

2008-2009

Adult Program 18+

NATURAL FITNESS LAB.COM

Trail Running & Nordic Skiing

applied strength, cardiovascular conditioning and power-endurance...



MENTOR-COACHING PHILOSOPHY...

Natural Fitness, in its purist form, is rooted in “clean oxygen fed sport.” It employs a wide-spectrum of skills and range-of-motion, while integrating core strength through physical literacy

This is your opportunity to follow the most progressive path for excellence. Let us share some of our thoughts on mentor-coaching.

"Take the fast-track for long-term athletic development."

Having returned from years of racing internationally, we were discouraged to find skiers still being taught technique and training methods, which elite racers had discarded years previously. Even today, so much of what we hear on the street is decades behind.

During our own early development phases, we

learnt pragmatic lessons that lead to outstanding results, but we also spend many years floundering, doing things wrong and following paths that lead nowhere; practicing contrived drills created for their own sake, just wasting time and developing bad habits. We trained and trained but not always smartly.

Ski skating evolved, while we were on the circuit. Then, the athletes taught themselves simply because there were no teachers - and it took a long time. Nowadays, you don't need to go it alone. Study the sport. The same goes for trail running. Few, guides, books or DVDs, or coaches exist. But it is a highly technical sport.

An athletic person is only able to fully-apply their fitness attributes once they can master the

basics of technique. First they must be shown, otherwise, skiing can be an exercise in creative snow removal, and trail running a battle against gravity. Too often coaches try to talk people into becoming good skiers or runners, instead of showing them! Similarly, watching tapes of past Olympics is not the fastest way to learn.

You can spend a lifetime observing and never catch-on, unless someone, who has been there, can recreate the right experience with you. Creates the conditions for success and fosters a positive social support group.

"When you don't know the way, you'll spend most of your time lost."

So much of what is happening in a sports motion, cannot be seen.

Many instructors are looking for good students, as much as you may be looking for good instruction. If you are not serious about learning to move proficiently and develop both your mind and body, then you don't need good coach.

Many students seek certified instructors at a given level, or coaches that have the performances of athletes on their resume by proxy. These formal qualifications give a measure of assurance that your instructor meets certain minimal theory but do not guarantee the ability to mentor or create an instructional package that works a high percentage of time. There needs to be a connection between an athlete and their coach, trust in the coach and trust in the plan.

But a discerning student with clear performance goals would look further: The real teaching advantage is derived from a combination of elite personal skiing attributes, streamlined pedagogy, well articulated methods, supporting published documentation, kinesthetic empathy, demonstrable performance and superior communications skills.

Good teachers are not passive observers, but active participants and mentors in nordic skiing. Similarly, a successful athlete cannot be passive. They must actively communicate with the coach in a productive manner, and always be excited about training. When they are not skiing or running, both coach and athlete are studying, playing, training or racing.

An instructor/coach should have the courage of their convictions to: contribute to sports manuals, published books, and produce materials for the sport.

They should be able to stand behind an applied methodology that has withstood public scrutiny for a time and achieved best consensus to date, on a unified approach to technique and training. An instructor should be confident but not arrogant nor dismissive. They need to fully understand alternative views on technique,

training or pedagogy, and be able to explain the nuances, in all fairness, to their students. And remain open-minded.

An instructor should be intimately familiar with the learning process and understand what stages each student has to go through. They ought to know the answers before the questions are asked, because they have been there, done that. There is no problem that they should not have seen resolved; first for themselves and then for their students.

The reality is that there needs to be a serious commitment to practice on your part. An instructor should teach their students key aspects of the sport and guarantee to shorten their learning curve to give them the edge.



First and foremost, instruction can save you years of development effort in one session, by steering you clear of what not to do, and point your technique in the right direction - guaranteeing superior results. Although, residual old-school rhetoric persists, as it did in early days of skate skiing, instruction should not be bound to a particular doctrine. You should learn the most progressive technique and training available.

You should train in the most optimal fashion, with a few key, purposeful and high-value drills. You should become "ruthlessly efficient" in your methods. Your time is valuable. Instruction should make the best use of your time; telling you precisely what you want and need to know. Instruction should make the connection

between solid biomechanical principles and a holistic approach to technique.

Instruction should not only tell you how it should look, but show you; using imagery to provoke the correct feeling and impart the secrets of execution drawn from real experience; knowledge that you should simply cannot get from a passive observer (relying on and critiquing taped race footage).

The explanations should be tailored to what interests you. Instruction should explain precisely how you could get there from here, using clear progressions and meaningful exercises in an open learning approach. You should be shown how to achieve: perfect form, weight-shift, increased dynamic range, and balance; to apply your force, create power and

move efficiently. Video analysis should provide objective and immediate feedback, supported by expert commentary and side-by side visual comparison with elite athletes and those along a similar development cycle.

You will gain confidence in your technique, training and performance because you have been mentored along a clear path to achieving those goals.

