

## Modifications and Adaptations

In competition, it is important that the rules not be changed to suit athletes' special needs. There are, however, approved Alpine skiing aids that do accommodate the athlete's special needs and are permitted in the rules. Also, coaches can modify training exercises, communication methods and sport equipment to assist athletes in achieving success.

### Modifying Exercises

Modify the techniques and skills involved in an exercise so that all athletes can participate. For example, a skier with one leg may use the same movement patterns, but will not be able to do a wedge/pizza. Or, an athlete skiing in sit-down equipment will use the same tactics, but only those parts of his/her body that will move, to make the turns happen.

#### Accommodating an Athlete's Special Needs

Use the sound of a bell or voice commands for visually impaired athletes.

### Modifying Your Communication Method

Different athletes require different communications systems. For example, some athletes learn and respond better to demonstrated exercises, whereas others require greater verbal communication. Some athletes may need a combination – to see, hear and even read a description of the exercise or skill.

### Modifying Equipment

Successful participation for some athletes requires equipment modifications to suit their particular need. Some athletes may need to have a toe clip that holds the tips of the skis together. An athlete with difficulty with balance may need to use outriggers to maintain a balanced stance. Because of a substantial disability that does not allow the athlete to walk unassisted, he/she may need to ski in sit-down equipment.

## Adaptations

More specific adaptations for Alpine skiing are listed below.

### Outriggers

Used for athletes who have difficulties with balance in motion.

### Mono-skis or bi-skis

Used for athletes who do not have the use of their legs. Many bi-skis can be tethered as needed for those athletes who cannot ski the bi-ski independently. Mono-skis can be skied independently.

### **Toe clips**

Used for stand-up athletes who may have difficulty holding their skis together. In training, coaches can use other adaptive equipment, such as hoola-hoops and tether lines, during training to teach particular movement patterns; however, these assistive devices must not be used in competition.

### **Orthopedic Impairments**

Leg braces may be used for athletes needing the support. Often the stiffness of the ski boot is enough to hold the athlete erect and give the athlete adequate support while skiing.

### **Auditory Impairments**

Use a flag or hand signals for start. It is imperative that the starter knows the auditory impairments of any athlete in order to meet the needs of the athlete.

### **Visual Impairments**

A visually impaired skier must have a guide while skiing. The guide will wear an orange bib and ski in front of the athlete while on the race course. The guide will give signals, either by voice command or using voice activated radios.

