

Alpine Course Setting



For this discussion

- Typically talking about a moderate pitch
- Safe venue with protection in place top to bottom.
- Good snow preparation
- Good visibility

What is a good course?

- Safe and legal
- Set to both the appropriate age class and ability
- Uses the hill and its natural features to make it fun and exciting
- Create appropriate challenges to separate the field
- Set variation, especially in multi day events

Know the Rules

- U12
 - SL 6 to 10m
 - GS 15 to 22m
- U14
 - SL 6 to 10m
 - GS 15 to 25m
- U16
 - SL 6 to 12m
 - GS 15 to 27m
- U18 and over
 - SL 6 to 13m
 - GS 11-15% of Vertical Drop

Know Reality

- What type of courses do we usually see at the races 90% of the time?
- U12
 - SL 10m
 - GS 20 to 22m
- U14
 - SL 9 to 10m
 - GS 23 to 24m+
- U16
 - SL 9 to 12m
 - GS 25 to 27m +
- U18 and over
 - SL 10 to 13m
 - GS 11% more often than not

Course Setting and Equipment (GS)

- U14 tend to ski on 17-21m skis
- U16 tend to ski GS on 21-27m skis
- U18 FIS athletes ski on 30 or 35m GS skis
- Nor-Am *Frank Kebble set 8m SL because all courses were the same
- WC GS Val d' Isere 17m turns with a 23m average. (Alta Badia and Kranjska Gora)
- Video of Henrik Kristofferson, what is already possible on the 35m skis

Variation

- Variation in course setting
 - Having a plan and creating a progression
 - In 2012 Rolf and I decided to ski 12 days of GS prep all under 22m for our U16 and FIS Boys.
 - Willingness to teach through course setting
 - Educate the athlete before they see the course

This course is not possible

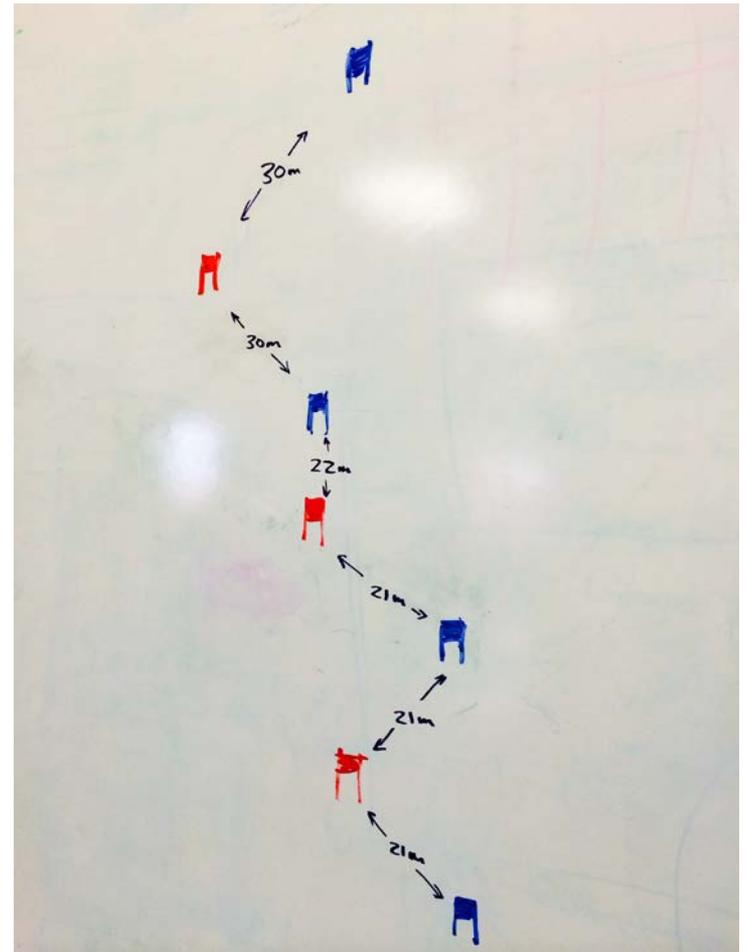
- Or is it?
- 99% DNF rate, then comes along... Joe Pro
- Making it look so easy. Reassuring yourself as a coach that the other kids can do it.
- Krause GS Zell am See

This course sucks

- Coaches spend too much time making sure their athletes feel good
- As soon as coaches try to set off the norm, other coaches and athletes complain
- Often the most productive days happen when simply finishing the course becomes the goal
- Build it into the progressions

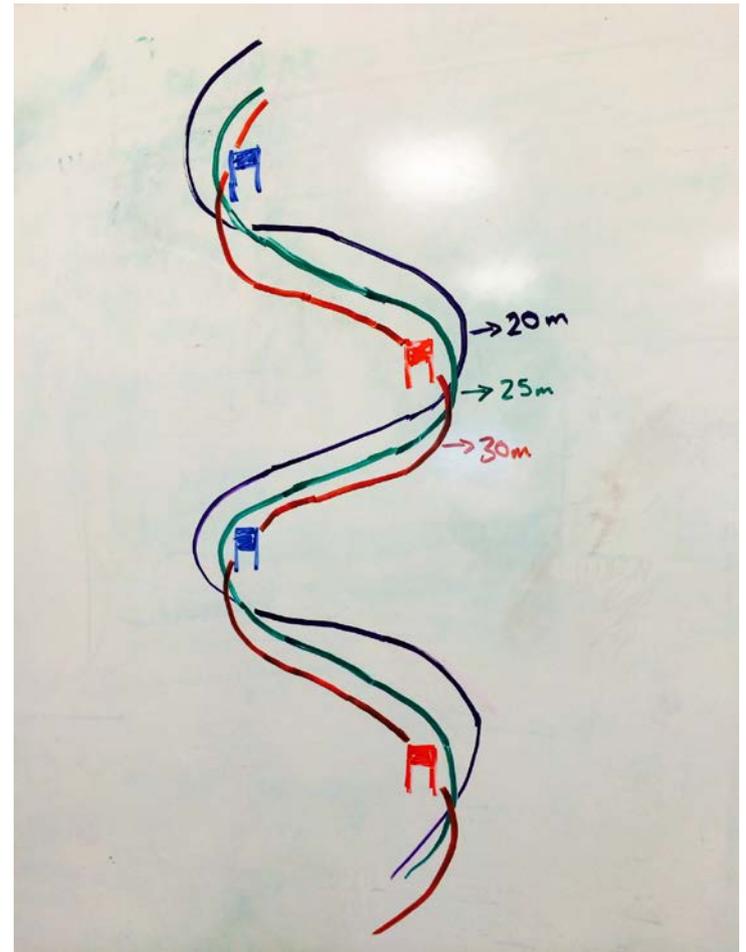
Communicate the plan

- Force the athlete into difficult rhythm changes with speed!
- Do they have the inspection skills to see this?
- Do they have the adaptation skills to change speed and tempo?



Where is the turn

- 30m GS – where is the turn
- 25m GS – where is the turn
- 20m GS – where is the turn
- Athletes will get away with whatever they can, can you force them on a different line through course setting?



Max distance training (the good)

- Develop comfort at speed
- Give the athlete time to develop movements
- Easily bring shape and direction to the gate
- Movement over terrain is forgiving
- Teaches athletes to let it go, let it rip, drive the turn deep and carry speed

Max distance training (the bad)

- If the athlete never has to struggle to stay on line or stay in the course, they will not learn tactics or how to stand on a ski with power
- The athlete can get away with a low line, but may be grinding away speed
- The athlete can ride the edge back and inside without penalty
- The athlete does not need to inspect, just let it rip

Minimum distance training (the good)

- Forces the athletes up and over their skis
- Forces the athlete to bring shape and direction to the gate
- Teaches the athlete to stand on their skis with power
- In many cases forces a pole plant to release the edge and start a new turn



Quick Quick Quick

- Coaches tend to set quick
- Athletes tend to inspect quick
- All in an effort to get started as quick as possible and get in as many runs as possible

Teach them to inspect what you set.

distance

rhythm changes

terrain changes

Terrain Changes

- Where to put the gate?
 - Before the roll
 - On the roll
 - After the roll
- What happens after the roll?
 - Set open or tight
 - Set offset or direct
- What are you trying to teach?
- It should not always be about setting something that is easy to finish.

Effects of Terrain Changes

Classic easy terrain change

- Go direct
- Hips back
- Lean in
- Athlete may not make any adaptation at all

Infamous difficult changes

- Bring shape
- Hips up
- Level up
- Athlete fully focused and attentive

Ligety



SL Recalibration

Need to be fast

- Timer for 12 gates in the fall line
- Build speed in short sections
- Practice starts
- Duel courses
- Compressed sets for quickness
- Push the line
- Show them real speed up close! (Cochrans)

Need to finish

- First, make finishing important to the athlete. Not finishing is not OK!
- Set long even rhythm sections on easy terrain
- Require a pole plant and quiet upper body
- Be sure they understand simple tactics
- Make them hike
- Set really difficult rhythm changes and demand finishing
- 1000 gate days with an emphasis on finishing

SL as a tool for teaching

- Upper body discipline
- Pole plant
- Tactics
- 4-6m sets with brushes or stubbys
- Poles and no poles (SWE Video)
- 1m hop turn course above start



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Wrapping it up.

- Variation is good, but takes planning
- Communicate your plan to your coaches and athletes
- Be committed to your plan
- Prepare your athletes for anything
- Use course setting as an important tool for coaching!