

NEXTGEN TO NATIONAL TEAM

A guideline for riders and parents

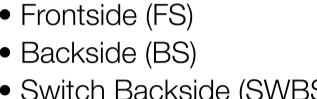
Disclaimer: The path to the National Team is not always as clear and straight forward as described in this document. Many factors will come in play and influence the rate of progression of each athlete. This includes: age, training age, competition experience, daily training environment, etc.

PHASE 1: (1-3 YEARS)

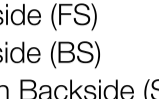
1. Build a strong foundation of skills

Typically, athletes are going to be fairly young when they join the NextGen Program. The most important thing for any young snowboarder is to build a solid foundation of skills. By making the NextGen team, athletes will have some strengths and successes, which have earned them their place on the team. However, when thinking about long term development and success at the highest level it is important to be a well-rounded rider in order to optimize their potential.

KEY SKILLS



Jumps



Rails

- Proper stance and approach techniques
 - Spinning in all directions:
 - Frontside (FS)
 - Backside (BS)
 - Switch Backside (SWBS)
 - Switch Frontside (Cab)
 - Flip and spin off axis as well as spin flat
- Proper stance and approach techniques
 - Approaching rails with a variety of tricks:
 - Frontside (FS)
 - Backside (BS)
 - Switch Backside (SWBS)
 - Switch Frontside (Cab)

THE IMPORTANCE

The earlier in an athlete's career he/she can become comfortable approaching different features in different ways and spinning on different axis' the more opportunities for growth and progression he/she will have.

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The more an athlete can do on their snowboard the more fun he/she can have!

2. Transition onto the NextGen Team

Coaches will have to collaborate and communicate with the athlete so he/she has a clear long-term vision as well as an aligned short-term plan to work towards the vision. Ideally, club coaches will work with NextGen coaches to help the athlete build a trusting relationship with the NextGen coaches so the athlete can continue on a successful path of progression within this team. The athlete would eventually move through this process again as they transition from the NextGen to the National Team.

THE IMPORTANCE

Athlete's will need to be able to build new relationships and take away key messaging and the positive impacts that each coach can provide them and their career.

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The NextGen and National Team programs are set up to help athletes progress and move forward from where they were when they first joined the program, as well as acknowledge the hard work of previous coaches.

3. Balance

Athletes need to have a strong foundation of skills. With that in mind coaches will help guide riders to continue to build on their strengths, while also strengthening their weaknesses.

KEY IDEAS



- Utilize small features to build skills and gain confidence in tricks that are less comfortable. This is a smart way for athletes to progress weaker spin/approach directions.
- Improve an athlete's stronger skills on bigger features, which will allow them to become more comfortable on these bigger jumps and rails.

THE IMPORTANCE

For an athlete to be successful at the highest level it is important to be versatile, adaptable and to learn tricks outside of their comfort zone.

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An athlete needs to balance the continuous strengthening of their best skills/tricks without neglecting their least favorite skills/tricks.

4. Build on Competition Skills

When entering the NextGen program most athletes will mainly have Regional and National level competition experience. NextGen athletes will have opportunities to compete at the National and International level, with the guidance of their coaches they will aim to learn what success looks like at each level of competition. Success at a National Level event may be a finals or podium result, while success at a World Cup may be a landed run (regardless of placing).

THE IMPORTANCE

Exposure to and experience at International level events is key during the developmental years as well.

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An athlete (with the help and guidance of their coaches) needs to know and trust their technical ability, as well as understand how to strategically take the appropriate amount of risk to land a run that will get them into finals or on the podium (depending on the stage of the competition). It is a skill, trained from experience, for an athlete to perform at their very best, on demand and under pressure.

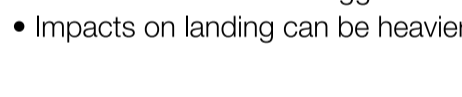
PHASE 2: (2-4 YEARS)

1. Learn to train for Elite Level competition

As an athlete gains more training and competition experience they learn bigger tricks, become more comfortable on bigger features, and compete in more top-level International events. The jumps and features at the Elite competitions (high end World Cups, Dew Tour, X-Games, US Open, etc.) are often significantly bigger than most World Cup events.

It is crucial to learn how to train for these events, the most notable transition is an athlete's ability to perform all of their tricks on Extra-Large (XL) sized jumps on a regular basis. This is an extremely important transition in an athlete's progression and it is key not to rush this process.

KEY SKILLS



Every aspect of riding XL sized features is different when compared to Medium (M) or Large (L) features:

- The approach speed is much faster
 - Air time is much bigger
- Impacts on landing can be heavier

Athletes must be fully committed and confident in their ability when hitting these features. They need to draw on strong foundational skills and not second guess their approach or execution. Additionally, athletes can not rush the transition from Medium (M) and Large (L) features to XL features.

THE IMPORTANCE

Taking the appropriate amount of time for an individual to progress to XL features is a way to mitigate risk and minimize the possibility for injuries, while maximizing opportunities for progression.

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Both the National Team and NextGen Team look at the long game for our athletes, not quick results. This type of approach gives our athletes' longer, more progressive career's.

Fewer injuries = More time on snow
More time on snow = More opportunity for progression

2. Learn to compete with the best in the World

As athletes progress their skills, they also progress to higher levels of competition. From Regional to National to International to Elite. NextGen athletes will go from their first World Cup experiences to normalizing International and Elite level competition.

KEY SKILLS

There are many facets in the process of normalizing competing at the highest level:

- Jet lag
- TV Production
- Personal pressures (self, family, team, funding, etc.)
 - Bigger courses/features
- Competing against established professionals

The results an athlete walks away with at the end of a competition isn't only related to the tricks they can do, it is also related to how well they adapt to their environment. Coaches can guide and advise to help in these areas but it may take several seasons of competing at the International level before feeling comfortable in that environment.

THE IMPORTANCE

To successfully perform at the highest level, it is a combination of physical and mental ability. There are many riders in the World who can do some of the biggest tricks being performed on a snowboard, there are few who can perform those tricks under pressure with the competition on the line.

3. Preparing to transition to the National Team

Both the NextGen and National Team programs aim to provide the best opportunities for our team members to progress their snowboarding each year, by providing World Class on-snow training sessions and World Class support at events throughout the year.

KEY SKILLS



NextGen

- Mix of M, L, and XL sized features depending on the time of year and focus or needs of the athletes
- A competition schedule with a mix of International and National level events, which is aligned with the individualized plans of the athletes on the team
 - Allows coaches to create an annual plan that identifies the needs of the athletes and help them work toward their long-term vision of joining the National Team and competing at the highest level.

National Team

- Focused on the needs of the rider, which is riding XL sized features year-round
- A competition schedule that is currently comprised of all of the top-level events, which is where the majority of the team is competing
 - Allows coaches to create an individualized annual plan with each athlete to help them achieve their goals at the highest-level.

SELECTION TO NATIONAL TEAM

We have created very robust and objective NextGen and National Team selection policies, however there are some subjective considerations that the coaches need to keep in mind when looking at an athlete's transition from the NextGen to the National Team. Some of those considerations are:

- **Are XL sized features part of the athlete's normal training environment? Do they use XL sized features to learn new tricks and progress their current tricks?**
- **What is an athlete's experience/exposure? How much International competition experience do they have?**
- **How much time is an athlete spending riding on their own? Are they motivated to progress without a coach present?**

These subjective considerations are important because they have an athlete's health and long-term development in mind. An extra year on the NextGen program to gain more confidence on XL sized features or gain more International competitive experience is a much better outcome than being pushed too far outside of one's comfort zone too quickly.

THE IMPORTANCE

It is important to keep in mind that the NextGen program is not intended to produce short term results and success but rather build and develop athletes to allow them to have success at the highest level of the sport and reach their long-term full potential. This sometimes translates into taking a few steps back in order to achieve greater progression when they reach the National Team.