

Nordic Proficiency Awards Technical Guidance

Objectives of Cross Country Proficiency Awards

- 1* should encourage beginner and very novice skiers to progress further with Nordic skiing. The skills required are those which enable them to ski comfortably and safely in easy terrain
- 2* is aimed at novice Nordic skiers. It introduces the basic classic, skating and xc downhill skills. It both equips a skier to ski comfortably in moderate terrain, and provides a foundation for further development of Nordic skiing
- 2* (Classic) covers situations where candidates are clearly at a good 2* standard for classic and all round skills, but are not able to learn or to demonstrate basic skate, which is compulsory for the full 2* award (for example some holiday resorts do not cut skating tracks or provide suitable equipment for skating)
- 3* is aimed at competent intermediate skiers. It covers the spectrum of techniques for cross country skiing on prepared tracks, and requires competence and correct basic techniques and ability to tackle varying terrain without undue hesitation. It provides the technical skills required for the Level 1 Cross Country (XC) Coaching Award
- 4* is for advanced skiers. Skiers should be able to perform these skills correctly and effectively, adapting to varying terrain and snow conditions. It provides the technical skills required for the Level 2 XC Coaching Award.
- 5* is an expert level and the skier should be an excellent performer in all aspects of XC, skiing fluently and easily throughout in varying terrain and snow conditions. It provides the technical skills required for the Level 3 XC Coaching Award.

One Star

| 1* | Skill required |
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| Overall | Able to stand on skis in balanced, stable and relaxed position with flexed ankles and knees, and to use legs and arms in forward movement on flat and slight uphill, and able to snowplough to stop. |
| Basic knowledge of equipment and suitable clothing | Emphasis on safety Snow – layers of clothing according to conditions & activity, hat & gloves, sun protection. Rollerski – helmet, knee & elbow protection, eye protection, gloves. |
| Stand safely | On snow – skis in plough or parallel position and poles slightly in front of body, slightly flexed ankles and knees. On rollers – skis parallel, weight forward, poles slightly in front of body, flexed ankles and knees. |
| Run straight down gentle slope | In tracks and out of tracks on groomed slope. Relaxed posture with weight over centre of foot and arms forward of body. |
| Diagonal stride | Walking rhythmically forward on skis, using poles in time with arms to assist forward motion |
| Double pole | Propulsion forwards with controlled use of poles; poles angled backwards and kept parallel; using weight through poles by bending through body with slightly bent (flexed) leg. |
| Herringbone | Walk up gentle slope in herringbone, with skis angled evenly, and poles used lightly in time with opposite legs |
| Star turn | Star turns with small even steps; able to turn around tips and around tails |
| Side step | Balanced steps with relaxed posture keeping skis parallel and at 90° to fall line. Able to step side to side on flat, and up and down gentle slope, using poles in time with skis |
| Snowplough glide and brake | Skis kept in v shape with tips slightly apart, weight equally distributed, use of edges and ski angle to control speed. Able to stop on a gentle slope and stay balanced over skis with correct posture throughout and some flexion in ankles and knees, and hands held in front |
| Rollerski – brake by rolling onto grass | Able to direct skis onto grass on flat, and stay balanced by putting on foot forward |
| Rollerski - snowplough | Slow skis by adopting snowplough position – pushing rear of skis out and keeping them flat |
| Importance of warming up before skiing | Understanding of need to warm up and start skiing slowly |

Two, Three, Four and Five Star

| Skill | 2* | 3* | 4* | 5* |
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| EQUIPMENT AND CLOTHING | | | | |
| Overall knowledge | Based on skiing in moderate terrain, probably with hired skis. Need to be aware of appropriate clothing for their activity | Based on skiing in medium terrain, potentially on their own equipment. Sufficient knowledge to advise novice skiers. | Based on active skiing in varied terrain; skiers likely to have own classic and skating equipment. Able to advise intermediate skiers. | Expert knowledge for skiing at all paces in varied terrain, including track skiing up to race level. Able to advise skiers at any levels including basic requirements of off track Nordic touring |
| Knowledge of clothing | Awareness of suitable protective and insulating clothing for skiing in winter mountain conditions: use of appropriate fabrics, wind and waterproofs and layers; need for gloves, hat and sunglasses. | As 2* but skiing more actively so needs greater understanding of flexibility in clothing. | As 3* but for more active paced skiing. | Knowledge of clothing for skiing for training and at race pace, Understanding of clothing for touring. |
| Knowledge of equipment | Skis, boots and poles: Should be able to equip themselves from hire shop, i.e. awareness of different types of skis (skate, classic, waxless) , boots and poles for classic and skating, and how to select correct sizes of skis and poles Rollerskis: awareness of classic, skate and combi skis, able to select pole length | Skis, boots and poles: Sound knowledge of different types of track ski , able to select correct sizes for classic and skating. Rollerskis; knowledge of different ski types, body and wheel materials. Able to select correctly sized poles for classic and skate Awareness of routine care of equipment | Skis, boots and poles: Knowledge of appropriate equipment for 4* ski techniques; understanding of equipment sizing and set-up including positioning of bindings. Rollerskis: knowledge of different types and speeds of skis, and appropriate usage. Good knowledge of maintenance of equipment, awareness of repair methods | Skis, boots, poles: thorough understanding of correct ski/binding/boot/pole and other equipment choice for different types of skiing, for all skiers from novice to advanced. Knowledge of correct equipment: sizes, choice of camber, sidecut, base type, etc;. Rollerskis Good understanding of care and repair of high quality equipment |

| Skill | 2* | 3* | 4* | 5* |
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| Knowledge of waxing | Understanding of waxing including purpose of grip and glide wax, selection and application of grip wax. Able to apply grip wax. | Understanding of and competence in basic waxing techniques: knowledge of waxes for different conditions, position of grip wax zone on classic skis and of application of glide and grip waxes. | Up-to-date knowledge of range and application of grip and glide waxes, Able to apply appropriate wax for activity and conditions. Awareness of base preparation and structuring. | Knowledge of how to acquire and maintain an adequate wax box and equipment, and choice of wax for different activities. Thorough knowledge of base choice and preparation (e.g. stone grinding) good knowledge of glide wax types, correct choice for conditions (e.g. HF versus LF), proper application and finishing, use of additives and finishes (e.g. powders), creation of base structure (e.g. rilling). For grip waxes, thorough knowledge of types of wax, correct selection and application and fault correction. |

| CLASSIC | 2* | 3* | 4* | 5* |
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| Overall level of skiing | Moves confidently around moderate terrain, with correct coordination of arms and leg. Beginning to develop weight transfer, with some flexion of ankles, knees, hips and elbows | Skis confidently over medium terrain, without undue hesitation. Achieves full weight transfer: able to remain on one ski to glide, and shows clear and well timed compression of new drive ski. Correct angulation of ankles, knees, hips, elbows, with a degree of body angulation and full range of movement of legs and arms. Able to stay in tracks round corners. | Skis fluently over varied terrain. Shows both static and dynamic balance on glide ski. Able to adapt tempo, range of movement, glide and power with changes in terrain and pace, responding with agility and showing smooth transitions between techniques. Able to stay in tracks on medium downhill sections and corner using body weight and angles appropriately | 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 | Rhythmic strides with correct arm/leg coordination. Ski compression and rear heel lift on each cycle. | Correct body alignment permitting static one leg balance and a clear glide phase. Full range of smooth movements of both arms and legs to generate forward momentum. | Fluent movements with only two phases in each cycle. Accurate, controlled and smooth placement of arms, poles and recovery leg. | Fluent and dynamic two phase action with accurate controlled and smooth placement of arms poles and recovery leg. |
| Diagonal stride uphill | Short strides with sufficient weight transfer to enable positive drive down and synchronised arm movement. Body weight over centre of ski. | Not required as specific skill – forms part of diagonal stride requirement | Not required as specific skill – forms part of diagonal stride requirement | Not required as specific skill – forms part of diagonal stride requirement |
| Double Pole | Smooth arm action with slightly flexed elbows on pole plant and partial body drop | Full range of movement of arms with relaxed hands and shoulders. Poles planted | Dynamic forward commitment of body weight, and poles planted well forward with | As for 4* plus effective adaptation of technique on variable terrain, and execution of |

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| | though flexion of ankles, knees and abdominal compression | with hands in front of baskets. Body weight rises and falls by compression/extension of ankles, knees, hips, abdominals. | flexed arms to generate power. Able to double pole uphill by altering tempo and range of movement. Able to demonstrate both new and old school techniques. | perfect one phase transitions in and out of DP technique. |
| Double Pole Kick | Correct coordination and timing of both kick and recovery leg and arms (can execute on one side at a time). Flexion of both knee and hip on glide ski. | Double pole action as above with well timed compression and drive off kick ski and a well balanced glide phase. Able to execute on alternate kick leg | As 3* plus a definite pre-loading of the kick ski and long drive from it. Able to alter technique according to terrain. | As for 4* plus Able to execute one phase transitions in and out of technique from both double pole and diagonal stride. |
| Exit track (2* - 5*) and change track (3* - 5*) | Exit track only: Able to step safely out of tracks at gentle speed (include a look back to check not stepping in front of other skiers). | Committed step out of track and onto new ski, smooth move back into track and committed step in with both skis. Able to do by stepping out parallel to tracks and by a skate move. | Fluent track change in 4 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. | As 4* plus able to complete cleanly in 3 stages with correct timing of pole plant. Able to adapt to snow conditions. |
| Herringbone and half herringbone (3* - 5*) | Able to ascend moderate 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 | Herringbone: as 2* on medium hill, maintaining posture. 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. | Herringbone: as 3*, on steep hill, also able to place each ski flat then roll onto inside edge. Half herringbone: as 3*, plus smooth transition to full herringbone outside loipe, then committed step back into loipe. | As 4* with seamless transition and no loss of forward momentum. |

| SKATE | 2* | 3* | 4* | 5* |
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| Overall | Able to skate on flat and slight uphill, with some weight transfer and angulation of skis. Shows slight degree of ankle, knee, elbow flexion | Full weight transfer on both sides with clear use of drive ski to generate power. Coordinated and full range arm/leg movement with correct angulation of joints, relaxed posture and slight forward lean of upper body. Able to use each technique appropriately on varied terrain. | <p>Good static and dynamic balance, strong forward commitment with full and sustained weight transfer, accurate and controlled placement of poles and recovery ski.</p> <p>Skis fluently and with agility on varied terrain: able to alter tempo, speed, glide length and the angle of attack of new glide ski, with smooth transitions between techniques.</p> <p>Able to alter lead ski on asymmetric techniques</p> | <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> |
| Basic Skate (not required for 2* Classic) | Forward movement generated by transferring weight from one leg to the other, with some angulation in ankles and knees, and synchronised arm/leg action | Not required | Not required | Not required |
| Herringbone skate | Not required | Rhythmical action with short glide phase on well angled skis. Correct timing (each pole planted with opposite ski) | 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 | As 4* plus ability to maintain fluency on very steep hill, and in varied snow conditions. |

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| Skate 1 | Not required | Synchronized arm and leg actions; poles planted asymmetrically with the lead pole planted with lead ski and driving in direction of the glide ski. Full weight transfer, clear glide phase and generation of power from both arms and legs. | Forward commitment with dynamic pole plant and drive off each ski; both skis placed flat. Hips and shoulders stable and facing forward along the track. Poles planted forward and offset, driving forwards rather than across the body. Able to adapt body angles, ski angles, tempo, speed and power to suit the terrain. | As 4*, also 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 | Not required | Correct timing of arms and legs: one drive of poles on each gliding leg. Symmetrical pole plants and glide phases, with body facing forward along track. Compression and extension of body on each glide. | As 3* with power through legs clearly generated by range of movement of ankles and knees while maintaining tall posture in each extension phase. Weight committed forward with poles planted dynamically, and well forward with flexed arms. Skis placed flat then edged to effect drive at conclusion of glide. Able to adapt glide phase, speed, tempo and ski angle according to terrain | As 4* plus strong dynamic generation of power. Able to climb medium gradients, changing speed and tempo according to terrain |
| Skate 3 | Not required | One symmetrical arm action for each full leg cycle. Full effective arm swing with extended glide on lead side. Placement of flat glide ski. Body compresses on lead side with pole plant, and extends upwards on recovery side so only one extension phase per full leg cycle. | As for 3* with an active arm recovery in time with recovery leg. High degree of ankle and knee flexion, and compression to begin drive, giving a definite drive off each leg and maintaining speed throughout cycle. Able to lead on each side, and to adapt tempo and patterns of glide to suit the terrain and snow conditions. | As 4* plus dynamic recovery and extended glide on non-lead side. Able to change tempo according to terrain; and to maintain skate 3 up and down hill. Able to carry out with symmetrical and asymmetrical pole recovery before symmetrical plant. |

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| Free Skate | Not required | Balanced symmetrical skating action without the use of poles. Stable upper body facing direction of travel. | Extended glide on both skis with varied body position. Able to use arms both in synch with leg action and held static. Able to climb gentle gradients | As 4* plus ability to ski effectively in both low and upright stance, and up and downhill. |
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| Turns and braking | 2* | 3* | 4* | 5* |
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| Overall | Good posture – flexed ankles, relaxed body, hands held forward and low, looking forward. Able to cope with changes of speed and direction. Good control on moderate downhill. | Good posture and able to adapt to terrain. Remaining balanced over ski with changes of speed and direction. Good control on medium hills and corners. | Very good posture maintained throughout. Able to respond to terrain with agility and changes of speed, direction and power. Good control on steep hills, and able to corner at speed. | 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 times with turns. |
| Skate turn | Body facing direction of gliding ski. Must show definite push-off from outer ski and smooth recovery of other ski, and co-ordinated use of poles. | Turns to both left and right on a gentle gradient. Definite edging of outer ski with glide and drive. Controlled/unrushed un-weighting and placement of both skis. (Inside ski placed at appropriate new angle, outside ski placed close, although not quite parallel to inside ski). | 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. Able to execute both with and without the use of poles, also effective use of poles to add power and to balance. | As 4* plus ability to ski high-speed figure-of-eight turns and to skate turn up and down hill. Able to vary angle of ski placement. |
| Step turn | Slight lowering of body posture. Positive lift and placement of inside ski with effective weight transfer and smooth recovery of other ski. Poles held safely/used to assist weight transfer/forward drive. | Controlled and accurate Placement of flat skis showing Able to stand comfortably on one ski. | Able to execute at reasonable speeds with fast foot action and small steps and increased lower body joint angles throughout turn. Smooth transition into skate turn. | Able to maintain step turns at fast pace and downhill, with seamless transition into skate turn. |

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| Side step on hill | On moderate slope. Able to side step up and down Slight lowering of body posture and edging of skis. Place inside pole up slope for stability, Positive lift and placement of inside ski with effective weight transfer and smooth recovery of other ski and pole. | On medium hill, as 2* plus appropriate angulation of body relative to hill, with effective use of edges. | On steep hill: as 3*, maintaining smooth and effective movement. | As 4* plus able to carry out cleanly in various snow conditions (deep/icy/uneven). |
| Kick turn | Stable kick turns (facing downhill) on gentle slopes, to either side. Accurate placement of skis and effective use of poles for support. | As 2* on medium hill with effective use of ski edges as well as poles. | As 3* on steep hill and in varied snow conditions (deep/icy/uneven) | As 4*, also able to execute on hill without poles. |
| Half snowplough | Able to use half snowplough to control speed and stop on gentle slopes. Controlled placement of plough ski out of track and replacement in track. Poles held in safe position. | As 2* on medium hill, with appropriate flexion and effective pressuring,. Able to make a controlled stop. Able to execute on both sides. | As 3* on steep hill and to stop at predetermined point. | As 4* - able to use in varied snow conditions and to execute hard stop on request. |
| Snowplough glide and brake | Able to control speed and stop at predetermined point on moderate slope. Flexed ankles, relaxed body and arms with hands held forward, looking forward, poles in safe position and not used to slow speed. | Good relaxed and effective position. Able to use snowplough to control speed on medium slope and to make a controlled stop | As 3* plus ability to stop at predetermined place and to execute effectively in varied snow conditions (groomed, soft). | As 4* on steep slope |

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| Snowplough turns | Smooth flow from one controlled turn to the next. Maintain plough position throughout. | Correct relaxed body position; Able to turn left and right at predetermined points and to control radius of turn. | 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. | As 4* in varied snow conditions |
| Stem turns (4* and 5*) | Not required | Not required | 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. | Able to execute in varied snow conditions, and to carry out a flowing sequence of left and right turns. |
| Traverse (2*) with step up stop (3* - 5*) | Traverse moderate slope. Weight mainly on lower ski, with upper foot slightly forward and hands forward over lower ski | Stable position with head and shoulders facing downhill, upper ski slightly forward; lower ski weighted. Traverse medium slope, with skis making clearly edged parallel tracks. Able to stop by stepping up hill to either side. | As 3* holding line and posture on steep slopes. Step up stop controlled and smooth with balance held throughout. | As 4* and able to execute in variable snow conditions. |
| Emergency stop (4 & 5*) | Not required | Not required | “Hockey stop” from snowplough, with well timed pole plant and inner ski cleanly brought round and edged. Able to execute to either side | “Hockey stop” from parallel, with both skis cleanly brought round and edged. Able to execute to either side, with and without use of poles. |
| Rollerski brake by rolling onto grass (2* & 3*), and emergency stop onto grass (4* and 5*) | Able to brake on the flat by rolling onto grass with one foot forward, and maintain balance as skis stop. | Able to brake in a controlled way a slope by rolling onto grass with one foot forward, maintaining balance as skis stop | Emergency stop: Able to brake by rolling onto grass at some speed, and maintain balance by carrying forward motion into running steps | Emergency stop: Able to brake by rolling onto grass at high speed, in response to command. |

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| <p>Rollerski snowplough (2* & 3*); stepping snowplough (4* and 5*)</p> | <p>Able to slow skis at gentle pace on slight slope by pushing out rear of roller skis, keeping skis flat. Slight flexion in ankles and knees, and stable posture, with ski poles in safe position</p> | <p>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 positions, and not used to aid the slowing of the skis. Tips of skis must be closer than tails, overall wide stance is acceptable.</p> | <p>Snowplough: as 3* 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.</p> | <p>Stepping snowplough: on medium hill 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.</p> |
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