roller ski snowplough (2★ & 3★); stepping snowplough (4★ and 5★)	Snowplough: Able to slow skis on a moderate slope. Pushing out the rear of the roller skis maintaining a flat ski at all times. Ski poles must be in a safe position, and not used to aid the slowing of the skis. Tips of skis must be closer than tails, overall wide stance is acceptable. Stepping snowplough: on flat or gently sloping ground stepping alternately with skis angled as for snowplough, maintaining strong angulation of knees and ankles to clearly slow skis within a few step. Poles held in safe position.

Level 3 Coaching

Level 3 Coaches will demonstrate a wide range of understanding, from a variety of sources. They will have sufficient experience and skill (on both snow and roller skis) to be an effective coach for skiers ranging from novice to advanced and for skiers wishing to specialise, including those wishing to become instructors and coaches. An extensive understanding of how to manage the learning environment and safety aspects of groups of different sizes, ages and fitness levels is needed. The candidate should also understand the issues of working long-term with individual skiers and groups, and the specific aspects of working with children.

The Level 3 Coach will be assessed by a Senior Tutor in delivering a practical coaching session with their peers at their own level of skiing and through discussion and questioning. This will include video analysis of a group and presentation/analysis to the group.

Level 3 Communication

The candidate will also deliver a structured presentation to a group, with or without visual aids (as determined by assessor). This will cover a ski related topic (eg equipment selection and sizing; ski care and waxing; basic physical requirements for cross country skiing (not racing); group management; incident management; dealing with snow conditions and weather)

Underpinning Knowledge

Knowledge requirements for Level 3 Coaches reflect an in-depth awareness of specific terms and concepts, and an ability to use these concepts in sessions for beginners through to advanced skiers. The Level 3 Coach will be able to think creatively and respond to the needs of their skiers. The Level 3 Coach will be able to:

Background

- Define and explain skiing and coaching terminology, identify equipment needs for all skiers,
- Advise skiers on how their equipment choices might influence their performance, discuss clothing choice and related safety issues,
- Show awareness of weather considerations and navigation appropriate to advanced cross-country skiers,
- Show knowledge and understanding of advanced fitness training,
- Show ability in and understanding of equipment maintenance and waxing techniques for all skiers from novice to advanced.

Movement Analysis

- Identify the components of good skiing,
- Recognise general movement patterns found among all skiers to advanced level,
- Identify desired outcomes of all types of skiing situations within the range of operations of the level 3 award,
- List exercises and tasks which address student needs, the equipment being used, terrain options, etc.,
- Discuss posture, appropriate movement and balance, identify effective movements for all groups of skiers,
- Understand detailed skiing movements involving posture, balance, and weight transfer, coach an appropriate blend of these movements suited to the needs of intermediate and advanced skiers,
- Create an activity/task list appropriate to the needs of these skiers,
- Plan a series of sessions to develop their skiers in relation to short, medium and long-term goals.

Session Delivery

When dealing with all levels of skier from novice to advanced:

- Teach the skiing public from novice to advanced and provide solid foundations for further learning,
- Show ability to give appropriate feedback, encouragement and motivation, including the use of audio-visual equipment,
- demonstrate ability to develop a relationship of trust between coach and students, identify learning styles and preferences and discuss examples of use in a lesson, understand the needs of individual skiers and develop a pathway for all levels, handle a group based on group energy levels, conditions, safety and lesson content,
- understand how to create an appropriate learning environment, and how to incorporate this knowledge into sessions maximising opportunities for safety, enjoyment and further learning,
- identify the components of good skiing,

- understand the needs of specific groups of skiers,
- be self-critical, open to constructive feedback, and modify sessions based on the needs of the skiers,
- be able to self-assess the effectiveness of their session, demonstrate ability to assess Proficiency Awards where available.

Revalidation

All Level 3 coaches are required to attend an approved SSE refresher course at least once every three years (either on snow or roller skis). This is to keep them abreast of the latest developments in both skiing and coaching techniques.

Revalidation will comprise:

- Provision by the Senior Tutor of a refresher on coaching methodology
- Demonstration by Instructor of appropriate technical ability and awareness of up to date coaching methods