

## Metro Milwaukee Ski Council Senior League

### Course Setting Guidelines (last update: 2006/2007)

#### Purpose:

Provide course-setting parameters for the MMSC Sr. racing league course setters and competitors. And, ultimately, giving everyone the opportunity to compete on consistent courses for each scheduled event through out the season.

#### Objective:

To set safe, fair, rhythmic, and fun race courses that all competitors finish. Special attention should be given when setting so that the course or skiing difficulty is appropriate for the average ability level of the field competing. Remember, we all do this for fun.

#### Note:

Any italicized words will be defined at the end of the setting guidelines.

#### Slalom:

1. USSA rules should be used a guideline, but not as an absolute.
2. Gate sets consist of *open* and *closed* configurations with a flex/hinged gate.
3. Courses are dictated as *red* or *blue*, and do not vary in color as traditional courses do.
4. A minimum of 2 *vertical combinations* will be required per course, assuming *over the top entry*.
5. *Vertical combinations* will be set with *closed* gates coming directly down the fall line of the hill. The end of the combination, or combinations, will be marked with a double gate (.75M of distance between the two).
6. Distance between turning gates in *vertical combinations* should 6 meters. Be sure to measure this and be consistent! Remember, a hinged gate shaft is a guaranteed 2 meters, and is a handy measuring stick during course setting.
7. *Vertical combinations* should be set on flatter terrain in order to maintain speed. *Hair Pins* can be set on the flat just before a transition of terrain, allowing the racer to gain speed into a steeper section. A *hair pin* can also be set to guide the racer across the fall line to avoid an obstacle, previous rut, or find a better snow surface to ski on.
8. The course setter should strive to be consistent in spacing between the *vertical combinations*, and shouldn't change in vertical distance until after these combinations. Remember, the course should be consistent in speed from start to finish.

9. Due to current slalom ski design (side-cut radius's of 11-13 meters), *open* gates should be set 10-13 meters from turning pole to turning pole. The maximum distance is 13 meters, or 6.5 gate shaft lengths.
10. The *open* gate immediately following a *vertical combination* should be set with a bit more vertical distance, allowing the racer safe recovery and to once again regain the rhythm of the course.
11. If the course setter desires to control speed, increase the off-set a bit instead of setting an abrupt "cranker" to slow or control speed. In doing so, it will force the racer to ski across the fall line against gravity, as well as limit DNF's and/or injuries.
12. The amount of *off-set* present in a course is determined by the terrain present. Keep in mind, *off-set* may be increased on steeper slopes to maintain control and speed.
13. When a course is set rhythmically, looking up the hill at the course, the *open* gates should line-up and form a corridor. And, any *vertical combinations* should cause the course to shift laterally across the hill.
14. Set the first turn directly down the fall line from the start. Set the last gate to direct the racer safely through the middle of the finish. Let the athlete enter the course easily, find the course rhythm, and finish safely. Think of it as easy in, easy out.

#### Giant Slalom:

1. USSA rules should be used as a guideline, but not as an absolute.
2. Gate sets are two hinge/flex gates set side by side, with a distance of roughly .75 meters between them. If available, colored panels should be placed at racer site level, making the turning gate easier to see throughout the course.
3. Courses are dictated as *red* or *blue*, and do not vary in color as traditional courses do.
4. Due to current giant slalom ski design (side-cut radius's of 21-23 meters), vertical distance from turn to turn should be between 20-25 meters.
5. Unlike slalom courses, set more to incorporate terrain. This can result in varying distances from gate to gate, but the course setter should still strive to set a rhythmical course. This is done through appropriate turn shape so that the racer can carry speed without interruption of balance.
6. Due to the nature of our courses "color", we do not set *thru* gates. Although, the minimum distance from turning pole to turning pole is 10 meters, and can be used to get racers across the hill if there's minimal *off-set*.
7. The amount of *off-set* present in a course is determined by the terrain present. Keep in mind, *off-set* may be increased on steeper slopes to maintain control and speed
8. Set the first turn directly down the fall line from the start. Set the last gate to direct the racer safely through the middle of the finish. Let the athlete enter the course easily, find the course rhythm, and finish safely. Think of it as easy in, easy out.

### Course Setter Characteristics:

Ski the run and terrain before setting, especially if it's unknown to you. Note obstacles and hazards. Check snow depths and fall line changes. Free ski the turn radius of the discipline being raced before setting to get a feel for the slope, gravity, fall line changes, flats, steeps, and general characteristics of the slope. Before setting (in your mind), visualize what a "best case" course set would be like, mimicking that in your setting. While setting, be sure to look up hill, then down hill to determine the best placement of the turning pole. Visualize where you are attempting to direct the racer and look for the safest descent. Look for obstacles and hazards so that you can avoid them. Consider the "spill zone" where a racer would fall and slide. Is it safe? After setting, be sure to casually ski your own course, paying close attention to rhythm, combinations, and potential "spill zone" problems. Be safety aware and considerate. If ever in doubt, change the placement of a gate to make it work best for the racer.

### Definitions:

- Open*: references a particular gate set for slalom courses. Specifically, a turning gate with 10-15 meters of vertical distance between turns, and an amount of horizontal distance incorporated.
- Closed*: references a particular gate set for slalom courses. Specifically, a turning gate with 6 meters of vertical distance between turns, and no horizontal distance incorporated. Thus, set directly down the fall line of the slope. Associated with *hairpins* and *flushes*.
- Red*: references a particular course, associated with the color of gates used. Color does not indicate a particular turn of direction.
- Blue*: references a particular course, associated with the color of gates used. Color does not indicate a particular turn of direction.
- Vertical combination*: references a series of *closed* gates, either as a *hairpin* or *flush*.
- Hairpin*: references a series of *closed* gates. It's comprised of two turns, and used to move racers across the hill, while keeping a consistent speed.
- Flush*: references a series of *closed* gates. It's comprised of three turns, and used to keep racers speed consistent through portion of the course having a smaller degree of slope.
- Off-set*: references the amount of distance horizontally between a series of *open* turning gates.