

CROSS COUNTRY TRAINING SYSTEM



“Taking my skiing to the next level
always seemed very achievable when there were
clear goals, a positive coach
and strong teammates at my side.”

—Andy Newell



Phases of Development

1

Biological Age - Pre Puberty // Actual age - 2–6

Sport and activity become a fun and integral part of life where children learn basic athletic motions, develop basic strength, flexibility and fitness all while focused on having fun.

2

Biological Age - Pre Puberty // Actual Age - 6–10

Youth participants learn athletic coordination, balance, and agility while continuing to develop overall strength, flexibility, speed and basic fitness. The importance of teamwork and fair play are learned. Fun continues to be the major focus.

3

Biological Age - Pre Puberty (prior to growth spurt) // Actual Age - Girls: 10–13, Boys: 11–14

Youth athletes learn skills across a variety of sports that will be the foundation for all future development in athletics. These young athletes should participate in a number of athletic activities including sports that focus on strength, flexibility, agility, coordination, balance, speed and endurance. Fair play, teamwork and fun continue to be emphasized.

4

Biological Age - Puberty (during growth spurt) // Actual Age - Girls: 11–14, Boys: 12–15

Young athletes must develop sport-specific skills as well as fitness. Athletes should begin to focus their attention on fewer sports as they discover their aptitude and enjoyment for a few specific sports. The athletes' rate of growth and development dictates the stage of progress and specialization.

5

Biological Age - Post Puberty (after growth spurt) // Actual Age - Girls: 12–16, Boys: 14–17

The athlete begins to optimize specific sport skills and fitness toward competing in the sport. A single sport should be chosen as the primary focus, though other sports can be played as a part of preparation. All aspects of the specific sport must be addressed and incorporated. Fair play, teamwork and the enjoyment of the process of preparation toward accomplishments should be emphasized. By age 17, a skier must be training over 500 quality hours and be working with a coach and racing at the appropriate national and international level including SuperTour, Jr. Qualifiers, JWC or J1, in addition to some international level racing.

6

Biological Age - Full Maturation // Actual Age - Girls: 16+, Boys: 17+

Excellence in all aspects of the athlete's specific sport must be the goal of preparation. By age 19, a skier must be training over 600 quality hours and be working with a coach and racing at the appropriate national and international level including SuperTour, JWC and some OPA level racing. By age 21, a skier must be training over 650 quality hours, working with a professional coach, racing a full schedule of appropriate domestic and international events. By age 23, a skier must be training near or over 700 hours and preparing at an absolute professional, elite level.

For more information on what you need at your age, review the domains of the ATS
Training, Technical and Tactical, Equipment, Performance Psychology and Competition

trainingsystem.ussa.org

TEAM - LOYALTY - INTEGRITY - RESPECT - ACCOUNTABILITY - PERSEVERANCE

