PSIA-AASI National Adaptive Academy Extended Session

January 6-8, 2021

Clinic Reminders

Clinic Topic: Guiding Nuances – Diane Barras

1. Guiding is more than just telling an athlete where to go. It's a form of communication that directs the athlete in sport technique including speed control, interaction with the terrain/environment, physical direction, and body positioning. Based on the vision of the athlete, this is typically achieved through a combination of verbal cueing and visual demonstration.

2. Guiding in snowsports is very different than many other VI sports. Unlike indoor sports, we have a continuously changing environment, from the terrain to the lighting. Unlike sports like running and cycling, there is not typically a physical connection between the athlete and guide. This creates unique set of challenges to success.

3. Effective guides are confident, humble, flexible, low ego multitaskers

4. There are a variety of Low-Tech and High-tech communication options to augment your guiding. High Tech may include helmet to helmet radios, voice amplifying speakers. Low Tech might include bells, poles, clickers, or other noise making devices.

5. Technology doesn't have to be scary. Take the time to learn how to use and troubleshoot it. Do not rely on other people to charge or maintain it (unless you really trust them).

6. Factors to look for in helmet to helmet:
    a. Ease of connection between units!
    b. Rated for outdoor and cold use
    c. Helmet mounting options – personal vs program use
    d. Speaker mounting – personal vs program use
    e. Microphone placement – is there a boom mic option?
    f. Ease/speed of charging
    g. Protection of wires
    h. Is there any delay between speech and output?
    i. Avoid voice activation

7. Some examples of helmet to helmet communication:
    a. Cardo PackTalk or SmartPack – has Mesh communication which has been easier to use than Bluetooth (but it also has that as well)
    b. Sena – I have not used these personally, but I know there are programs out there that do

8. Factors to consider with speaker technology:
    a. Volume!!
    b. Cold weather usage
    c. Charging vs battery
    d. Directionality
    e. Ease of adjusting volume/power with gloves

9. Some examples of Speaker Technology
    a. Amplivox Belt Blaster
    b. Custom Made (home tech vs high tech)

10. Guiding Position will depend on the athlete, their vision, comfort level, and goals – among many factors. It should not be based on the type of guiding the guide prefers.

11. Pros and cons of guiding in from the Front

    Pros
    - They often will move towards you or your sound (downhill!!)
    - If they have some vision, they can use it to follow and mimic
    - Can be easier to set a pathway through crowds
    - You experience the terrain before they do, so you can be proactive in commands

    Cons
    - Lots of turning around to look
    - Cannot see what they are doing (technique) very well
    - Your voice is pointed away from the athlete
    - You must process a lot of information from front and back as you are moving and talking

12. Pros and Cons of guiding from the Back

    Pros
    - You can see the student and where they are going
    - You can watch their technique

    Cons
    - They cannot use their vision to watch you
    - They will often lean back/uphill towards you
    - They experience terrain first; if you don't see it, you cannot warn them

13. Be deliberate in the words you use; make sure that you both agree on what the words mean. Avoid words that sound similar (especially when your face is frozen) and have multiple meanings.

14. Pay attention to how you use your voice. "Vocal Sculpting," including your volume, intensity, emotion, and tempo will shape how they interpret the "command."

15. Have fun and don't live in fear. Many guides have been held back by their fear of messing up or hurting the athlete. Find a healthy balance and get out and do it. And be ready to be exhausted by the end of the day!