

Snowshoeing 8 Week Practice Plan

Pre Season:

Meet with volunteers, family members and future athletes. Discuss practice schedule, clothing and equipment, competition schedule. Put as much of this information in writing as possible so everyone knows what will be happening. Discuss goals with the athletes and what they can do at home between practices. Also exchange contact information and a plan for communicating changes in practices (i.e. cancellations, extra practices). Show a snowshoe video to get everyone "psyched" for the upcoming season.

Note: Try to have at least 2 practices/week even if one of them has to be dry land or indoors. If the practices are on consecutive days, the body often "remembers what it has "learned" the day before and skills can be more quickly learned. Also, most competitions are on two consecutive days and the athletes will be accustomed to snowshoeing two days in a row. If the snow is exceptionally good, try to squeeze in extra practices.

Week 1 to 4 (two practices/ week)

Equipment fitting: poles are optional. I find that they just complicate the learning process for beginners. They may be added for additional rhythm for more advanced athletes.

Practice taking snowshoes on and off

After the group warm-up, divide the athletes by skill level and adjust drills to the athletes. Make it challenging for everyone. Bring the group back together for the game time at the end.

Dryland (No snow): The best part about snowshoeing is that you can practice on bare ground with the snowshoes as long as it is in an area where it doesn't matter if the ground gets chewed up a little. Also, sand volleyball courts, or a beach if you have one, would be very much like snow. Just make sure the surface is soft enough for the cleats to dig into.

Warm-up: with or without snowshoes

Stretching and exercises: Always include falling down and getting up on both sides.

Skills:

Walking maintaining diagonal arm swing with and without snowshoes on.

Endurance drills: with or without snowshoes

Standing in place and hopping from one foot to the other

Skipping, jogging (concentrate on arm swing)

Hill bounding

Game time:

Anything that keeps everyone moving (Dodge ball, volleyball, tag)

Snow:

Have snowshoes on at all times. The more time the athlete spends with the shoes on, the more they become an extension of their bodies. This applies to the coaches as well.

Warm-up:

Stretches, fall practice, jumps.

Skills:

Endurance:

Snowshoe for 30 minutes or more with the course determined by skill level.

Game time:

Soccer on the snow, Frisbee, tag, dodge ball. Have a "just for fun ski" with everyone.

Week 5 to 8 (two practices/week)

Basically the same structure as the previous weeks but get out the stopwatches. Instead of the endurance part of practices, have the athletes ski the events that they will be entered in. Get as many times as possible. Make sure you use proper start commands. Also work on relay

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exchange with everyone. Do not abandon the skills training; always take the time to isolate and work on specific skills.

Start discussing the upcoming competitions with the athletes. Try to have practices at different locations so the athletes become accustomed to skiing on different terrain. This also avoids boredom.

If you have been training especially hard, have a “just for fun” hike in a local park. This reminds everyone that snowshoeing is also a lifetime sport that most people do only for recreation and not for competition.

Take time out to watch a video again with the athletes and discuss techniques with them.

Post Season:

Have a party to watch videos and look at photos of the past season. Discuss what to do in the off season to stay in shape. Have the athletes think about goals for next year.