



BSS ALPINE DEVELOPMENT GROUP

in conjunction with

SNOWSPORT ENGLAND ALPINE SQUADS

SNOWSPORT SCOTLAND ALPINE ACADEMIES

and

SNOWSPORT WALES

Update - February 2015

FOREWORD

The formation of the BSS Alpine Development Group and its co-ordination and delivery with the squad systems of Snowsport Scotland, Snowsport England and Snowsport Wales are designed to provide a co-ordinated approach to the development of Alpine athletes within the British system from U16 through to U21. The main purposes of this initiative are to help prepare our U16 athletes properly for the challenges of FIS racing and to help prepare older athletes for the potential of going full time.

BSS and all three Home Nations believe that in recent years there has been a substantial expansion in the numbers of young Alpine athletes who are both committed and impressive. This is a tribute to the hard work of a number of clubs and academies. The purpose of the project is to support and reinforce the work of these clubs and academies in two main areas:

- Preparing U16 athletes properly for the challenges of FIS racing.
- Preparing older athletes for the potential of going full time.

The three main changes that this initiative is meant to deliver are:

- A significantly clearer approach to entry levels
- A significant change in emphasis to the criteria for remaining in programmes
- The ongoing development of a co-ordinated syllabus designed to help U16 athletes prepare properly for FIS racing and to help older athletes prepare properly for the prospect of going full time.

The BSS Alpine Development Group and all three Home Nations squad systems should act as a stepping stone to membership of the Delancey British Senior, U21 and U18 Alpine squads. Details of the Delancey British Alpine squads are covered in the "Alpine Selection Policies for 2015-16" document published on the BSS website.

OBJECTIVES OF BSS

It may be useful to understand the project in the context of the three main Objectives of BSS. Performance pathways in Alpine are envisaged in the third of those three Objectives.

The constitution of BSS lays out three Objectives. They are included in Section 4 and read as follows:

4.1.1 develop and financially support programmes for athletes who have the potential to compete successfully at Continental Cup, World Cup, World Junior Championship, World Championship and Olympic levels in all snowsport disciplines;

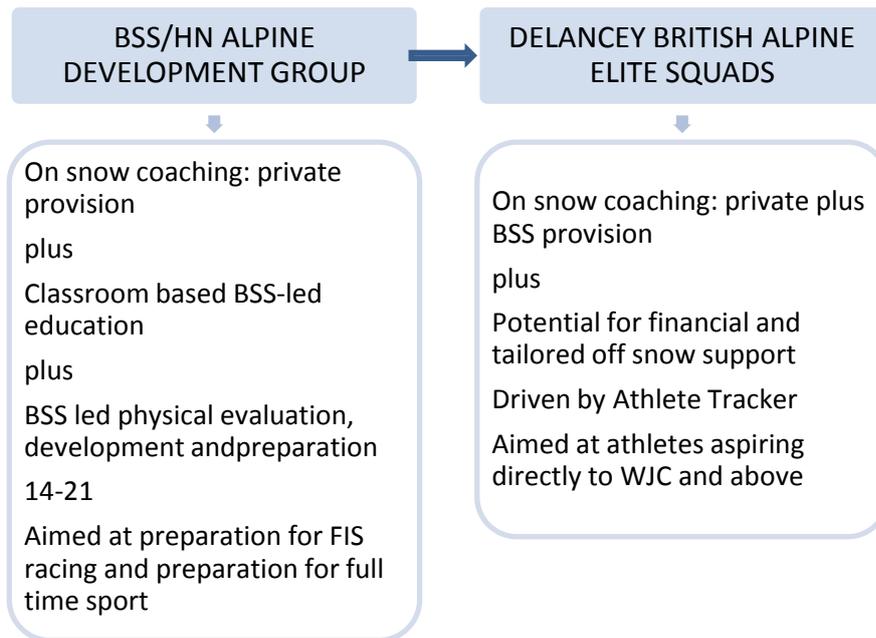
4.1.2 support and promote an increase in the level of participation in competitive snowsport through engagement and partnership with the Home Nation Snowsport Bodies and Members; and

4.1.3 create performance pathways for the most talented British athletes, whereby such athletes can attain their personal best.

The BSS Alpine Development Group Project is aimed at fulfilling the first part of the third of these Objectives.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BSS ALPINE PERFORMANCE PATHWAY

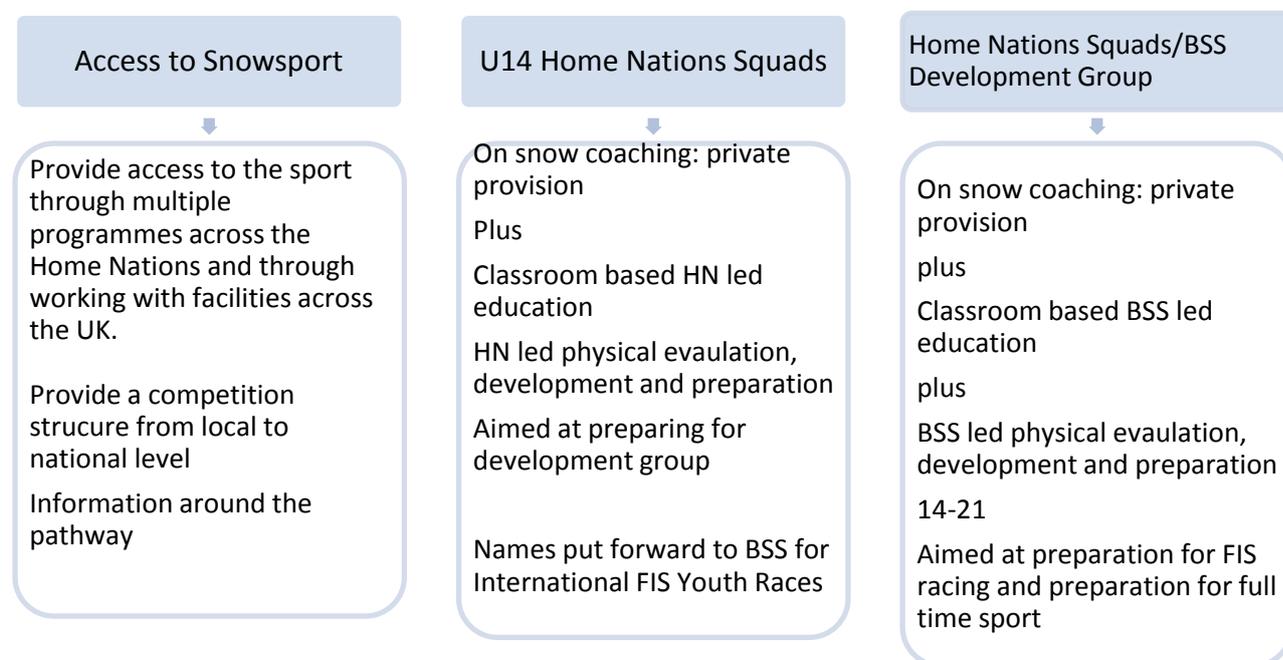
The following graphic is meant to give a summary of the two parts of the intended BSS Alpine performance pathway. BSS involvement in this project will be led by the Alpine Business Group.



CONTEXT OF THE HOME NATIONS PATHWAYS

It may also be useful to understand how this project fits into the pathways of the Home Nations.

CONTEXT OF HOME NATIONS TALENT PATHWAYS



CONTENTS

The balance of this document covers an outline of the anticipated programme and is organised in the following sections:

1. Introduction
2. Schedules of YOB and programme
3. Structure of Weekends, Scale of Programme and Coaching Qualifications
4. Discussion of Subject Areas
5. Gym Assessment and Updated ACE programme
6. Skills Quest
7. Recap of Entry and Retention Criteria
8. BSS CIT Squad
9. BSS U16 International Racing

INTRODUCTION

This document focuses on the structure and outline of the syllabus. The intention is to deliver this syllabus over three weekends per year. Each of these weekends will consist of three sessions. The expectation is that each year one set of these weekends will be hosted by Snowsport Scotland and one set of these weekends will be hosted by Snowsport England, in conjunction with their respective squad systems. BSS will work with the Home Nations in an effort to produce scheduling which will allow some flexibility for athletes. It is expected that Snowsport Wales athletes who meet the selection criteria will attend weekends hosted by either Snowsport Scotland or by Snowsport England.

Readers should acknowledge that parts of this syllabus are still in draft form. BSS and the Home Nations expect to receive significant feedback as this project gets underway and all parties assume they will be able to improve the project significantly with the benefit of experience. Where appropriate changes will be made in the future either before or after the project has been launched.

Any comments or queries should be addressed to Tony Willis at bss@teambss.org.uk, Ross Gardner at ross@snowsportsotland.org, Tim Fawke/Jo Ryding at alpinesquad@snowsportengland.org.uk or Robin Kellen at robin@snowsportwales.net.

There will be significant costs associated with this programme and they will be passed on to parents and athletes. These are currently expected to be of the order of £200 per year plus any costs of slope time, and will be finalised by early April.

2015 programme dates are expected to be as follows. Precise details and locations will be communicated over the next ten days.

Weekend 1: April/May

Weekend 2: June/September

Weekend 3: September/November

SCHEDULES OF YOB AND PROGRAMME

The scope of the programme includes U16s all the way up to U21s. That covers seven years of birth and three distinct FIS age groups. We expect to conduct all of the sessions in three separate groups split by the FIS age groups. The following table lays out the structure of how BSS currently expects the syllabus will be delivered for the coming four years.

Calendar Year	YOBs	Syllabus Year
2015	2000 and 2001	U16 Syllabus Year A
	1998 and 1999	U18 Syllabus Year A
	1995, 1996 and 1997	U21 Syllabus Year A
2016	2001 and 2002	U16 Syllabus Year B
	1999 and 2000	U18 Syllabus Year B
	1996, 1997 and 1998	U21 Syllabus Year B
2017	2002 and 2003	U16 Syllabus Year A
	2000 and 2001	U18 Syllabus Year A
	1997, 1998 and 1999	U21 Syllabus Year C
2018	2003 and 2004	U16 Syllabus Year B
	2001 and 2002	U18 Syllabus Year B
	1998, 1999 and 2000	U21 Syllabus Year A

BSS and the Home Nations will work together to incorporate a programme for the Home Nations U14 squads alongside the BSS/HN Development Group. The content of the U14 programmes will be for each Home Nation to determine.

STRUCTURE OF WEEKENDS, SCALE OF PROGRAMME AND COACHING QUALIFICATIONS

It is currently expected that each of the three weekends will consist of three sessions:

- Saturday morning
- Saturday afternoon
- Sunday morning

This will make a total of nine sessions.

For each of the three FIS age groups there will be one allocated gym assessment session per weekend.

Two of the weekends will contain sessions committed to an assessment on an indoor snow slope or possibly a dry slope using a version of the USSA Skills Quest.

The other four sessions over the year will be designed to cover the syllabus that is outlined below.

As part of the syllabus all athletes in the programme will be expected to gain a level 2 coaching qualification. Demand from participants in the programme will be assessed and if desirable and practical courses specifically for members of the Development Group will be arranged.

We will look at arranging activities for the Saturday evening and will be led in part by athletes and parents.

We will also be looking at systems such as buddying or using programme parents and grandparents to help the athletes in the early years of the programme.

DISCUSSION OF SUBJECT AREAS

Over and above the gym assessment sessions and the Skills Quest sessions the syllabus will focus on four main areas:

- Strength & Conditioning education
- Behavioural issues
- Administrative topics including finance
- Technical skiing issues

Below there is an outline of what these main syllabus areas might include. BSS and the Home Nations anticipate that there will inevitably be some differences in the delivery from the weekends hosted in Scotland and those hosted in England. The four sections below should be taken as guidelines.

BSS Development Group and HN Squads: Strength & Conditioning

We expect that this will be the biggest single component of the classroom sessions. Most coaches think that even the best British athletes are off the pace when they arrive in FIS racing and take some time to catch up. A combination of the length of courses and the introduction of many more offset gates means that the physical challenge is sharply higher than in U16 and U14 racing. Additional factors that add to this higher physical challenge include the strength needed to cope with the deterioration in the quality of courses when over 100 or on occasion over 200 adult athletes have skied already.

In the programme hosted by Snowsport England we are expecting the first S&C session of each year to be a recap on the importance of S&C. In addition to this we are looking at four threads with one session per thread allocated for an athletes' time in each of the three FIS age groups. These four threads are expected to be:

- Nutrition
- Self-administered physiotherapy
- Periodisation of Strength training. How to make it work as well as possible.
- Periodisation of Conditioning training. How to make it work as well as possible.

BSS Development Group and HN Squads: Behaviour

There is a strong argument for all serious athletes to consider the use of sports psychology. However BSS and the Home Nations believe that this should remain an individual's choice and while there will be some advice around sports psychology here, this section of the syllabus is meant to be focussed on areas that might more normally be thought of as behavioural. BSS and the home Nations have chosen to use the four topics contained in

Level 1 of the mental skills concept pioneered by Jack Lesyk of the Ohio Center for Sports Psychology.

At U16 level there will be a session on each of:

- Motivation
- Attitude
- Goals & Commitment
- People Skills

At U18 there will be a review of each of these areas as well as a session which provides an introduction to more detailed sports psychology. At U21 this area is not expected to be a focus of the syllabus.

BSS Development Group and HN Squads: Administration

This title may do not do the range of topic justice. However BSS and Snowsport England are expecting to host a series of sessions which may include focus on the following main areas:

- The Structure of FIS racing. Categories. Points, bibs and course deterioration. How Championships, Continental Cups and WC work.
- Governance. How British Alpine racing is administered and its implications. Thoughts on how FIS is administered and its implications.
- Finance, sponsorship and media
- Various other topics. Drug testing. Medical support. Coaching opportunities. Racing and further education.

BSS Development Group and HN Squads: Technical Skiing Skills

We are currently expecting one session per year on technical skiing skills. BSS does not want to second guess the specific coaching processes that athletes and coaches undergo. However BSS does think it is valid to see evidence that significant thought is being applied to the technical aspect of our better athletes' skiing. It is hoped that parts of this part of the syllabus will be delivered by a combination of GBR's senior skiers and coaches.

GYM ASSESSMENT AND UPDDATED ACE PROGRAMME

BSS has worked in conjunction with Surrey Sports Park and others to build on the ACE programme that has been in place for the last 2-3 years. BSS remains of the view that the original ACE programme provides a worthwhile all around evaluation of an athlete's general physical capacity. However for the Development Group BSS wanted to assess more specific skiing related capacities.

In the programme hosted by BSS and Snowsport England there will be some significant changes to the ACE programme. However Snowsport Scotland has run the ACE programme for some time and has already accumulated data both on individual athletes and at an aggregate level. BSS respects the view of Snowsport Scotland that any evolution of this existing programme should occur at a measured pace and in the programme hosted by BSS and Snowsport Scotland for the 2015-16 season there may only be one change from the existing ACE programme.

BSS certainly hopes that over time the ACE on the two programmes will converge on the most effective pieces of each for the benefit of the athletes.

Although the original design of ACE was purely to be a tool to assess ongoing progress the senior coaches in British skiing are clear that its use in the context of any Development Group should also include a pass/fail test for entry. This pass/fail element of the test is likely to include a subset of the exercises within the ACE that are common to both programmes and that can be performed and practised without access to specialised equipment.

BSS and the Home Nations are also strongly of the view that the ongoing evaluation process that the ACE is predominantly about will be helped enormously if there is a significantly improved reporting package for athletes, and will work to ensure that this is provided.

Details of the revised ACE programmes will be published shortly.

SKILLS QUEST

A number of Britain's coaches were present last year at two presentations by Jon Nolting of the US Ski Association on the use within the USA of their Skills Quest. This was designed to allow a more structured approach to focusing on core skills within an athlete's development. Snowsport Scotland has already starting using a version of this Skills Quest with its own Alpine squads, and BSS has been persuaded that it can be scheduled efficiently and can be used in a constructive manner.

As outlined above two of the three weekends will have a session either in an indoor snow dome or on a dry slope at which various skiing specific core skills will be assessed. Further details will also be released shortly. However these skill based assessments will not be used for pass or fail purposes. Instead they are meant to fulfil three main purposes:

- To give athletes and their coaches an independent assessment of strengths and weaknesses
- To give athletes and their coaches a sense of the relative strength of their core skills
- To allow the governing bodies to collate data that will allow them to understand and then help address any generic weaknesses in the core skills of British athletes.

RECAP OF AND CHANGES TO ENTRY AND RETENTION CRITERIA

Initial Entry and Transition Provisions for 2015-16

Following extensive discussion between BSS and the Home Nations there have been changes made to the entry criteria that were outlined in the announcement on the BSS Alpine Development Group outlined in December. These will now be common between the BSS Development Group, the Snowsport Scotland Academies system and the Snowsport England squad system. These criteria will also apply to Welsh athletes wishing to join the BSS Development Group, although the Welsh squads themselves encompass a wider range of potential and their own selection criteria will not be changed.

The routes to entry through Championship criteria and coaches recommendations have been dropped. Any athlete that feels they have been significantly disadvantaged through this change relating to the current season will be able to make their case to the relevant BSS selection panel. BSS and the Home Nations will select all current FIS squad athletes if they have shown the necessary commitment through the year and attended relevant training days. We will also consider U16's on a case by case basis to avoid a further repetition of the unhelpful dropping of athletes that this project is in part designed to avoid.

However entry into the BSS Development Programme and the squad systems of Snowsport Scotland and Snowsport England will be primarily through rankings on BASS or FIS points. The criteria will be judged at the end of each season.

BASS points and rankings used for first three years of entry

For athletes moving into the first three years of the system there will be four potential routes to entry. These will all be judged on the final BASS point lists of the season

- Ranked in the top 8 by YOB in SL
- Ranked in the top 8 by YOB in GS
- Ranked in the top 5 by YOB in SG
- Being within 40 points of the top YOB in any of these disciplines

BSS and the Home Nations believe this system will allow for two improvements in selection. Promising athletes who happen to be in a year with one or two unusually exceptional peers will not be disadvantaged. And promising athletes who happen to be in a year with a lot of strong athletes of essentially similar standards will not be disadvantaged.

The relevant BSS selection panels will also have discretion to select up to two wild cards per YOB per gender.

FIS Points used for years four to seven

For FIS athletes moving into the fourth to seventh year of the BSS Development Group and into their second to fifth year of FIS racing, any athlete that comes within 20 points of the

relevant BSS CIT squad qualification criteria for any of SL, GS or SG will be deemed eligible. For selection for the 2015-16 season these criteria are likely to be set as follows:

	CIT criteria	BSS/HN DG criteria
Moving into year 2 FIS	110	130
Moving into year 3 FIS	95	115
Moving into year 4 FIS	85	105
Moving into year 5 FIS	75	95

Fitness Tests

All eligible athletes will be required to take and pass a fitness test.

This fitness test is discussed above and will focus on a subset of exercises that will be common to the two anticipated ACE programmes and that can be performed and practised without access to specialised equipment. Details will be released shortly.

Athletes that fail this test at the first attempt will be welcome to return in subsequent weekends where they will be able to retake the fitness test.

A significant change in the criteria for remaining in programmes

When an athlete leaves school it will be expected that one of three things will happen:

1. The athletes will go full time and remain in the group,
2. The athletes will enter full time education and move to the collegiate status provisions within the group, or
3. The athletes will leave the group.

However on an ongoing basis athletes' continued membership will be judged on 3 main elements which could also result in being asked to leave the group.

- The absolute progress of their ongoing fitness evaluations. Any potential issue relating to this will be discussed with athletes and where relevant parents. Mitigating circumstances will be taken into account, particularly injuries. However athletes not showing the commitment to their sport that is normally evidenced by continuing absolute levels of progress may be asked to leave.
- A minimum commitment of 10 weeks equivalent of on snow time with a recognized training provider. This is deemed the minimum commitment we

would expect of an athlete while in full time education. Athletes of FIS age will be expected to take out a FIS licence and fulfil a credible FIS based racing programme.

- Full attendance at three group weekends per year will be expected. Again exceptions will be made for mitigating circumstances. But athletes not attending the full syllabus may be asked to leave.

Collegiate Status

BSS and the Home Nations are keen to make it much easier for athletes to continue to make progress in their sport while at University. Athletes in full time tertiary education will be allowed to continue in the squad if they continue to fulfil the criteria relating to fitness evaluations, a minimum commitment to 10 weeks equivalent of on snow time and attendance at the group weekends. It will also be a requirement that unless injured athletes take a reasonable number of FIS starts per year.

Athletes who are in full time tertiary education but who have completed the seven years envisaged by this syllabus will be allowed to keep their collegiate status if they have one discipline under 75 FIS points.

International Affiliates

BSS and the Home Nations are also keen to allow GBR passport holders living abroad to be part of the British system. Making this work requires a degree of flexibility and a respect for the overseas programmes that they will be following. There is no desire to force unnecessary travel, but at a minimum, video evidence of the fitness tests will be required.

There are also mechanisms which allow translation of BASS points to other countries' seed point systems for younger athletes. While these are not precise any interested athletes should apply to Tony Willis at bss@teambss.org.uk and any difficult decisions will be considered by the relevant selection panel

These athletes will be heavily encouraged to compete in some British sponsored races wherever possible.

BSS CIT SQUAD

For the 2015-16 season and thereafter BSS will award CIT squad status exclusively to athletes within the BSS/HN Development Group. Further details of qualification will be published in late Summer or September and as part of the classroom sessions we hope that the structure and purpose of this project can be better communicated to athletes, parents and coaches.

BSS U16 INTERNATIONAL RACING

In the “Alpine Selection Policies for 2015-16” document published on the BSS website in December BSS made reference to two issues surrounding eligibility for BSS U16 International Racing. These were:

“While we would hope that most, if not all of the U16 athletes selected to represent BSS internationally will join the BSS Alpine Development Group, membership of that Group will not be a condition of athletes’ international selection.

However, BSS will expect all U16 selections to have passed the fitness test that would gain them entry to the BSS Alpine Development Group. Details for this test will be announced in early February.”

For the 2015-16 season BSS will stand by the first of these promises. However that position will be reviewed for the 2016-17 season and it is currently expected that membership of the BSS Development Group will then be a necessary condition of representing GBR at U16 level.

Additionally athletes wishing to represent GBR at U16 level during the 2015-16 season will need to demonstrate that their performance is consistent with the minimum entry criteria for the BSS Development Group and the Snowsport Scotland Academies and Snowsport England squads as outlined in this document:

- They will need to satisfy the relevant BASS ranking criteria outlined above
- They will need to pass the relevant fitness test
- Or they will need to be granted International affiliate status to the BSS Development Group
- It should be noted however that satisfaction of these criteria will NOT necessarily result in selection for races.

As in previous years BSS, all the Home Nations and most coaches believe that there should be provision for athletes to move up the pecking order during the season. Selectors will continue to be expected to choose athletes from outside of the system that produce exceptional race performances in the earlier parts of the season. These athletes will not be required to pass fitness tests mid-season and should anyway be of a level where they might be invited to join the subsequent year’s BSS Development Group.