

## Promoting Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD): Does the Introduction to Community Coaching Course Promote the Principles of LTAD?

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In December 2008, 16 cross-country ski coaches participated in an Introduction to Community Coaching course at Nakkertok Ski Club, located in Ottawa, Ontario.

This workshop was attended by one member of the research team. Of the 16 participants in the course, ten were invited to participate in the research project. Two of these ten coaches were not eligible for the study and one completed the first interview but did not complete the second interview. Thus, the final sample included seven coaches who completed both mid-season and end-of-season interviews. All of the coaches were working with athletes aged three to six years. Six of the seven coaches who participated in the study had no experience coaching cross-country skiing. As well, it is important to note that the same six coaches were coaching athletes ranging in age from three to six years old. The coach who had previous experience coaching cross-country skiers was working with eight to ten year old athletes.

The goal of the present study was to determine whether coaches who participated in a coach education workshop were able to acquire and implement information on LTAD into their coaching practices. The results suggest that the Introduction to Community Coaching course was achieving one of its main goals, which was the transfer of knowledge regarding the principles of LTAD. The coaches were able to describe many of the core principles of LTAD during their end-of-season interviews, including how they integrated these principles into their coaching practices. This could be attributed to the theoretical and practical lessons included in the course. Coaches trained through the course stand to improve the effectiveness of youth sport coaching in cross country skiing and promote long term athlete development in very young athletes.

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