



SS Freestyle Group Management Protocol

Managing groups, especially youth at a ski area or in a gymnasium environment, is challenging. This protocol is a tool to help SS Freestyle Coaches implement Fun, Safe, and Quality Learning experiences for its members.

Before you Start:

- Learn as much about your group and the children / athletes in it
- Know your terrain and spaces
- Know your lesson inside and out. But be flexible.

Starting the Session - In 30 -45 second window be prepared to deliver these points every session.

- Your state - be energized
- Expectations - state clear expectations for behaviour
- Lesson purpose – the focus of today
- Share the schedule and where you will be skiing. If this is trampoline you must say when tramp switches are and key elements of the lesson.
- At the end of you quick speech start a personal connection – What’s your favorite? Would you rather?

Lesson time – A time to flow!

- *Respect* - use their names and notice things about the individuals. Make eye contact.
- “You da the boss” - Be a kid and have fun. But wear your coaches (adult) hat when need.
- *Walk the walk... don’t talk* - Be very clear and concise with your instructions. Use short sentences and be active. Have the children/athlete do what your saying at the same time your doing it. Don’t let them lean on their poles or be distracted while you are talking. Share demonstrating duties with kids often. If they practice what you are teaching instead of you talking about it they will get better, use energy, be more focused, have more fun and get a quality learning experience.
- *Routines* – Keep some structure. Surprisingly having chaos in a class does not build confidence. Kids venturing off and doing their own thing doesn’t help learning. Kids familiar with a routine listen and understand better.
- *Transitions* – Have clear signals for groups to stop and listen. Do countdowns and make it fun. Ie. “Everyone line-up smallest to tallest...GO!”
- *Feedback* – make it positive, specific and immediate. “Sandwich” or “two stokes and a fix”.



How to prevent poor Behaviour:

- Reward good behaviour – it teaches what is right and makes kids feel good
- Keep moving forward at an appropriate pace.
- Stay with in the mental challenge zone so kids don't get bored or overwhelmed
- Provide breaks as needed
- Teach a variety of styles

Use these tactics to deal with unwanted behaviour if it occurs:

- Be calm; Don't take it personally; Be a model of good behaviour
- Make the behaviour unacceptable, not the person
- *Time out* – the purpose of a time out is to have a private conversation with a person who is displaying unwanted behaviour in a group setting. Simply say we need to have a quick chat privately. Ask the group to practice a safe skill within a safe distance of you while you do this. The conversation should not take place in front of others. The child misbehaving can wait until the time is appropriate for you to have the conversation.
- Have a plan to proceed with issues should they escalate. Call the program leader and/or the parent/guardian.

Managing groups is like practicing any other coaching or sport skill. It takes practice. It is a very important skill to have so coaches should come ready to practice group management techniques every session. Often the energy it takes to manage groups is more than the actual physical components of a lesson or session. If you are stumped always ask for help from others in the club.

Reference:

This information available in this protocol is referenced from the Fundamentalz Coaching course. All coaches should have the on-line pre-course to teach the non-technical skills required to implement fun, safe and quality learning experiences. Fundamentalz online course:

<https://www.freestylecanada.ski/en/resources/coaching/funz/>

Prepared by:

Wade Garrod, Program Director

SS Freestyle